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Applied Linguistics

Edited by
Judit Dombi, József Horváth & Marianne Nikolov

Lingua Franca Csoport

UPRT 2013: Empirical Studies in English Applied Linguistics

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Introduction

In line with our commitment to share valuable empirical works from the field of applied linguistics, this year's UPRT collection endeavors to bring together topics as diverse as research on English as a lingua franca, intercultural communication, anxiety, teacher training, language testing, citation practices, classroom communication, and even metaphors of political morality. You may wonder how such varied topics can appear in the same volume. The answer is simple: the annual roundtable conferences, whether they are held in Pécs or Zagreb, bring together researchers, colleagues, and friends eager to share their most recent empirical contributions to applied linguistics. Being in the midst of so much knowledge, experience and energy is inspiring, thought-provoking and motivating. We do hope that reading these works may reflect the conference's atmosphere and the articles of the volume will be stimulating for our readers.

Speaking of stimulating our readers, here is a quiz for you: What do you think the following words, notions and names have in common: *motivate*, *program*, *Swain*, *lexical*, *interlocutor*, *Croat*, *proximal*, *concord*, *multilingual*, *lexis*, *dyad*, *preposition*, *milieu*, *outperform*, *posit*, *Hungary*, *phonology*, *classmate*, *competence*, and *calibrate*?

If you said they are the twenty statistically most significant keywords in the current edition, that is, the words that give this volume its special character the most, you would be right. They are. The keyword list, based on the main text (a total of 43,038 words) of the eleven papers published in this volume, was generated using that wonderfully useful tool, *Lextutor*, created and constantly updated at lextutor.ca by Thomas Cobb. It shows us some of the main threads that kept our colleagues excited recently.

We hope you share that excitement. Enjoy UPRT 2013!

The editors

Beyond the Black Box: A Sociocultural Exploration of Speaking Task Performance

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Introduction

Research on speaking tasks has conventionally relied on the Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1981, 1996) and the Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1985) for its theoretical underpinnings. This has provided a richer understanding of the role of naturalistic talk in promoting language learning. However, such research has also been criticised for its view of the learner's mind as a black box which stores information that is processed from linguistic input and that is then accessed for output. Alternatively, sociocultural theory (SCT) offers a different paradigm that situates language learning within social behaviour.

The paper explores the performance of learners engaged in speaking tasks in dyads with a view to identifying some of the social processes that promote language learning. Unlike much task-based research which is conducted under controlled laboratory conditions, the data for this paper has been collected in a normal and therefore less predictable EFL classroom as part of the classroom research tradition with 56 upper-intermediate learners of English participating in regular speaking classes.

In what follows, I first present the three perspectives that have guided my research: task-based language teaching (TBLT), classroom-based research, and SCT. I then describe the context in which the data was collected. I explain the parameters of the study itself, and, finally, I discuss the data vis-à-vis understandings provided by SCT. I conclude with considerations for those involved in the theory and practice of TBLT.

Research perspectives

This study is informed by three specific, complementary research perspectives: TBLT, classroom-based research, and SCT. I will briefly deal with each in turn.

The TBLT paradigm

Central to the TBLT paradigm is the second-language pedagogic task itself. This has been defined variously by Breen (1989), Bygate, Skehan, and Swain (2001), Candlin (1987), Ellis (2003), Lee (2000), Long (1985), Nunan (1989), Prabhu (1987), and Skehan (1998). Samuda and Bygate (2008) have taken a critical look at Ellis's (2003) comprehensive criteria for a task and produced a working definition: "A task is a holistic activity which engages language use in order to achieve some non-linguistic outcome while meeting a linguistic challenge, with the overall aim of promoting language learning, through process or product or both" (p. 69).

With this definition of the task in mind, Samuda and Bygate (2008, p. 196) go on to identify the central characteristics of TBLT in this way:

- Tasks define and drive the syllabus;
- Task performance is a catalyst for focusing attention on form, and not vice versa;
- Assessment is in terms of task performance;
- Task selection is shaped by real-world activities of relevance to learners and their target needs;
- Tasks play an essential role in engaging key processes of language acquisition.

TBLT is founded on theory developed by Long (1981, 1996) and Swain (1985). In his Interaction Hypothesis, Long posited that learners learn lexico-grammatical forms as they attend to them in resolving a communication problem and that they resolve it through *negotiation for meaning*, which Long defined as a process by which two or more interlocutors somehow overcome a communication breakdown, e.g., with a clarification request (Long 1981, 1996). In Long's system, as learners engage in interaction, they are also guided toward a *focus on form*, which is defined as learners attending to particular language forms during a meaning-oriented activity (Long, 1981, 1996). Within this process of spoken interaction, Swain put forth the Output Hypothesis, by which second language learning is promoted when learners are pushed to produce language that is accurate and precise (Swain, 1985). It is this theoretical underpinning provided by Long and Swain that has generally informed task-based teaching and research.

The question arises, then, whether interaction actually facilitates second language learning. It would certainly appear so. A meta-analysis of task-based interaction studies (1980-2003) undertaken by Keck, Iberri-Shea, Tracy-Ventura and Wambaleka (2006) reviewed 14 sample studies that met strict inclusion and exclusion criteria. The study found that experimental groups outperformed control groups in both grammar and lexis on immediate and delayed post-tests, target-essential tasks yielded larger effects than target-useful tasks, and opportunities for output play a crucial role in the learning process. These findings are certainly compelling and thus prompt one to endeavour to understand task-based interaction more fully.

Classroom-based research

Unlike much research on tasks that takes place under controlled laboratory conditions, classroom-based research attempts to explore the possibilities of tasks in action in authentic classroom conditions. TBLT 2005, the first of a series of biennial international conferences devoted solely to TBLT, pointed out the importance – and dearth – of such research. Examples of such studies include Foster's (1998) exploration of negotiation for meaning in the classroom and Kumaravadivelu's (2007) study of learners' perceptions of tasks.

Limited resources represent an important aspect of classroom conditions. For instance, time is crucial for adult learners who need to develop the language skills they require, particularly for their working lives. Materials and equipment form another concern. González-Lloret (2007) describes how she created CALL materials for her Spanish language learners at the University of Hawai'i in her own free time and with no funding. Outside the relatively well-equipped and well-funded educational settings of rich countries, the classroom conditions in developing countries on the periphery (Phillipson, 1992) and even in the so-called emerging economies of the semiperiphery (Blagojević, 2004) are arguably much further removed from the laboratory conditions of the SLA classroom research studies mentioned above. The need for more research that explores how tasks are actually implemented in intact classrooms is huge.

Sociocultural theory

In addition to the relative shortage of classroom-based studies, task-based interaction research has been criticised for its understanding of the learner's mind as a black box which stores information that has been processed from linguistic input and which is then accessed for output (cf. Lantolf, 2000). Described as "input crunching" by Donato (1994), this notion of learning that information is received

and then processed in the brain and incorporated into mental structures that provide various kinds of knowledge and skills has been thought to greatly limit our understanding of how language learning may take place and, more specifically, of the diversity of ways in which interaction may serve this goal. Indeed, the black box metaphor is so pervasive “that many people find it difficult to conceive of neural computation as a theory, it must surely be a fact” (Lantolf, 1996, p. 725).

SCT provides an entirely different perspective on the role of interaction in language learning (cf. Lantolf, 2000). Developed by Lev Vygotsky, the influential post-revolutionary Belorussian thinker, this theory of learning posits that the human mind is mediated (Vygotsky, 1978, 1987). It stresses the role of mediated learning in enabling learners to exercise conscious control over such mental activities as attention, planning, and problem-solving. In this theory, mediation involves the adaptation and reorganisation of genetically endowed capacities into higher-order forms through the use of some material tool (e.g., a computer), through interaction with another person, or through the use of symbols (e.g., language).

According to SCT, thinking and speaking are interrelated in a dialectic unity in which publicly derived speech completes privately initiated thought. Thus, if we sever this dialectic unity, we give up the possibility of understanding human mental capacities. In Vygotsky’s own analogy, an individual analysis of hydrogen and oxygen tells us nothing of how water can extinguish a fire. Another key component of the theory is the zone of proximal development (ZPD), the difference between what a learner can achieve when acting alone and what he can accomplish with support from someone else and/or from cultural artifacts. A further basic tenet of SCT, activity theory, states that the motives for learning in a particular setting are interwoven with socially and institutionally defined beliefs.

With regard to mediated learning and using language as a tool, Swain (2000) reports on studies conducted by Vygotskian researcher Talyzina (1981) on the three stages required for the transformation of material forms of activity into mental forms of activity: (1) a material (or materialized) action stage; (2) an external speech stage; and (3) a final mental action stage. In this transformative process, the learner starts with speech drawing her attention to a particular phenomenon in stage 1, moves on to formulating verbally what she is now able to carry out in practice, and finally arrives at stage 3, in which speech is reduced and automated. Thus, verbalization is seen in SCT as crucial to internalizing knowledge. In fact, in one study, Talyzina found that when the intermediate external speech stage was omitted, learning was inhibited “because verbalization helps the process of abstracting essential properties from non-essential ones, a process that is necessary for an action to be translated into a conceptual form,” i.e., “verbalization mediates the internalization of external activity” (Swain, 2000, p. 105).

While the work of Vygotsky and his colleagues and students was focused on learning in maths, sciences, and other areas, the benefits of their theory and find-

ings for second language learning have become abundantly clear. The extensive application of SCT to second language learning includes volumes such as Lantolf (2000) and Lantolf and Thorne (2006) as well as studies such as Foster and Ohta (2005), van Comperolle and Williams (2012), and Stafford (2013).

The context

The specific context in which the learners in this study find themselves is Communication Skills, an upper-intermediate English for Academic Purposes (EAP) speaking class at the University of Szeged in southern Hungary. One 90-minute session is organised every week during one term and forms part of students' language practice in the first year of a three-year Bologna-compliant undergraduate course. The aim of the speaking class is to provide learners with an opportunity to develop both the interactional and transactional speaking skills that are required for their studies – and beyond – and, more immediately, to prepare them for an advanced speaking exam (approximately B2+ on the CEFR scale) at the end of their first year.

The vast majority of these learners have acquired English in primary and secondary schools in Hungary. The rest of the learners come from other regions of Europe through the Erasmus student exchange scheme. (The non-Hungarians' speaking data is not included in this study). Almost all of the University of Szeged students are specialized in English or American Studies, while the rest are taking a minor in one of these fields and studying another main subject in the arts and sciences (for example maths, history, or German language and literature). Similar to other Hungarian universities, it is a long-standing tradition that the medium of instruction in all English and American Studies classes is English. This teaching practice generally obtains for area programmes at Hungarian universities (for instance at the German, French, and Italian languages and literatures programmes) and in a number of other countries in the region, such as Serbia and Romania (Erzsébet Barát, personal communication). Although the methodology of teaching in Szeged's English and American Studies classes ranges from tutor lecturing to more student-activating methods (including discussions and student presentations), using English as the medium of instruction clearly presupposes that students possess a strong command of academic English.

The study

The current study is part of a larger project that investigates the implementation of TBLT in a Hungarian EFL context. The larger study consists of two phases: a classroom phase and an interview phase. The participants fall within a proficiency range of upper-intermediate to advanced learners of English. They are 18 to 23 years old, and they attended one of three speaking classes that I was teaching in autumn 2009.

The classroom phase consisted of two lessons in two consecutive classes. They each centred on a speaking task that required complex decision-making toward a convergent outcome. These were widely available tasks taken from Penny Ur's fittingly named *Discussions that Work* (1981). The tasks were read through and explained carefully. They were then performed in dyads and recorded on the learners' own mobile phones. The audio files were subsequently sent to me in an email attachment. As the task was being completed, I observed the dyads and made notes on their performance for later feedback. I then discussed their performance with them in terms of content and form. A total of 56 learners participated in these speaking tasks in three separate modules. The transcripts form the data for this study.

Prior to the data collection, I explained to the learners that their participation would aid me greatly in my research, the broad purpose of which was to explore learner performance on speaking tasks from various perspectives. I assured them that their performance was not being assessed or marked and that their data would remain anonymous. In terms of the normal flow of the class, I endeavoured to minimize any potential disruptive effect of the speaking tasks. Indeed, as the learners were doing a number of similar tasks throughout the term, the only clear difference with these particular tasks was that the learners' performance was being recorded for later analysis.

Data and discussion

For this study, the spoken interaction data has been analysed from the perspective of SCT. It is believed that this perspective can provide new and nuanced understandings that can be beneficial to task-based interaction research and to TBLT. This will include the central SCT concepts of activity theory, mediation, and the zone of proximal development.

Swain (2000) makes two key points about learners engaging in collaborative dialogue. First, this "collective behaviour" may be turned into individual mental resources, i.e., they are creating individual knowledge, and this "knowledge building ... collectively accomplished may become a tool for their further individual use of

their second language” (p. 104). Second, such dialogue draws attention to problems and enables them to verbalize alternative solutions (*ibid.*). In other words, the verbalization provides an object for the speakers’ consideration (*ibid.*). Drawn from my data, the three examples below illustrate this well with a peer offering assistance in the form of missing lexis and her interlocutor accepting the offer toward the completion of his assertion.

(1)

P1: Lord Moulton should have **written a (pause) paper...**

C: Yes he should write a **will**.

P2: **Yes**.

(2)

R1: But the evidence could be fake. So an expert **should be (pause)**

J: **hired**

R2: **hired** yes to prove that she is the daughter of late Lord Moulton.

(3)

K1: Yes, if I’m not sure that this charity will use my money **for ...**

B1: **for good reasons**

K2: **for good reasons** then you know it’s sad because if – OK I don’t know what its name is you know when 1% of your tax is for charity – there were a charity for children with cancer and it turned out that they spent the money for their...

B2: Well that’s why I don’t like charity cases.

K3: Yes, that’s why I don’t want to give my money.

B3: Yes, I must admit that you are right.

In example 1, C is helpfully aiding P by providing the appropriate word *will*, but in focusing on this word does not attend sufficiently to verb form and thus says *should write* instead of *should have written*, a form which P has produced accurately. The two interlocutors here appear to be on a path of learning from each other through this collaborative dialogue. As Swain (2000) points out, “Together their jointly constructed performance outstrips their individual competencies” (p. 111).

Additionally, in example 3, in engaging in the task of discussing who should and should not inherit Lord Moulton’s millions, K chooses to argue against the money going to a dubiously run orphanage and, in so doing, draws on her strongly held personal belief that donations intended for those who need it may well be misused. K is clearly working hard to explain herself, and, as van Lier (2000) describes the efforts made by a learner in his own data, “there is a personal investment in the information she constructs for her interlocutor” (p. 250). This represents a particularly personal meaning-making and thus, potentially, language learning.

Certainly, an important part of meaning-filled conversation is play, a key element of learning for Vygotsky (1978). According to Vygotsky, “The role of play in the development of language is viewed as one that creates a zone of proximal development in which the child behaves ‘beyond his age, above his daily behaviour’” (1978, cited in Sullivan, 2000, p. 123). In example 4, play in the form of humorous exaggeration, strengthens the conversational bond between the interlocutors and thus the possibility for learning.

(4)

B1: Yes, and when we arrive to town, maybe Tim Brodie should get the money, but I don't think so.

K1: Yes, because he's (inaudible).

B2: Yes, I don't like him from his description [des-].

K2 (laughs): Yes, why?

B3: Not the kind of people I usually get on well with.

K3: You mean, the motorbikers?

B4: No, motorbike is not a problem. I have many friends from school that usually motorbike. They crashed into a tree sometimes, but it's not a problem.

In example 4, the two learners appear to have veered off task, yet the genuine interest shown by B in K's objection to Tim Brodie not being “the kind of people I usually get on with” and K's amusement at B's observations represent mediators of learning. As Sullivan (2000) points out, such “playful exchanges serve as tools that result in awareness of language meaning and form” (p. 123). In addition, Lantolf (1997) observes that playful activities “seem to have a positive effect on the learners' confidence to use their second language” (p. 32). While he is referring here to individual play, this could certainly also apply to play in pairs or groups as well.

Donato (1994) describes learners' jointly scaffolding each other's talk in a variety of ways including prompts, directions, reminders, evaluations, corrections, and other contributions in productive interactions. Ohta (2001) describes learners taking risks and attempting new language forms and in so doing creating a sense of movement and improvement for themselves. In the diverse examples below, learners allow each other the space and time to negotiate both meaning and form.

(5)

B1: Well, who [wu:] do you think should get the money?

K1: Well, hard question. I think Miss Langland (pause) deserves the money (pause) **much more**.

B2: Yes, **the most**.

K2: **The most**, thank you.

(6)

T1: What about Miss Langland, the nurse who attended Lord Moulton?

R: Oh, I-it can be because she likes work and she's not too old and she's well already.

T2: Yes, I suppose because she treated well Lord Moulton and **he** was affectionate and loyal to him – **she** was affectionate and loyal to him – in his last years. I guess she could be the one who will get the money because she deserves it and yes she made - she made some things to get it so it's not just - it's just a waste of money, but it will go to - it will go to a person who works for it. What about Tim Brodie?

(7)

A: The orphanage, it would [not] deserve it, as the text says the money may find its way into the pockets of officials and not for the orphans.

B1: Yeh.

C: Yes, maybe, but if they keep the money for themselves, the orphans get less and less money but [if] the orphanage get the money the orphans can get more from it. Well, I say that not all of the money. Maybe the officials are corrupt, but they will get nothing if the money don't - doesn't go there.

B2: **I see your point. You mean** that even though the part of the money will be the officials' the orphans will get some as well.

In example 5, B provides K with the opportunity to complete her thought, pauses and all, and then gently corrects B even as he agrees with her point. In 6, T is allowed to keep the floor while he self-corrects (e.g. his pronoun use). In 7 too, C is permitted to complete a relatively long turn and thus make a point, with which B agrees and which B validates further by offering a confirmatory summary. These examples show the give and take of a productive interaction with even uncertain interlocutors feeling sufficiently safe to assert themselves and affording others the opportunity to do the same. As Samuda and Bygate (2008) point out, the quality of jointly constructed talk depends on the interactive involvement of the participants (p. 119). Here we see that involvement entails more than taking the floor and may include simply listening and gently recasting an interlocutor's inaccurately expressed utterance.

In the final two examples from the same dyad's task performance, each learner is stretching her own boundaries to find the right lexis for her dialogic purposes.

(8)

K1: Yeh that's true, but then why would she got the million?

G1: I don't know.

K2: [I don't know.

G2: Maybe she could find a-a (pause) **health care center**, I don't know.

K3: Oh.

(9)

K1: Yes, maybe that Lord will give the money to him because er he paid the education, he loves that boy.

G1: He's the son of the gardener.

K2: Okay, but maybe once in the future when he-he has the I-don't-know-what the *lehetőség* **the possibility** to learn **to study** he will become a good part of the society.

As Swain (2000) points out, such language-related episodes (LREs) – the points in the interaction in which a lexico-grammatical item becomes the focus of attention – “may be thought of as serving the functions of external speech in the external speech stage” (p. 110) within the learning model explored by Talyzina (1981) and her colleagues. Swain (2000) observes that, as each interlocutor speaks, “their ‘saying’ is cognitive activity and ‘what is said’ is an outcome of that activity. Through saying and reflecting on what is said, new knowledge is constructed” (p. 111). I would suggest this also holds true for a word or form that a learner already “knows” – in the sense that she has encountered it before and thus feels it is familiar – because it is only through regular application of knowledge we have gained that we can internalize and sustain that knowledge.

These extracts illustrate a range of processes: collaborative dialogue, which creates a space to build individual knowledge and to verbalize alternative solutions; personal investment, which stimulates meaning-making; play, which builds confidence and strengthens interpersonal bonds; joint scaffolding, which encourages risk-taking and experimentation with new language forms; and strong participant involvement in various forms, which promotes a relatively high quality of dialogue. As has been pointed out above, importantly, these processes facilitate language development. It is thus in providing opportunities for learners to participate in such processes as often as possible that we aid them most effectively in enhancing their own learning.

Conclusion

In this study, I have analysed the second language task performance of young adult learners of English whose first language is Hungarian. I have moved beyond more established task-based research paradigms to explore the data from a sociocultural perspective. The data I have collected and presented is certainly not unlike that of other learners of English elsewhere in the world, yet researchers and teachers familiar with Hungarian and Hungarians will instantly recognise the unique composition, flow, and even content of the conversations.

However, whether the data is familiar in a more universal or specific sense, it is in appreciating the sociocultural nuances of the collaborative efforts of our learners that we can hone our own intuition and skills in researching, teaching, training teachers, and developing materials so that we can ultimately provide them with optimal opportunities, both quantitatively and qualitatively, to engage in similar task performance and thus enable them to build their knowledge. Indeed, when we move beyond the black box, that is beyond a construct of learners' merely processing lexicogrammatical items, we avail ourselves of the chance to more fully understand the wealth of speaking processes that learners engage in as they develop both collaboratively and individually.

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Developing English Majors' Intercultural Communicative Competence in the Social Constructivist Classroom: The Students' Views

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Introduction

In his *Survey of Intercultural Communication Courses* Fantini (1997) proposes that a growth in the field of intercultural communication (IC) has led to the increasing availability of related courses in academic programs. He then explains:

Instructors are contributing to defining aspects of the intercultural field through the design of the courses they develop. They are challenged to conceptualize what they believe to be relevant, to find materials and resources, to consider formal and experiential approaches to instruction, and to seek appropriate ways to gauge the results of their efforts. (Fantini, 1997, p. 126)

Sixteen years later this is still a relevant issue in higher education, with an ever growing presence of IC courses in Business Studies, Social Studies, and Foreign Language Studies curricula, to name but a few. At the same time, educators may discover that designing course syllabi is not an easy task, due to theory proliferation and the fact that the field of IC encompasses a wide range of disciplinary knowledge, while its parameters are still evolving. Student feedback is therefore invaluable in enabling teachers to tailor these courses to students' needs and to the specific educational context.

The study presented in this paper is part of a larger classroom study which enquires into the development of students' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) by means of formal instruction within a BA in English Studies program at a Hungarian university. The larger study explores sixteen students' development in an *Introduction to Intercultural Communication* seminar which was designed from a social constructivist perspective, and therefore placed an emphasis on critical thinking, reflection and investigating, among others. As part of this enquiry, the study pre-

sented here aims at discovering the students' views about the course in general, and the social constructivist perspective it takes in particular.

Theoretical background

Before discussing the background, participants, methods and findings of the study, I would first like to clarify what is meant by two concepts that were introduced above and are central to the study, namely *ICC* and *social constructivist learning theory*.

Intercultural communicative competence – The construct

Byram's (1997) ICC framework was chosen as a theoretical basis for the study from a host of similar constructs (see Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, for a review of intercultural competence models) because it was devised from a foreign language education perspective in that it draws on the construct of communicative competence and expands it to include an intercultural dimension. The author proposes that we dispense with the ideal of the native speaker, which sets an impossible target for learners, and replace it with the ideal of the intercultural speaker (Byram, 1997, p. 70). His model is then an account of the competences which foreign language learners should develop in order to become intercultural speakers.

Here the construct of ICC is made up of linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse and intercultural competence, of which the first three put the 'communicative' into the equation, and are reformulations of van Ek's (1986) similar concepts in his framework for comprehensive foreign language learning objectives. The fourth, intercultural competence has five dimensions: attitudes, knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness. It is important to bear in mind, however, that in reality the elements of the construct are difficult to treat in isolation from one another: they are all intertwined in several ways. An illustration of the framework is provided in Figure 1.

The examined course aimed at students' development in all four competences of Byram's ICC framework, with special attention paid to intercultural competence and its five dimensions. All phases of instruction were therefore largely based on and informed by this framework.

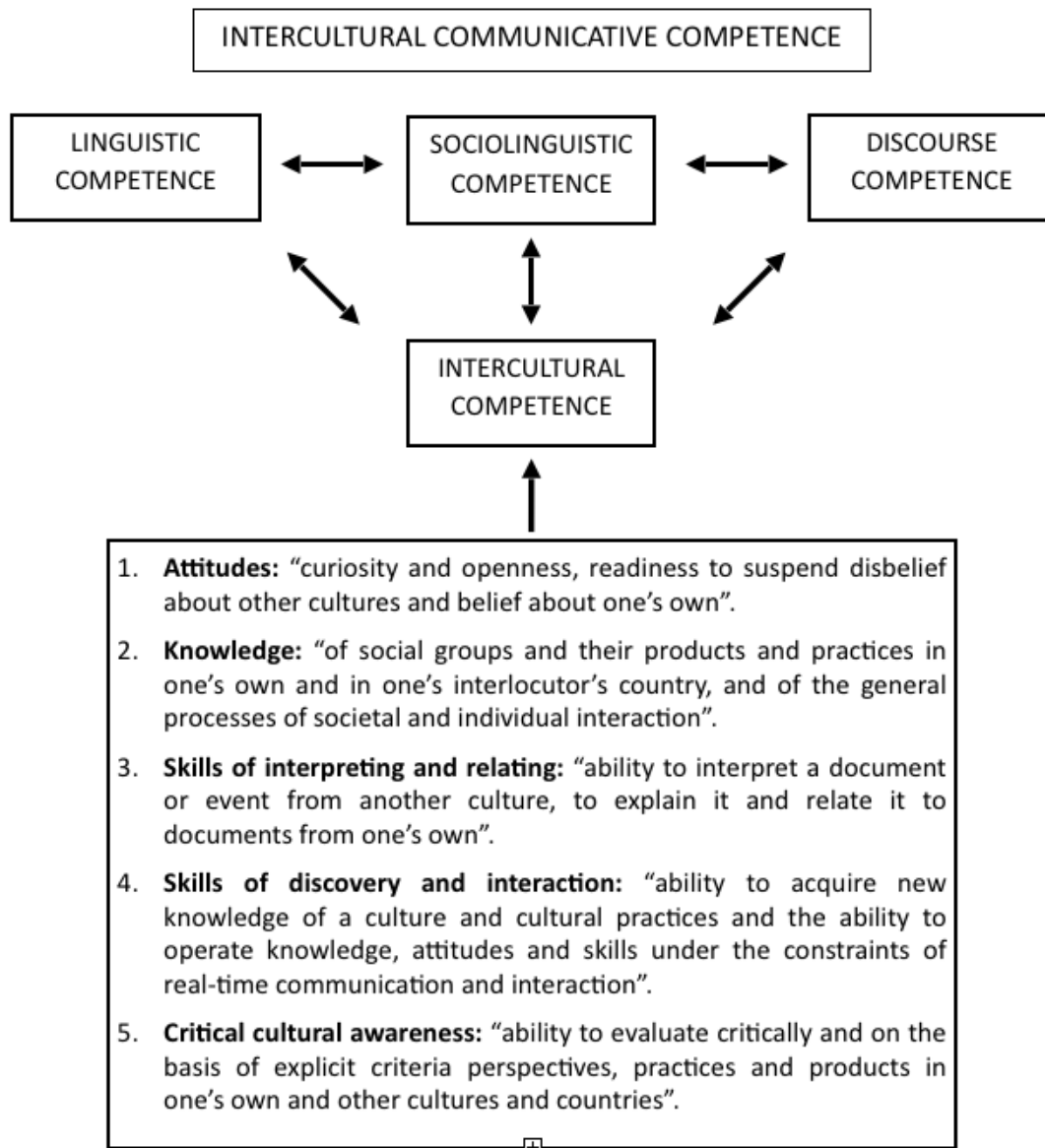


Figure 1. Byram's ICC model. Adapted from Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence (pp. 50-53, p. 73), by M. S. Byram, 1997, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. Copyright 1997 by Michael Byram. Adapted with permission.

As we have seen, ICC is a complex ability construct made up of several sub-competences, one of which is intercultural competence, which can be operationalized along five dimensions. What this means is that its development should also be multifaceted. Yet, what are the specific educational methods, techniques and strategies that best support such an endeavour?

Drawing on the sociocultural theory of Vygotsky (1978), as well as the works of other theorists such as Bandura (1969), Piaget (1970), and Bruner (1977), social constructivist learning theory offers valuable insight in this respect. A central notion of this learning theory is that each of us constructs their own, idiosyncratic version of reality through shared social activity. Knowledge is a social product, learning is a social, as well as an active process, and the role of cultural artefacts and/or more knowledgeable others who serve as facilitators or models is key (Lantolf, 2000; Pritchard & Woollard, 2010). The constructivist classroom can therefore be characterised by the following:

1. Learning is a social and collaborative activity; learners are encouraged to interact and engage in dialogue; the teacher acts as facilitator.
 2. In-school learning is related to out-of-school learning and other experiences; tasks and activities are set in meaningful contexts and are therefore motivating.
 3. The teacher builds on learners' prior knowledge.
 4. The teacher encourages learner autonomy and initiative.
 5. Language is key to development.
 6. Critical thinking, reflection, questioning, investigating, explanation, feedback and real-world problem solving are of great importance.
- (Pritchard & Woollard, 2010, pp. 37-47).

Returning to Byram's (1997) model, the ultimate aim of ICC development from a foreign language education perspective is to attain the ideal of the intercultural speaker, who communicates appropriately and effectively, is curious, open and critical, and at the same time possesses knowledge as well as the skills of interpreting, relating, discovery and interaction. It is apparent from the above that the educational approach derived from social constructivist learning theory corresponds greatly to this aim.

Background to the study

The IC part of the BA in English Studies curriculum at this Hungarian university consists of a seminar series and two lecture series, which have been offered since the 2006/2007 academic year. Students are advised to enrol in the seminar and the introductory lecture series in their first year, and take the second series of lectures in their final year. In a previous, exploratory study (Menyhei, 2011), I asked the teachers and students of the seminar and the introductory lecture to give their opinion about the topics, materials, activities and assessment, as well as the benefits and difficulties related to the courses. The aim of the study was to gain insight into classroom practices and their outcomes, which would inform the planning phase of the IC seminar I would later offer at the same department. A semi-structured interview was conducted with three teachers, and a questionnaire was filled in by 16 students.

Among the results, two seemed particularly significant. Firstly, two of the teachers expressed uncertainty about the aims and methods of such a course; as one of them put it, *“I can’t phrase it [i.e. the learning outcomes] like I can in the case of another course, like ‘By the end of this course you will be able to do this. You will learn something that you didn’t know before the course began’ – I can’t phrase it.”* Secondly, the lack of student participation in the lessons was voiced as a problem, especially in the case of those seminars where students were not given research tasks, which students taking part in other seminars found meaningful and intrinsically motivating. In other words, there was an institutional need to determine an approach to teaching IC in the department which would prove useful for students, and there was evidence that this should include research tasks. At the same time, I was personally intrigued by the question of how such a complex ability construct as ICC might be developed in a formal educational context.

In light of the above results, materials were gathered and tasks and activities were designed for the seminar examined here, with a social constructivist perspective in mind. These were then used in the classroom, where classroom practices were also largely guided by the principles of the perspective outlined in the previous section. The scope of the present paper does not allow for an in-depth discussion of all tasks and activities, but Table 1 provides an overview of some of the home assignments students completed for the course, together with what dimension of students’ ICC they were expected to develop. The brackets around some of these dimensions indicate that, depending on the depth of students’ analysis, these dimensions could also potentially be developed.

Table 1. Examples of home assignments and their aims

Home assignment	Description	ICC dimensions it aims to develop
Worksheet: My inter-cultural encounters	Writing about and analysing own experiences of inter-cultural encounters in a worksheet	Skills of interpreting and relating Critical cultural awareness
Analysing extracts from two job interviews; worksheet	Reading the transcripts of two job interviews adapted from Roberts (2009) Analysing in the related worksheet the candidates' and the interviewers' communication in the two cases, making comparisons and finding explanations	Attitudes Knowledge
Analysing a news article; worksheet	Watching the news or browsing the web for a recent news article discussing a case of cultural conflict between groups of people Critically analysing the news article in the related worksheet	Knowledge Skills of interpreting and relating Critical cultural awareness
Interviewing someone from a different country; essay	Interviewing someone from a different country, with the help of an interview guide, about one of the topics the class has previously decided on: the education system or raising children in the interviewee's country Recording the interview and reflecting on it in essay form	Attitudes Knowledge Skills of interpreting and relating Skills of discovery and interaction Critical cultural awareness

The study

Research questions

The study presented here intends to uncover “insider perspective” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 38) in that it sets out to investigate students’ views about the *Introduction to Intercultural Communication* seminar in which they participated. Therefore, the following research questions are addressed:

1. What is the students’ general attitude like toward the seminar?
2. What specifically did the students like and dislike about the seminar?

At the same time, it was hoped that this insider perspective about the seminar in general would lead to implications about the social constructivist approach of the course in particular:

3. In what ways is the social constructivist approach to developing students’ ICC appropriate in this context in the students’ view?

Participants

The participants were sixteen BA students of English Studies: eleven Hungarian, two Latvian, two Polish students and one Spanish, all of whom enrolled in my seminar *Introduction to Intercultural Communication*. Those who were not Hungarian were all spending a semester in Hungary as participants of the Erasmus student exchange programme at the time of the study. From the sixteen students, four (two Hungarian, two Latvian – three female, one male) also participated in the focus group interview.

Most students claimed they spoke two or three foreign languages, with German being the second most common foreign language spoken by the participants after English. Also, the group was fairly mixed in terms of their ‘intercultural background’. For instance, whereas five students said they had no friends from abroad or from different cultures, five others had many. Similarly, whereas ten students had spent two weeks or less abroad, the length of residence in other countries of other students ranged from six weeks to two years. This information about students was gained from a background questionnaire, and is included here to give a general idea about the participants; a more detailed description of both the group and the research context will be found in my dissertation, reporting on the findings of the larger study.

Methods of data collection

In collecting data I relied on two different sources of information:

1. a questionnaire on students' views about the seminar and their own development.
2. a follow-up focus-group interview with four students.

The questionnaire was administered to students in the final lesson of the semester. The aim of this instrument was twofold: it was used to gather information on students' views about the seminar and its approach, on the one hand, and about their development, on the other. The questionnaire consisted of three open-ended and three closed-ended items. The former ones asked students to list reasons why they liked and disliked the course and to say which activity or assignment they found most useful and why, whereas the latter ones required them to indicate on a 4-point Likert-type scale the extent to which they enjoyed the listed in-class activities, home assignments and topics. For lack of space and abundance of data, in the following section I only discuss the findings gained from students' answers to the open-ended questions.

Four students from the group also volunteered to participate in a follow-up focus-group interview, which was conducted via Skype a month after the course had finished. The questions here referred to the findings gained from the questionnaire, and the aim was to get a deeper understanding of these findings. The nine questions guiding the focus group interview can be found in the Appendix.

Findings

The students' general attitude toward the seminar

Based on the results gained from both the questionnaire and the focus group interview, it can generally be stated that the students have an overwhelmingly positive attitude to the IC seminar under scrutiny. In their answers to the open-ended question asking for reasons why they liked the course, the words 'interesting' and 'useful' come up ten and seven times, respectively. Furthermore, it seems students are not used to participating in such classes, but associate the methods and the educational approach with the 'usefulness' of the course. Consider the following comments for example, made by the students during the interview (pseudonyms are used for the participants of the focus group interview):

Anna: We communicate a lot and we should think all the time when this course happening – the lessons, and discuss and it was really useful I think.

David: I found it useful because it wasn't a normal kind of course: because there were methods, structures and many varying topics but mostly you could associate with your own normal life – so you could say you must have experience, some kind of event that you could relate to any of the topics given in the course. So yeah it was useful, it opened some perspectives for me.

Naturally, however, some negative aspects also surfaced in students' comments, such as the following, taken from answers in the questionnaire:

S13: We weren't really pushed to learn all the theories.

S14: I don't really like to talk in class. I prefer the teacher teaching, and not all the time the students talking.

These views already point to the general finding that, from their comments about why they liked or disliked the course, implications can be drawn about students' attitude toward the social constructivist approach taken in this seminar in particular.

What the students liked and disliked about the seminar

Just like in the case of the previous, exploratory study, the findings of the study presented here also reveal that the English majors at this Hungarian university enjoy learning if they are engaged in the learning process through meaningful activities. It seems the students appreciate the opportunity to actively participate in lessons and express their opinions in discussions. This is evidenced by the number of times these aspects of the seminar were mentioned as positive: seven students said they liked the course because it was interactive, whereas five mentioned pair and group discussions and the opportunity to talk as benefits of the course. Five students also claimed they liked the assignments, which they referred to as 'enjoyable', 'challenging', 'interesting', and as tools that made them 'rethink many things'. An overview of these and other aspects of the course referred to by the students as ones they liked is found in Table 2.

Table 2. Aspects of the course mentioned by students as ones they liked

Positive aspect mentioned	Number of students mentioning aspect
The course is interactive	7
Pair/group discussions; opportunity to talk	5
The topics	5
The assignments	5
The teacher's teaching style	4
The opportunity to learn (new things)	4
It improved my English	2
The presence of Erasmus students	2

On the other hand, several participants pointed to difficulties they had experienced with the assignments. For instance, some students explained that they found a few of the assignments too challenging, while others singled out the assignment where they were required to interview someone from a different country as difficult to complete:

S16: I don't like the recording of interviews, because it was difficult and I didn't have any experience about it. Otherwise, it was hard to find a person for the interview.

Some of the theories discussed in the lessons – such as that of Hofstede (1991) and Hall (1959, 1966, 1976) on culture, or that of Byram (1997) and Bennett (1993) on ICC – were also unpopular: five students included theories among the three reasons why they didn't like the course. As in the case of the home assignments, different students had quite different problems with the theories:

S5: I believe that it is useful, but I really don't like theories.

S12: Theories and models were hard to integrate sometimes.

S13: We weren't really pushed to learn all the theories.

As for the first two of the above comments, I believe they reveal the need to rethink the way theories are presented and applied in the lessons, which is a great example of valuable insight gained from learner feedback. The third comment, however, leads us to a problem related to a central element of the social constructivist classroom,

namely learner autonomy. The next section is devoted to discussing this and other similar findings in greater depth. For other aspects of the course that students claimed they disliked, see Table 3.

Table 3. Aspects of the course mentioned by the students as ones they disliked

Positive aspect mentioned	Number of students mentioning aspect
Various difficulties with the assignments	8
Various issues with the theories	5
It was three hours long	5
Pair/group discussions	2
The deadlines	2

The students' views about learning in the social constructivist classroom

As mentioned before, some of the students' comments express, although not explicitly, their views about learning in the social constructivist classroom. For instance, the finding that students appreciate assignments that allow them to 'rethink many things' can lead us to believe that an important aspect of the constructivist classroom, namely learner reflection, is seen as appropriate in this particular context. At the same time, other features of the IC seminar that are characteristic of the constructivist approach, such as the emphasis on learner autonomy, have evidently caused problems for some students. For the sake of clarity, let us consider in the form of a list the positive and the negative aspects of learning in this type of classroom in this particular educational context, as seen from and underlined by the students' comments, some of which have already been mentioned in Table 2 and 3.

The positive aspects of the social constructivist classroom, as supported by students' comments, are:

1. Interactive lessons; pair/group discussions; student participation

S1: Good questions, so most of the students wanted to participate in the conversations.

2. Learning from other students

S7: Even difficult parts get cleared because teacher (or others) just explained it.

S15: It was interesting to hear other's opinion about a given topic.

3. In-school learning related to out-of-school experiences; activities set in meaningful contexts

S9: I could use everything that I have learned in my personal stories, by my personal experiences.

S13: In this course the things we have learnt are really useful in everyday life. There were a lot of occasions when I told my friend 'oh actually I've learnt about this in one of my classes and I think...'

4. Zone of proximal development

S2: [under the question 'I liked the course because...'] It taught me; it made me work; I could handle it

David: I really liked it because they were challenge in a way but not that hard to work on, so [...] they were good tasks to do, good assignments. But not those that you should sacrifice at last 4 or 6 hours of your day to finish it. [...]

5. The importance of critical thinking, reflection, real-world problem-solving

S6: You had had to analyse something and think.

S9: I could analysed my stories and think about them in another way.

S11: There are several useful thoughts and information in this video and I often think about it, when I have only a 'single story' about somebody/ something.

Linda: This sheet teach us to be more conscious and reflect on ourselves, and it's a good part.

The negative aspects of the social constructivist classroom, as supported by students' comments, are:

1. Interactive lessons; pair/group discussions; student participation

S2: [under the question 'I didn't like the course because...'] It was a 'team-work' oriented class.

S14: I don't really like to talk in class. I preffer the teacher teaching, and not all the time the students talking.

2. Challenging assignments for every lesson

S6: To some home tasks I had to put a lot of effort, and sometimes it was difficult.

S7: Usually we don't have homeworks, so... something unusual.

3. Learner autonomy and initiative

S9: I could not find a person from abroad to do the interview.

S13: Sometimes I wasn't sure about what was expected from me through the assignments. I wasn't sure of what to concentrate on to complete my assignments in the right way.

S13: We weren't really pushed to learn all the theories.

S16: I don't like the recording of interviews, because it was difficult and I didn't have any experience about it. Otherwise, it was hard to find a person for the interview.

Several conclusions can be drawn from the above. Firstly, it seems that whereas the majority of the participants are happy to get involved in discussions with their classmates during the lessons, there are a few students who do not value this aspect of the constructivist classroom so much, as they rather favor “the teacher teaching”. Secondly, many of the students are appreciative of reflective tasks and assignments, especially if these are somehow related to their everyday lives, or out-of-school experiences. For others, however, these assignments are unusual, too challenging, and perhaps beyond their zone of proximal development. This is closely connected to my final point that, interestingly, quite a few of the problems that were raised by students, regardless of whether they were to do with home assignments or theories, can be traced back to a lack of learner autonomy. This is most clearly seen in the fact that, although Hungarian and Erasmus students alike participated in the seminar, some students still had difficulties with finding an interviewee from another country for the interview assignment. One can only guess that the reason for this is simply that these students were never required to act as autonomous learners during their primary and secondary studies. In future research, it would be interesting to find out, by collecting more background information, whether this is indeed the case.

Conclusion

The study set out to explore the students' views about the *Introduction to Intercultural Communication* seminar and, more specifically, the social constructivist perspective it took. The findings therefore offer insight into how such courses could be planned in this educational context in the future, in order to meet students' needs. We have seen that, for the most part, students deem the constructivist approach of this seminar fitting, and find the course useful precisely because of the methods associated with this approach. They appreciate interaction and relating classroom learning to real life – in other words, they intuitively apply the competence construct. That is what students want: meaningful content relevant to their life experiences and future needs, as was envisaged.

Further research is needed for a more in-depth view on some of the findings, such as the students' difficulty in areas requiring learner autonomy and initiative. In addition, the students' learning process, or ICC development should also be analysed, in order to arrive at a more complete understanding of the course and the extent to which it has succeeded in reaching its aim.

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Appendix

Focus group interview questions

1. In our final lesson I asked all students to fill out a feedback sheet about the seminar. On the feedback sheet some students said that they liked that the course is useful.
Is this true of you? Why/why not?
2. Some students said that they didn't like learning about the theories and models.
Is this true of you? Why/why not?
3. Some students said that they liked the home assignments, whereas others had problems with them.
Which is true of you and why?
4. One student said that the most useful home assignment for him/her was:
"the audio assignment where we had to talk with each other and the interview with a foreigner because these improved our skills".
Do you agree with this student? Why/why not?
5. Another student said that the most useful home assignment for him/her was:
"my intercultural encounters because I could use everything that I have learned in my personal stories [...] And I could analysed my stories and think about them in an other way".
Do you agree with this student? Why/why not?
6. Do you think that topics that are more concrete and can be connected to personal experience are more enjoyable? Why/why not? Can you give an example?
7. One student said that the most useful in-class activity for him/her was:
"the videos we have watched about the weddings because this way we really could see the conflict and it was easier to decide what were the problems".
Do you agree with this student? Why/why not?
8. Another student said that the most useful in-class activity for him/her was:
"the day we talk about gypsies in Hungary [...] What is useful here is that people now (me included) will think before talking."
Do you agree with this student? Why/why not?
9. Apart from the issues we have already discussed, what other topics do you find important?

Citation Practices in EFL Undergraduate Theses: A Focus on Reporting Verbs

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Introduction

Writing academic texts is an important part of the professional life of academics. This means that the widely held “publish or perish” attitude puts great pressure on scholars to disseminate their research projects and ideas. I am of the opinion that a similar type of pressure is placed on students who are required to write seminar papers and home assignments throughout their studies and a thesis before graduating. The “publish or perish” attitude in their case can be translated into a “write or receive no credit” view. The pressure is enormous since many of them are not equipped with the content knowledge, academic writing skills, and often even the language skills necessary to construct meaningful and acceptable texts. In addition, they often finish their papers in a great hurry, against the ticking clock. A few semesters of writing instruction provide valuable help in how to write academic texts, and students also implicitly learn about it while reading scholarly works; yet many struggle with writing assignments both in their mother tongue (L1) and in the target language (L2), English. When undergraduates are asked to write summaries, literature reviews, analyses of sources, or to carry out and report on small-scale empirical research, they have to simultaneously attend to issues that require constant decision-making, such as methods and text construction questions, grammatical and lexical choices, and citation and paraphrasing problems. Appropriate referencing to the works of others is a major prerequisite of most academic writing genres, but it often proves to be very challenging to novice writers. The inappropriate phrasing of citations can lead to misunderstanding, unclear authorial stance, or even charges of plagiarism.

The aim of the present study is to investigate the citation practices found in BA level theses, with focus on the reporting verbs or verb phrases in finite reporting clauses with that-clause complementation, as in the following example: *Hyland (2010) reported that*. This author + reporting verb phrase + that-clause format is a frequently employed rhetorical device to indicate the findings of other authors and is probably the most difficult citation type since it requires the paraphrasing of the

original texts, their evaluation and the choice of the most appropriate reporting verb. The data are drawn from three sub-corpora of BA-level EFL theses written by Hungarian students of English in contrasting disciplines, namely applied linguistics, literature and cultural studies. It is argued that data-driven, corpus-based academic writing instruction and the support of thesis writers are most beneficial if the data are drawn not only from large international academic corpora, but also make use of locally produced and discipline-specific student texts.

Background to the study

Student writers, even the linguistically and academically most skilled ones, are emergent researchers. They are often referred to in the literature as *novice*, *inexperienced* or *apprentice* authors since they don't have the years of experience real academics do, and, as a result, they are outsiders of the research community they are expected to understand and participate in. Previous corpus-driven studies have discussed differences between novice and expert writers in terms of their lexical choices (e.g., Hyland, 2010; Martínez, 2005), employed rhetoric structures (Doró, 2013; San & Tan, 2012), hedging (e.g., Hyland, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2010; Serholt, 2012) and patchwriting and textual borrowing (e.g., Li & Casanave, 2012; Martínez, 2005; Pecorari, 2003; Petrić, 2012; Wette, 2010). The same issues have also been analyzed with specific reference to L1 and L2 writers, and it has been concluded that L2 writers rely on a smaller number of linguistic and rhetoric options, have difficulty indicating the degree of certainty of their propositions, and are also weaker in a number of other areas (e.g., Hyland & Milton, 1997; Polio & Shi, 2012; Sheldon, 2011).

Discipline-specific variability has been pointed out in many areas of academic writing, including citations. Hyland (1999) compared eight fields and found substantial differences in the construction of referencing in humanities and social sciences compared to health sciences and engineering. The second group of articles used integral citations and block quotations very rarely. Likewise, Lim (2010) reported on citation differences in two more closely related disciplines, namely applied linguistics and education. Results in this study indicate that the majority of applied linguistics results sections used some form of commenting, while only half of the education papers did so. Hyland (1999) concluded the following:

differences in citation practices are related to the fact that academics actively participate in knowledge construction as members of professional groups and that their discursal decisions are influenced by, and deeply embedded in, the epistemological and social conventions of their disciplines. (p. 341)

As for their form, citations can be either non-integral, placed in parenthesis, or integral in the case of which the source in question is grammatically integrated into the new text. Thompson and Tribble (2001, pp. 95–96) distinguish between the following categories of citation:

a) Non-integral

1. source: indicates the source of an idea, gives evidence for propositions; it is placed at the end of the sentence – (*Schmitt, 2001*)
2. identification: identifies the author of the study referred to – *A recent study (Schmitt, 2001) argues that*
3. reference: the writer refers the reader, as proof, to further texts – (*see/e.g. Smith, 2001*)
4. origin: indicates the originator of an idea or product – *the Complete lexical tutor (Cobb, 2013)*

b) Integral

1. verb controlling – *Schmitt (2001) argues that...*
2. naming – ..., *as shown in Schmitt (2001), ...*
3. non-citation – *Schmitt/The authors often made reference to ...*

The above discussed categorization does not include the footnote/endnote format often used in literature and science articles. Also, in student papers two other cases need to be mentioned. I call the first one *missing citation* which means that the needed non-integral citations are missing, providing this way no indication of the sources of ideas, definitions or statements. This is problematic because it makes it difficult or impossible to distinguish ideas that are formulated by the author from those which are borrowed or lifted from other texts. The other citation type is not a distinct citation format, but can be labeled as *erroneous citation*, done either as a mistake in the authors' name or date of publication or as a deliberate choice to falsely indicate familiarity with sources not read but which make reference lists impressive. I have also met cases in which students mixed up references hoping that this way heavy textual borrowing or patchwriting would not be identified.

Choosing the most appropriate form of citation is difficult and is governed by a number of factors, such as disciplinary conventions, expertise in academic writing, knowledge and willingness to show stance, or degree of prominence given to other authors (Thompson & Tribble, 2001). The same article also notes that little explicit help is given in EAP textbooks or writing materials as to which citation format to use and what connotations certain verb choices may have. Indeed, when language items are given as lists in academic writing textbooks students often take a “pick

and mix” approach and choose from the given options randomly. In addition, they explicitly or implicitly learn academic chunks that frequently reoccur in academic texts they are reading, including reporting verb phrases. They then use them in their own texts, often without a full understanding of their meanings and connotations as markers of stance. Recent research has pressed the importance of corpus-based English for academic purposes instruction both through the use of specialized and self-compiled corpora (see Bloch, 2009, 2010; Galloway, 2005; Gaskell & Cobb, 2006; Lee & Swales, 2006).

Integral citations, as the name indicates, integrate the ideas, statements, results of previous studies in the new text by employing verbs that indicate the authors’ evaluation of the information provided. Charles (2006, p. 501) explains four main categories of verbs that function as reporting verbs. The first one are ARGUE verbs that indicate the function or purpose of communication (e.g., *argue, suggest, propose, note, acknowledge*). The second group is made up of SHOW verbs that indicate a fact or situation (e.g., *show, demonstrate, reveal, indicate*). Words in the third group are FIND verbs concerned with discovering something (*find, discover, observe*). The last category consists of THINK verbs connected to thinking or feeling something (*think, assume, estimate, suggest, agree*). Of course, not all reporting verbs are easily categorizable under these four types, and some verbs may have various functions attached to them. To illustrate, *point out* can be used either as a show verb to replace *indicate* (*results indicate that*) or as an argue verb similar to *note* (*Smith pointed out that*). In contrast, Hyland (2000) named three main reporting verb categories according to their denotation. Verbs can refer to discourse acts (*say, state, add*), to cognition acts (e.g., *believe, think, suggest, conclude*) and to research acts (*show, notice, discover, demonstrate*).

The use of reporting verbs in student papers have been analyzed by a small number of studies. Charles (2006) investigated PhD theses written native speaker students on science and political topics and highlighted the importance of stance marking in reporting clauses that refer to the authors themselves (*I will argue that; we assume that*). Similarly to Charles, Hyland and Tse (2005) worked with postgraduate level ESL writing, but used Chinese dissertations and compared them to published articles. Since their study focused on abstracts, that-complements were used with verbs controlled by nouns referring to the research and methods (*results indicate*) rather than names of authors. A recent study (Parkinson, 2013) compared published research articles and study reports written by South African ESL undergraduates working on their science degree. The analysis of the two corpora is not limited to citations, but all verb controlling that-clauses. The author found that the most frequent reporting verbs used by this student population were *agree, say, believe, think, mean, show*, some of which are more typical of conversational language than academic prose.

The corpus and methodology which resemble the closest the methods discussed in the present study are those reported by Donscheva-Navratilova (2008) who ana-

lyzed the reporting verbs + that complement structures in 20 applied linguistics theses written by Czech students or English. She found significantly more of these structures in the MA thesis than in the BA thesis, also greater number and different proportions of verbs at the MA level. In both sub-corpora discourse act type and author-neutral verbs dominated.

To the best of my knowledge, no studies so far have addressed the issue of citation in student academic texts written in various fields of English studies, neither has this been done with published research corpora. Some previous studies have contrasted soft sciences with hard sciences, but these two categories are too broad to be transferable to EFL student populations studying English literature and culture in higher education. In some recent investigations I concentrated on BA level theses written by Hungarian students of English on different topics. Doró (2012, 2013) found both similarities and differences in the abstract structure and in the lexical use of academic bundles in linguistics and non-linguistics papers. Data revealed that applied linguistics texts adhere more to the full move structure identified elsewhere and that these texts used clearer and more academic type lexical bundles in the identification of research aims. These results suggest that the division of theses into various discipline-specific sub-corpora may lead to richer data than the analysis of one large group of student texts.

Methods

In light of the issues raised above the present research focuses on the citation practices of undergraduate novice EFL academic writers. Since citation types vary in form and function, the linguistically and rhetorically most challenging citation type was chosen, namely verb controlling integral citation that use as subject authors of previous studies. Self-mentioning (*I believe that*, *This essay concludes that*) were excluded from the analysis.

The following research questions are addressed in this study:

1. What are the verb phrases and their frequency of use in verb controlling integral citations followed by that-complements in BA theses written by Hungarian students of English?
2. What are the similarities and differences in the reporting verb use between the three most common thesis disciplines, namely applied linguistics, literature and cultural studies?

Thirty BA-level English studies theses written and defended by students at a large Hungarian university in the year 2011 were chosen. This included ten theses written on an applied linguistics, ten on a literature and ten on a culture topic. Without

the titles, abstracts, lists of references and appendices the theses form a 79,383 word linguistics sub-corpus, a 104,191 word literature sub-corpus and a 104,005 word culture sub-corpus. This indicates that the linguistics papers are, on average, slightly shorter than the other theses.

As a first step the corpus was searched electronically for forty verbs which commonly perform reporting functions in academic writing using AntConc, a text analysis and concordance program. Using the concordance function, all instances were carefully analyzed individually to ensure that they were placed before a *that*-complement and used with an author subject. As a second step the corpus was browsed for the word *that* to screen for other possible but less frequent reporting verb phrases. This meant a careful, individual qualitative analysis of all elements in the concordance line. A few additional verb phrases were identified this way. Results were normalized per 1,000 words to allow for comparison across the three sub-corpora of different sizes. Final figures were calculated as number of occurrences.

Results and discussion

Table 1 shows the number of occurrences of reporting verbs in verb controlling integral citations. Altogether 47 such verb phrases are employed in the corpus. The most frequent verbs are *claim*, *suggest*, *point out*, *state*, *mention*, and *add*. This result is partly in line with the findings of other researchers on the most frequently occurring reporting verbs (Dontscheva-Navratilova, 2012; Hyland, 2000, 2010). The variety of verb phrases, however, contradicts the conclusions of some earlier research (e.g., Parkinson, 2013) that reported on limited verb use in student academic essays. In additions, a closer look at the frequency and concordance data indicate that some reporting verbs frequently used in published academic texts are rare or completely missing from the corpus (e.g., *agree*, *maintain*, *describe*), while others, such as *claim*, *state*, *point out* and *suggest* are overrepresented. A number of verbs appear only once or twice in the entire corpus (*assert*, *illustrate*, *examine*).

Table 1. Reporting verb phrases followed by that-clause complements

acknowledge (0)	discuss (4)	note (8)
add (12)	draw the conclusion (1)	observe (3)
agree (0)	elaborate (3)	point out (22)
argue (4)	emphasize (3)	posit the idea (1)
assert (1)	establish (1)	relate (1)
assume (2)	examine (1)	remark (6)
believe (6)	explain (7)	reminds the reader (2)
claim (84)	figure (1)	report (3)
come to the conclusion (1)	highlight (10)	reveal (8)
conclude (3)	ignore (1)	say (13)
confirm (3)	illustrate (1)	show (5)
contend (4)	imply (2)	state (37)
deduce the conclusion (1)	indicate (7)	suggest (22)
demonstrate (5)	is of the opinion (1)	support the idea (1)
describe (0)	maintain(0)	is of the opinion (1)
detail (2)	mention (13)	

The analysis of the corpus by discipline reveals what could be expected. Some of the most frequent verb phrases appear in all three sub-corpora (e.g., *claim*, *suggest*, *point out*), while others are more specific to one than to the other fields. For example, verbs such as *highlight*, *contend* and *elaborate* are employed with relatively high frequency only in the literature sub-corpus. However, a close examination reveals that this is the result of a specific personal writing choice of one or two students, rather than a sign of discipline-specificity.

Interestingly, while the linguistic sub-corpus is the shortest of the three, it contains more reporting verbs than the other two which are identical in both size and the occurrences of reporting verbs. This means that in the linguistics theses 1.4 of this kind of citation appears per 1,000 words, while only 0.96 in the other two fields. The 1.4 frequency in the applied linguistics theses is close to the 1.6 found by Donscheva-Navratilova (2012) for her applied linguistics Czech theses. However, as Table 2 indicates, while the linguistics papers concentrate on a smaller number of high-frequency verbs, the other two corpora, equal in size and frequency of verb use, work with a different set of verbs and proportions. In terms of Hyland's (2000)

categorization based on the rhetoric functions of reporting verbs, those referring to discourse and cognitive acts prevail.

As a whole, it can be concluded that BA level students, even though the writing of a thesis (20 to 35 pages in length) is a great challenge for them, master the basic academic lexicon, rhetoric structures and citation practices of their discipline by the end of their studies. What the numbers reported in a corpus-based study cannot reveal, however, is whether the citation types and reporting verbs used are results of deliberate choices or are partly the indication of students' linguistic repertoire often made up of ready-made lexical chunks. Verb choices may also reflect the advice given to students to avoid lexical repetition and to employ a variety of academic words, yet, they may not be fully aware of the connotations and reasons behind one versus another lexical item.

Table 2. Reporting verbs (RV) used three or more times by sub-corpus

Linguistics sub-corpus 79,383 words 110 RVs	Literature sub-corpus 104,191 words 100 RVs	Culture sub-corpus 104,005 words 100 RVs
claim (35)	claim (32)	claim (17)
state (14)	state (13)	add (11)
suggest (11)	highlight (7)	mention (10)
point out (11)	reveal (5)	state (10)
say (8)	point out (4)	suggest (8)
note (5)	believe (4)	point out (7)
demonstrate (3)	contend (4)	remark (6)
	suggest (3)	indicate (5)
	say (3)	explain (4)
	elaborate (3)	

Conclusion and implications

This paper investigated the integral, verb controlling citation practices in three parallel sub-corpora of undergraduate EFL theses. Results partly resemble previous findings in similar corpora, but also contradict findings or assumptions reported in some earlier studies that pointed to limited lexical and structural choices of EFL student writers.

The results suggest a number of possible future directions of enquiry. Due to the small number of texts involved, the results are more indicative than conclusive in nature. However, previous studies using similar or smaller corpus sizes have also revealed valuable data that can be used both for research and instructional purposes. Future research should point to the direction of the analysis of other citation types and to students' understanding of the underlying connotations and meanings of various citation practices. As Bloch (2010) and Petrić (2007, 2012) rightly propose, the rhetoric functions of citations should receive more attention both in research and in EAP instruction. For this, however, students need cognitive readiness, language skills and advancement in their studies in order to fully benefit from writing courses. Changes made in the citations during the writing process and the reasons behind these changes should also be addressed in future research.

Despite its exploratory nature, this study offers valuable insight into and systematic data on undergraduate writing practices and concludes that the use of corpus-driven academic writing instruction or self-discovery is beneficial for both parties. Writers can analyze patterns of language use in their own texts or sections produced by their peers and also compare them with the patterns produced by more experienced writers (native or non-native). While developing materials or providing academic advice, instructors can discover patterns in their students' writing they are not aware of or may not have thought of otherwise. Results point to what other studies have also addressed (e.g., Polio & Shi, 2012), namely that the identification of disciplinary differences is especially helpful to those who teach academic writing to mixed groups or introductory courses in which students have not chosen their field of interest.

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Student Perceptions of ELF at an International Higher Education Institution

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Introduction

Over three million students have studied abroad at higher education institutions since the launch of the Erasmus programme. Every year more students join it (Erasmus Facts, 2012, p. 22) and many of them opt for English medium programmes. With this internationalization of education, many financially strained Hungarian higher education institutions adopted an open-door policy: some operate one-year pre-session English courses for future students while others have started different English medium majors, such as programmes in medicine, dentistry, or architecture. Eötvös Loránd University, for example, offers 13 and Pécs University offers 14 different bachelor programmes in English according to their websites. Moreover, a research institute has found that more than 35% of Hungarian secondary grammar school learners (N=512) would be happy to study abroad (GVI, 2013). In summary, today's secondary school learners are expected to become a mobile generation and therefore need to be prepared for using English for studying and socializing in an international context.

The expanding international market of higher education has brought about a special context in which English is not only a foreign language to learn or the language of instruction but a mediating or contact language between local and foreign students. The presence of international and multicultural students has transformed our institution, the International Business School (IBS), into an international college where English is the common language used for communication between students, teachers and other staff. It is common to hear a Norwegian having a conversation with a Ukrainian while waiting for an oral entrance interview and the language most frequently heard in the canteen is English. Some students specialize in tourism management or diplomacy perhaps to further improve their foreign language competence but a utilitarian attitude to learning English is prevalent in the whole institution, i.e. students would not like to improve their English for its own sake but for the profit margin (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998), that is, for future success. In the

Hungarian context, this instrumental orientation (Gardner, 1985) was found to substantially increase by age in Nikolov's longitudinal study (1999, pp. 44-45) and was identified to be present in learners' thinking both in 1993 and in 1999 in a large-scale repeated cross-sectional study (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2002).

In our research we wished to study the communication patterns that characterize English as a lingua franca (ELF) communication in this special context and the perceptions of students of this newly emerging language.

Theoretical background

Although the term English as an international language (EIL) was also used earlier, ELF is now the accepted terminology for the English that is "a contact language [...] among people who do not share a first language" (Jenkins, 2007, p. 1), which is a definition that does not exclude native speakers (NSs) of English, an important point Modiano stresses (2009, p. 61). There is consensus among linguists on English being "the world's preferred medium for business, science and, to some extent, even entertainment" and it being a "language of convenience" (Ostler, 2010, pp. XV-XVI) but the issue of ELF appears to be a controversial one (See ELTj/IATEFL Debate, 2007). In addition, theoretical papers on ELF research are not devoid of political overtones. Waters points out that it is political correctness that provides "the unacknowledged ideological basis for the promotion of... EIL" (2007, p. 358), while Holliday believes that "chauvinistic native-speakerism is very real" (2007, p. 360). Jenkins describes the "anti ELF sentiment" among linguists at great length (2007, pp. 37-44) and as evidence, she analyses four issues of three periodicals in English language teaching. She concludes that "the picture that emerges... is undoubtedly one in which the NS dominates" (2007, p. 58).

ELF-related research began perhaps with Kachru's definition (1985, p.13) of the "Inner", "Outer" and "Expanding" circles of communication, which reflected a NS, second-language speaker and non-native foreign language learner view of the world. However, researchers have realized that a lot of interactions cannot be described within this framework; moreover, most interactions take place between non-native speakers (NNSs) of English. Furthermore, far more interactions take place between the young than the old and some of those via innovative social platforms across time and place. "A global discourse community" has emerged (Widdowson, 2003, p. 160) and thus the teaching of English may need to be reconceptualized (Graddol, 2006; Seidlhofer, 2000). This global use of English, as Seidlhofer writes, is not "an extended replication of the native English that already exists" (2010, p. 148) as "all circles expand" (2010, p. 150) and one may add that the line between the circles is getting less and less easily definable. Seidlhofer posits that ELF users come from all

the circles defined by Kachru and in lieu of local speech communities “communities of practice” are evolving with globally diffuse interactions (2010, p. 153).

A central question in the debates about ELF is what norms and what role models learners would have to follow in learning ELF. The controversy clearly manifests itself in for example the debate between Kuo and Alptekin. Kuo believes that the emergence of ELF “does not necessarily have any implications for teaching” (2006a, p. 218) and the description of ELF “would inevitably result in a qualitatively and quantitatively reduced version of English as a native language” (Kuo, 2006a, p. 216), which, however, is a view not shared by Seidlhofer (2010) or Illés (2013), who point out that some ELF speakers may be much more eloquent and proficient than some NSs of English. Kuo also emphasises that “learners should be allowed to, if not encouraged, to follow a NS phonological and grammatical model” (2006a, p. 220). Alptekin, on the other hand, finds Kuo’s UK research context inadequate for studying attitudes to ELF and argues that “ELF is not a local language with a local culture” and “it is an international language with the world as its culture” (2006, p. 268). As regards language teaching, Alptekin claims that teaching can no longer be based on “the NS-based notion of communicative competence” (2002, p. 57) and that “discourse displaying exclusive NS interactions should be kept to a minimum” in teaching materials (2002, p. 63). Alptekin emphasises the importance of incorporating intercultural communicative competence into the new pedagogic model of ELT and he even goes as far as to say that it is “successful bilinguals” who would need to become pedagogic models instead of NSs (2002, p. 63). Kuo’s main counter-argument is that “linguistic inaccuracy should only come as an end-product and should not become a starting point” (2006b, p. 269). Jenkins summarises her view by saying NSs “do not represent a linguistic reference point” any more (2007, p. 3), which is in line with other scholars’ opinion (Illés, 2013; Seidlhofer, 2010).

Ownership of English is another often debated area in the literature (Widdowson, 1994). English is regarded as the language of NSs: it is “our language” says the Prince of Wales (cited in Widdowson, 2003, p. 157). On the other hand, English has also started to detach itself from the native community. Therefore, the question arises: who owns “this malevolent growth that destroys linguistic diversity” (Widdowson, p. 161), i.e., ELF? Jenkins argues that English belongs “to no one and everyone” (2007, p. 4) but empirical studies have shown that learners do not feel they own the language (Li, 2009, p. 102).

Theoretical ELF research has established that for ELF users ‘getting the message across’ is of great importance. This is referred to as the “co-construction of mutual understanding” by Seidlhofer (2010, p. 158) and “figuring out meaning and behavioural schemata” while interacting by Illés (2013, p. 11). Swiss teachers’ attitudes to English as “the lingua franca of Europe” were examined with the help of Likert-type questions and error-evaluation by Murray (2003, p.150). The analysis of the responses of 253 teachers of English yielded interesting results concerning differences

between native and non-native teachers. To cite some of the findings, NS teachers were found to more strongly agree than non-natives that NNS English should be respected (pp. 154-155). More natives than non-natives tolerated learners' mistakes and their desire to communicate instead of working on their typical mistakes (p. 156). Also, more natives agreed than non-natives with the suggestion that samples from non-natives should be included in textbooks (p. 156). The author concludes that Swiss teachers accept Euro-English but are reluctant to accept it as classroom target.

Empirical ELF research in Hungary includes qualitative and quantitative studies. With the help of interviews and observation, Kalocsai examined the reasons why Erasmus students' self-confidence in English grew at the University of Szeged. She found that repair strategies and cooperative meaning construction greatly enhanced students' confidence and performance but they strongly rejected "unrequested 'help' geared toward NS norms" (2009, p. 113). Kontráné Hegybíró and Csizér (2011) surveyed higher education students' dispositions towards ELF in four institutions in Hungary (N=239). Their questionnaire study identified an 'ELF-way of thinking' in their sample. For instance, respondents were aware that the language of publications and conferences in their field would be English (p. 16) and most agreed with the statement that "The world is not learning English to communicate with the British or Americans" (response average on a scale of 1-5 was 3.84, p. 17). Respondents did not, however, consider it important to sound like a native (average was 2.41, p. 18) or to develop idiomatic English competence (3.09, p. 18). The authors found that NS norms are especially respected as regards written discourse and a native-like accent is preferred to a local one.

The research context

IBS may be considered an ideal community for researching the environment in which English is used as the language of instruction and communication among students, faculty and other staff for a number of reasons. Firstly, although the majority of IBS faculty consist of native Hungarians, they use English as the medium of teaching and communicating with their Hungarian and foreign students and colleagues since IBS is an institution accredited by a UK university. Another reason is that IBS's student cohort, over 50% of whom come from more than 60 different countries, uses the English language in and outside the class to communicate with their teachers and with each other. An additional feature of the IBS context is that many of the students have "cosmopolitan" or "blurred identities" (Holliday, 2009, p. 28) either because they come from families of mixed parentage, or because they have lived or have been schooled in many different countries. In a lot of cases they are multilingual and their intercultural competence is also rather high. On the other

hand, there are students who have never spent longer periods of time abroad and who have to cope with a challenging cultural and academic environment for the first time in their lives when they start studying at the school. This multicultural and multilingual environment provides students with a globalised context, which simulates real life communication and therefore can prepare them to successfully function and work in the real world. Due to the special traits of this community, IBS can be seen as an ‘incubator’, which prepares future businesspeople for the challenges of a global workplace.

Methods

The quantitative tool and participants

The quantitative investigations were conducted with the help of a 34-item self-report questionnaire administered to 148 students in April 2012. The sample included 115 first-year and 26 second-year students. The remaining students were either third or fourth year students or did not disclose this information. The tool was piloted two years earlier with a similar cohort. It included 33 Likert-type and one multiple choice statement compiled on the basis of the literature and the researchers’ and colleagues’ experience. Six statements specifically aimed at eliciting feedback on modules taught and on the support given by the English Language Department, but the majority of the questions touched upon the use of English and mother tongues, aspects of the international environment, content and language learning, cultural differences in learning and communication patterns. One statement about code-switching for example was No. 19: *“I often insert English words into my mother tongue when talking in IBS.”* One statement on communication patterns was No. 20: *“Better speakers of English often help others to get the message across.”* Statement No. 13 inquired about the students’ level of agreement with the beneficial effects of the international environment: *“Studying with international students has contributed greatly to my development in English.”* Some questions about the efforts and success of students were included to be able to identify motivated language learning behaviour and self-reported success and thereby examine sub-group differences. Two such statements were for example: *“I always do my English language related homework”* and *“I am satisfied with the progress I have made in English since September.”* Each area was addressed with a set of questions (three to six), thus multi-item scales were computed as regards code-switching, students’ acceptance of diversity and the effect of the international milieu, content and language integrated learning, self-reported success and motivation. Analyses were carried out with the help of Excel and SPSS. Proportions of student responses concerning level of agreement, correlations between scales were exam-

ined and t-tests were conducted in order to identify salient characteristics of the sample.

The qualitative tool and participants

Utilising semi-structured interview techniques, a total of seven students in their first or second years of study with different national, cultural and linguistic backgrounds were interviewed in March 2013. The students were selected with a purposive sampling method to ensure that a good mix of the IBS student population is represented. Three of the interviewees were native Hungarians to represent the gradually shrinking number of Hungarian students at IBS, whereas the other four were foreign students (a Turk, a Norwegian, a Moldovan, and a Chinese) to represent the growing number of our international cohort.

The respondents, four male and three female, belong to two major age groups: five are in their late teens and early twenties, whereas two students are more mature, in their mid- and late twenties. Regarding their cultural background, three of them could be tagged having “blurred identities” (Holliday, 2009, p. 28): Dave has been educated in Hungary since leaving his primary school in China; Greg has Hungarian-Russian parents, who live and work in Germany, and Lisa has had work experience abroad and now commutes to IBS from France where she lives with her French spouse with whom she communicates in English. The interviewees were given pseudonyms to ensure their anonymity and they represented all the levels to which English language modules are taught at IBS (8, 6, 4 hours/week), including one very advanced student who had exemption from studying English. More details of the interviewees are shown in Table 1.

The 26 interview questions were formulated based on the relevant literature and the quantitative results and were designed around five issues: the language use of students and lecturers, the environment English is used in, students’ preferences, code switching and learning. The questions were finalized following peer review provided by two colleagues at the department.

Table 1. The interview sample included students of different nationalities and language competence

Name	Year	Nationality	In-house placement test score (Max. 70)	English contact hours
Lisa	1	Hungarian	61	Exempt
Harry	1	Norwegian	29	8 hours
Dave	2	Chinese	46	4 hours
Fiona	1	Hungarian	28	6 hours
Phil	2	Turkish	28	8 hours
Judy	1	Moldovan	49	4 hours
Greg	1	Hungarian	29	8 hours

The in-depth interviews used open-ended questions and a number of examples of ELF: a list of seven written sentences taken from the literature (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Seidlhofer, 2000) and collected by the researchers and a three-minute excerpt (Audio sample PBqas411) of a business meeting among a British, a Finnish, an Austrian and a German speaker to illustrate written and spoken examples (VOICE, 2013).

Each interview, which took on average an hour to complete, was digitally recorded, then reduced to a protocol and relevant sections were selected and transcribed. The questions were available both in English and in Hungarian. The interviews were conducted in English with the international students and in Hungarian with the Hungarian students as the interviewers were native Hungarians. Surprisingly, Lisa, one of the Hungarian students opted for doing the interview in English as she felt confident enough to answer the questions in English. Likewise, the interviewer felt interviewing her in English would not result in loss of data as she was exempt from studying English language modules due to her good command of English.

Both researchers listened to the recordings and identified common emerging themes. The interviews provided ample data on the communication patterns, the individual perceptions, the expectations and the norm concepts of different level learners. In what follows, qualitative and quantitative findings are grouped around the emerging themes that the co-coded protocols revealed. The original Hungarian excerpts were translated into English by the researchers.

Major findings

Code-switching was examined through responses elicited to statements 16, 19, 30 and 33. To illustrate the kind of statements that provided the data for the scale on code-switching, first details about responses to Statement 30 are presented as an example.

I often switch from my mother tongue to English and the other way round.

Approximately the same number of students indicated that they partly agreed with the statement as the ones who agreed: 35%. Only three per cent chose the 'Strongly disagree' option, 15% the 'disagree', and 13% the 'strongly agree' option. The average of the statement evaluations was 3.53 on a five-point scale, which indicates that the majority tend to agree. The correlation between the self-reported success scale computed as the average of the responses to four statements and the scale on code-switching indicates that students who often switch from one code to the other tend to be more successful learners in their own views ($r=0.49$; $p<.01$). The success scale allowed the examination of the attitudes of two distinct groups: those of highly successful students ($n=67$) and those of lower achievers ($n=63$). According to the data, successful learners tend to both do and notice code-switching more frequently than less successful ones. The mean difference between the two groups was .58, which proved to be a statistically significant difference ($M_{hisuc}=3.91$, $M_{losuc}=3.33$, $t_{(128)}=-5.051$, $p<.01$). The following interview excerpts reveal some of the reasons for using the mother tongue and the thinking behind code-switching.

When there is no other language sp ... (restarts) for example Kazakh or German who doesn't understand Hungarian, we switch to Hungarian so when the opportunity arise, then we use it [Hungarian]

But we never, and I observed this that most have this basic level of ... (hesitation) they have this ... (restarts) so we shouldn't use it [Hungarian] when the other is excluded so everybody is switching to English when they see that one of them is not listening ... (restarts) we use it [Hungarian] when the other language speakers are not around. (Lisa)

Another example of code-switching presented by Fiona illustrates how mixing languages and summarizing may bridge the information gap among speakers of different nationality.

Yes, yes, it often happens that if, for example, in the breaks [...] we talk to each other in Hungarian, ... (hesitation) and when a foreign student joins us, we tell him in English what we've been talking about, and then

we continue in Hungarian, and then he either joins in in English, or asks what is being talked about, ... (pause) or we say it again in English, or we talk a bit about it in English, but then we continue in Hungarian again. It's easier in this way. (Fiona)

Statement 15 aimed to explore the extent to which English is used as a language of convenience:

I communicate mostly in English with the students who are from another country.

When the responses of sub-groups are examined more motivated learners appear to communicate more in English than those who display signs of not being motivated. The difference between the means of language learners with high motivation and low motivation was .53, a statistically significant difference ($M_{\text{himotiv}}=4.53$, $M_{\text{lomotiv}}=4.0$, $t_{(141)}=-3.310$, $p=.03$).

Likewise, learners who believe themselves to be successful communicate more in English than less successful students. The difference between their means was .41, a statistically significant figure ($M_{\text{hisuc}}=4.49$, $M_{\text{losuc}}=4.08$, $t_{(126)}=-2.385$, $p<.05$). Lisa's insistence on conducting the interview in English perfectly exemplifies this phenomenon. This is further highlighted by Fiona, who believes that fluency is one of the behavioural characteristics of a successful speaker rather than worrying about mistakes.

and also that their English knowledge is kind of more solid, they can respond right away, so they don't feel uneasy about what the others, us, think if they make a mistake. (Fiona)

Even though they tolerate mistakes, there is a need to improve their language competence and a desire to sound more professional. Harry expressed this idea the following way: "I'd like to sound more like a NS, [...] sound like I'm coming from England or America, not as a guy from abroad."

As regards students' preferences it became evident in both the survey and the interviews that students tend to value communication with students with higher language competence more than communication with the others. In the survey, students were allowed to choose more than one option but the majority chose higher level students. As Figure 1 shows, 65% said they preferred to talk to students with a higher command of English; 62% said they preferred to communicate with students whose English level was approximately the same as theirs and only 17% would be contented with communicating with students with lower level English than their own. Moreover, the results were very similar in the pilot study conducted in 2010.

Learners who consider themselves successful prefer to communicate with peer students who have a higher command of English than they do. The difference is not very large (.22) but significant ($M_{\text{hisuc}}=0.78$, $M_{\text{losuc}}=0.56$, $t_{(122)}=-2,739$, $p<0.01$) between the subgroups of students who consider themselves successful and unsuccessful.

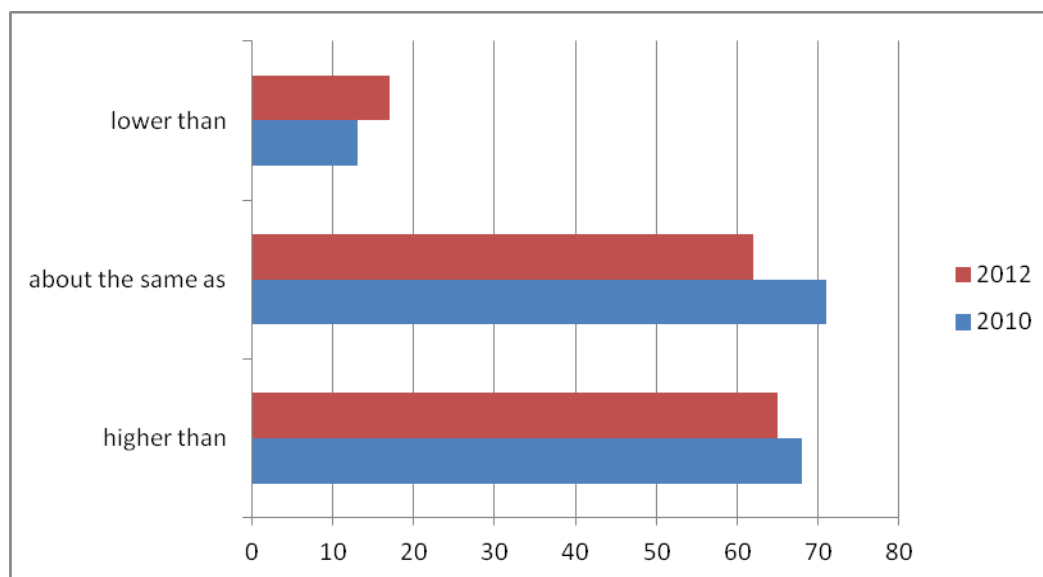


Figure 1. More students choose to communicate with students whose English competence is higher than theirs

Let us illustrate this finding by quoting two of the interviewees:

When I was that age I wouldn't have thought that this happens ... (hesitation) that people really pick up who is the good speaker among themselves. And they even gravitate towards to spend time with them and I know of a student who explicitly told and I would never have imagined ... (hesitation) that tells 'I'll go to play billiard with that girl' and 'for what reason?' I was just asking that because it's a friend of mine and 'for the reason that I would like to better my English' and she is a German origin lady. (Lisa)

If you are for example ... (hesitation) the homework, assignments, I am checking the ... (pause) who can speak fluently, and who is listening, so I don't wanna waste my time to explain what was it, what is this, what I am asking ... (hesitation) So, always I am choosing who can speak fluently and it will make my job easier. (Phil)

The questionnaire also aimed to explore students' views about the international environment with three statements. One of these is the following:

The fact that there are students whose mother tongue is different from mine motivates me to improve my English.

About a third (30%) of the students endorsed this idea, while only 13% disagreed, which clearly shows the beneficial effects of the international milieu.

An interesting finding about the international environment that the data revealed is that more motivated learners appear to benefit more from the international environment. With the help of the motivation scale, a group of highly motivated students ($n=77$) and a group of not very much motivated students were established. There was a significant difference of .31 between the relevant indices ($M_{\text{himotiv}}=3.8$, $M_{\text{lomotiv}}=3.51$, $t_{(142)}=2.176$, $p=.03$). Here is how two of the interviewees worded this finding:

However, if someone would like to acquire the language [English], then the person will look for opportunities to communicate, just like in my case, I look for opportunities to communicate with both older students, and those ones who speak better English. (Greg)

If anyone comes up to me, I'll communicate with them. It's only that it's simpler to understand certain people and to make myself understood with certain people, whereas with some others I feel a bit uneasy... (pause) if I really understand what they mean. Or if the person might speak English better than I do, or might have a wider range of vocabulary, that motivates ME to express my ideas well. (Fiona)

Comparisons of higher and lower English language competence students showed that higher level students tend to have a heightened awareness of cultural differences. Students who were exempt from English due to their high competence evaluated Statement 4, for example, differently from lower competence students:

Learning is the same everywhere in the world.

Students who are more competent in the English language (exempt from English classes) gave this statement a 1.082 lower rating than less competent students (students with 8 English hours ($p=.027$)). In a similar vein, students who are more competent in the English language (with 4 English hours) gave this statement a rating .938 lower than did less competent students (students with 8 English hours) ($p=.018$). These results, however, need to be examined with some caution since the grouping is the result of a rather complex procedure, and students in some cases were unable to recall which group they belonged to. Categorization therefore was not clear on the anonymous questionnaires.

Conclusion

In summary, the research evidenced that students studying in an international milieu are aware of their own and their peers' communication strategies in ELF, the most salient of which seems to be gravitating towards better speakers. Not only do they notice these strategies, but they also develop those perceived to be beneficial as regards their own English language development. As Greg put it, an international environment "is beneficial for everyone, even for those, although it may sound funny, who don't find it beneficial". The findings of the study also underlined the importance of teaching communication strategies, such as summarizing, simplifying, paraphrasing, clarifying, adjusting pace and giving explanations. In terms of code-switching, the findings confirmed the view that the presence of the mother tongue does not prevent English language development but is a natural concomitant of it. The study also supplied evidence for the rapid development of English in an atmosphere that tolerates mistakes. The findings reinforce earlier research by identifying learners' views that comprehensibility and fluency are key issues in communicating in ELF but the English as a native language norm is a motivating factor even in an international environment.

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Lexico-Grammatical Features in Croatian ELF

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Introduction

At this time and age, English is a “common language on a global scale” (Seidlhofer, 2012, p. 393) as, according to Crystal and Potter (2013), one-third of the world’s population today use English. Among these users, there has been a predominance of second or foreign over native English language speakers (Crystal, 2004). This means that a “vast majority of verbal exchanges in English do not involve any native speakers of the language at all” (Seidlhofer, 2005a, p. 339). Consequently, elements from other languages have influenced English yielding the development of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) as a variety different from the standard English varieties. This paper draws on Seidlhofer’s definition of ELF as the English language used “among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option” (2011, p. 7). ELF users of various first language (L1) backgrounds influence the ELFs they produce differently because they incorporate features of their L1s into their ELFs. These differences are most obvious at the phonetic and phonological levels of linguistic analyses of various ELFs. The description of the ELF lexico-grammatical features, based on a spoken corpus, covers ELF users of various backgrounds (Seidlhofer, 2004, 2005b). The frequency of usage of each category of ELF lexico-grammatical features depends on the transfer from the users’ L1s and may therefore differ depending on the speakers’ L1 backgrounds.

Thus, the aim of this preliminary study was to propose a scale of categories of lexico-grammatical features as used by a group of Croatian speakers of ELF (Croglish), rating them from the most used category to the least frequently used one, in order to propose a description of this group of ELF users in terms of their lexico-grammar. Phonological and phonetic description of Croglish has been provided (Josić-Smojver, 2010) whereas a lexico-grammatical analysis, to our knowledge, is still missing. The more general purpose of this study is to provide an incentive for the description and comparison between other ELF varieties, in terms of the scales of usage of lexico-grammatical features, as proposed by Seidlhofer (2004, 2005b).

Seidlhofer (2001, p. 144) proposes that ‘overuse’ or ‘underuse’ of specific expressions in learner language “could also be regarded as a feature characterizing successful ELF use” and the ‘deviations’ from the norm “could be investigated to establish whether they can serve as pointers, or sensitizing devices, in the process of trying to profile ELF as a viable variety”. Deviations from the native-like norm (henceforth referred to as *deviations*) are used in this text to signify all language forms that are not in accordance with one of the standardized varieties of English. The term native-like form/item will be used to refer to elements of any variety of the English language that is considered standard. The standard varieties of English which Croatian speakers mostly encounter and use are the more common American and the less common British English varieties. Jenkins (2009, p. 201) suggests that ELF, similarly to English as a native language, involves a good deal of local variation. As certain features may not be universal across the globe, but greatly depend on the users’ L1, it is proposed that speakers’ various mother tongues influence the shape of the ELF variety they use. This proposal is in accordance with L1 positive and/or negative transfer which postulates that learners’ mother tongue is a “highly significant system on which learners will rely to predict the target-language system” (Brown, 2002, p. 13). Differentiating ELF varieties according to certain features influenced by the speakers’ L1 backgrounds, while retaining the core features needed for intelligible communication (Jenkins, 2000), is a point of interest, particularly in phonology (see Josipović Smojver, 2010 for a description of Croglish, a Croatian based ELF). Establishing what the preference of the speakers of various ELF is for the usage of the established common ELF lexico-grammatical features might help define separate ELF varieties in terms of this level of linguistic analysis.

ELF research has so far focused on a range of linguistic levels, especially lexis, lexico-grammar, pronunciation and pragmatics (Jenkins, Cogo & Dewey, 2011). Although ELF studies focusing on lexico-grammatical features were scarce at the beginning, when compared to the studies dealing with phonology and pragmatics, they have now “developed into a particularly vibrant area of empirical work” (Jenkins et al., 2011, p. 291). However, these studies have mainly relied on spoken language data (e.g., third-person -s (Breiteneder, 2005; Wacker, 2011), the ‘extended’ use of the progressive aspect (Ranta, 2006), question tags (Hülmbauer, 2007)). The focus in ELF studies so far has been on spoken language for it is characterized by immediate interaction which facilitates mutual intelligibility and at the same time, due to the nature of such interaction, spoken language is more prone to change and deviations from the standard. However, according to Jenkins, Cogo and Dewey (2011) there has recently been a visible interest in exploring written ELF. Seidlhofer (2003) also recognizes the international character of English in written form, particularly with the increasing use of English for a variety of specific and/or academic pur-

poses. Written language tends to rely more on the established norms of the language. Therefore deviations from the norm may not be as pronounced as in the spoken interaction. Seidlhofer (2004, p. 223), however, maintains that with an increase in the use of written modes by non-native users, they may also “take on the kind of distinctive features that are evident in spoken ELF”. Moreover, establishing the categories of features commonly used in writing in separate ELF varieties is necessary to round up the description of these varieties, involving their written as well as spoken forms.

The present research draws on Seidlhofer’s (2004, 2005a) categories of recurring lexico-grammatical features of spoken language deemed ungrammatical in standard English, yet generally not causing misunderstanding nor impeding communication. The items italicized below represent a selection of examples of ELF lexical features per category. Some examples were adapted from Seidlhofer (2004, p. 220; 2005a, p. 92), whereas some were designed by the authors of the present study. The nine categories of ELF lexico-grammatical features are:

- omission of the third-person singular present tense –s morpheme (Mary *know*, she *give* him);
 - interchangeable use of *who* and *which* as relative pronouns (London *who*, neighbour *which*);
 - omitting definite and indefinite articles where they are required or inserting them where they normally do not occur in the Standard English (in *the* Europe, there will be lot of people);
 - pluralizing uncountable nouns (*advices*, *evidences*);
 - using the singular demonstrative *this* + plural nouns (*this* days, *this* events);
 - overusing some ‘general’ verbs, i.e. using them in collocations which are non-existent in Standard English, especially *make*, *do*, *have*, *put*, *take* (*make* a discussion, *do* singing);
 - replacement of standard *question tags* with a simplified form (*isn’t it?*, or *no?*);
 - inserting redundant prepositions (return *to* home) or nouns (how long *time*) to supposedly increase clarity/regularity;
 - using *that-clauses* instead of the standard *to-infinitive* constructions (she can’t wait *that she enters*, she wanted *that her sister Jane help her*).
- (Seidlhofer, 2004, p. 220, 2005a, p. 92)

Although these categories of ELF features have been outlined on the basis of spoken language data, they will be used in the present research to investigate written ELF usage of Croatian L1 speakers, as no similar list of features known to the authors has been proposed for written ELF.

The focus of our research was written ELF usage of Croatian undergraduate students. The aim was to identify the occurrences of Seidlhofer’s (2004, 2005b) nine

categories of lexico-grammatical features characteristic of ELF in Croatian ELF users' translations of a Croatian text into English. In addition to the first aim, the study proposes a scale of usage of ELF lexico-grammatical features identified in written texts, ranging from the ones more frequently used incorrectly by Croatian learners to the more peripheral ones, the ones used correctly by Croatian learners. Moreover, we expected that the usage of lexico-grammatical features would often be influenced by the users' L1 (Croatian). Thus, a description of the written Croatian ELF variety is attempted, if only on the basis of this small-scale study.

The study

Sample

A convenience sample of 106 second- and third-year university students participated in the study. The students were enrolled in two study programmes at the Faculty of Teacher Education of the University of Zagreb: future Generalist teachers (N=58) and future Preschool Education teachers (N=48). At the time of the research all the participants attended a two-semester English course (the only obligatory course in English during their studies) and none were linguistically oriented in their studies. Self-assessment of their knowledge of English yielded a mean grade of 3.15 on a 1 to 5 scale. Based on the participants' self-report, all were Croatian L1 speakers who had learned English as a foreign language. The majority (65.7%) started learning English between the ages of 9 and 13, although some had started as early as 3 and some not before 15.

When asked about their use of English, the majority (80.3%) reported using it between 1 and 10 hours per week. The participants also reported using English mostly with speakers whose mother tongue is neither English nor Croatian (53%) and 26% reported using it with speakers whose mother tongue is Croatian (mainly in class with peers and professors). Hence, considering their exposure to and use of English in addition to the fact that the majority of ELF users are non-native speakers of English who use this language to communicate with other non-native speakers of English (Seidlhofer, 2005b), it may be safe to say that this group of young English language learners are indeed ELF users. This runs in accordance with the authors' previous research on Croatian ELF users (Cergol Kovačević & Mikulec, 2013).

Data collection instrument and procedure

The instrument used in this research was an anonymous questionnaire consisting of two parts. The first part was designed to elicit background information about the participants, such as their English learning history, and general exposure to and use of English. The second part was a text in Croatian which the participants were required to translate into English. The Croatian text was designed so as to comprise occasions which in the translation into English were expected to yield the target ELF lexico-grammatical features. In other words, care was taken that the expected ELF solutions be induced in the design of the Croatian text. We assumed that the participants would use ELF reflecting Seidlehofer's lexico-grammatical categories in their translations into English. The expected examples of the lexico-grammatical categories are in Table 1.

Table 1. List of ELF categories and examples

Category	examples in ELF
1 this + plural	<i>this days, this charity events</i>
2 wrong plural	<i>informations, knowledges, advices, evidences</i>
3 question tags	<i>,no?; ,isn't it?</i>
4 articles (the context dictated the particular usage of articles, e.g., the friend was happy – this friend has already been mentioned in the text)	<p>-the instead of Ø: <i>the London, the Europe, the America, the next door</i></p> <p>-Ø instead of the: <i>Ø capital of the UK, Ø history of, Ø most important things about Ø European Union</i></p> <p>-Ø instead of a: <i>Ø charity concert, help Ø little girl, Ø lot of people, half Ø hour</i></p> <p>-a instead of the: <i>on a way to a concert, a friend was happy, a people</i></p>
5 general verbs	<i>do singing, make sports, take a complicated operation, make a discussion</i>
6 3 rd person singular	<i>Mary live, she have to study, Mary have to wait, her neighbour which live next door, little girl who have to take a complicated operation, Mary like, he do not always agree, Mary know, if she give him</i>
7 that instead of to infinitive	<i>that her sister Jane help, her neighbour (...) asked her that she help him, can't wait that she enter, a friend was very happy that he see her</i>
8 increasing clarity/regularity	<i>return to home, black colour dress, enter in the concert hall, how long time</i>
9 who/which	<i>the London who is capital of the UK, her neighbour, which live the next door, help little girl which have to take a complicated operation, Mary is wearing her red colour dress who is her favourite</i>

Translation was used because (1) while translating, speakers use the skills of language production we were particularly interested in; (2) we wanted to maintain control over the occurrence of the target categories which would not have been the case if free writing had been used. In the analysis of the translations into English only those parts of the text were focused on in which the target ELF features were expected to occur.

Findings and discussion

Figure 1 presents the percentage of deviations in each ELF category in all the participants' translations. The most problematic category was the *this + plural* one (57% of deviations) which was mainly used incorrectly and in a number of instances, especially in the phrase where **this charity events* was expected, *this* was simply dropped altogether. Further two categories which appear to have been problematic for the participants were *wrong plural* and *question tags*. The fairly high number of deviations in the first category, *wrong plural* (48.36% of deviations), may be explained as negative transfer from L1, since all examples for *wrong plural* used in the study do have plural forms in Croatian language. The second category on the scale was the incorrect use of *question tags* (47.66% deviations). It may be related to the fact that this category is a more common feature of spoken rather than written language. Therefore, its use in written form may have been perceived as unnatural by the participants, especially since in a number of instances it was observed that question tags were not translated into English, but were simply left out by the participants. The next category, *articles* (39.25% of deviations), was expected to be the most problematic, as this grammatical category is non-existent in the Croatian language, and our EFL learners tend to find it difficult to master. However, it was ranked fourth on the scale.

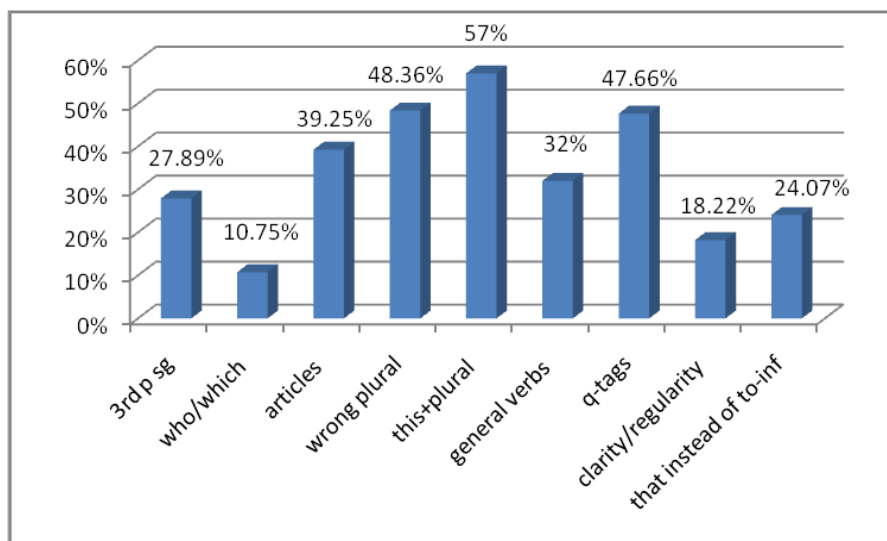


Figure 1. Percentage of deviations from the native-like norm in each category

General verbs category was ranked after *articles*; the possible explanation for this may be obtained in the theory of negative transfer from L1, since, e.g. *have a complicated operation*, if translated literally from Croatian, would be **go on a complicated operation* and this was the translation most frequently written. The category *3rd person singular*

–s was expected to be in the lower section of the frequency scale, since the Croatian language is highly inflected in its form and its speakers are not unfamiliar with the concept of inflectional morphemes. Therefore, it was presumed that Croatian L1 speakers would not find this category to be problematic. In addition, this is one of the first grammatical categories introduced in EFL courses in grade 2 of primary school (HNOS, 2006), and its correct use in EFL classrooms is particularly insisted upon by language teachers.

The category *that instead of to infinitive* is yet another example of negative transfer from L1. That is, **that her sister Jane help her, her neighbour (...) asked her *that she help him, can't wait *that she enter* are all literal translations of Croatian phrases. On the other hand, for the category *increasing clarity/regularity* the studied group of Croatian ELF users rarely used the deviations such as **red colour dress* instead of *red dress* and none of the participants produced the common ELF deviation **how long time* instead of *how long*. One may safely conclude that this is due to L1 – L2 positive transfer, as the Croatian versions of the examples translate literally into *red dress* and *how long*. However, another example in the same category **enter in the concert hall* was affected by the L1 – L2 negative transfer, as the verb *enter* requires a preposition in Croatian, unlike in English where it does not collocate with a preposition in this context.

The least represented and least problematic category was the interchangeable use of the relative pronouns *who* and *which*. This finding was somewhat unexpected because there is a crucial difference between the English and Croatian languages in terms of the usage of relative pronouns. Whereas in English the relative pronoun *who* is used only to refer to persons and the relative pronoun *which* to everything else, in Croatian the usage of the relative pronouns *who* and *which* depends on the grammatical gender of the noun, and not on whether they refer to persons. Thus, L1 negative transfer frequently causes confusion in the use of the two relative pronouns by Croatian L1 users of English. Therefore, we expected L1– L2 negative transfer for this category. A possible explanation why this transfer did not result in a higher percentage of deviations in this particular category may be that this deviation is more common in spoken than written language use. However, for a more conclusive inference concerning this category, additional testing would probably be required.

On the basis of the results, a scale of ELF features used by Croatian ELF speakers was proposed. Table 2 presents the final scale of the lexico-grammatical ELF features as they were used by Croatian ELF users, from the most represented ELF category to the least represented ones. The results of both groups of participants are included.

Table 2. *Lexico-grammatical ELF features in nine categories*

	category	% of deviations from native-like norm
1	this + plural	57
2	wrong plural	48.36
3	question tags	47.66
4	articles	39.25
5	general verbs	32
6	3 rd person singular	27.89
7	that instead of to infinitive	24.07
8	increasing clarity/regularity	18.22
9	who/which	10.75

However, certain limitations of this preliminary study need to be stated. The nine categories of ELF used in the study were originally defined by Seidlhofer (2004, 2005a) on the basis of spoken interaction, while in the present research they were applied in the analysis of the users' written language production. In addition, the use of translation as the only research method may deem the results somewhat inconclusive and this may also be the reason why most of the results indicated either a positive or negative transfer from learners' L1. In order for the findings to be further verified, a collection of learners' guided as well as free writings might yield a more detailed insight into the actual use of the target deviations but may also provide an insight into a broader list of deviations. Finally, in order to define a comprehensive scale of the usage of ELF features among Croatian ELF users, a more heterogeneous sample of participants should be considered, involving English language users from a variety of age groups (possibly university students enrolled in different study programmes and working people using the English language in their day-to-day interactions at international companies).

Conclusion

A lexico-grammatical analysis of the written Croatian ELF variety was provided in this paper. Based on the results, it may be suggested that, despite the fact that Seidlhofer's categories of lexico-grammatical ELF features are based on the most commonly used deviations from the norm, the usage scales will not be the same in every language. Rather than being universal, they may depend on the users' mother tongue; that is, positive and negative L1 transfer, which have been found to significantly impact the deviations from the norm in the participants' written production.

However, this has to be confirmed by more extensive research. Moreover, other lexico-grammatical features of ELF which would be typical of Croatian and possibly other Slavic languages should be uncovered. On the basis of such findings, Croatian/Slavic ELF categories could be formed. Such scales of usage of lexico-grammatical feature categories could be drawn for each group of ELF speakers who share a common mother tongue or one of the mother tongues belonging to the same language family.

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A Comparative Study of Foreign Language Anxiety Among Students Majoring in French, Italian and Spanish

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Introduction

The role of individual differences in second language acquisition (SLA) has been the subject of a number of studies conducted during the second half of the 20th century. Among many models of SLA, it is important to mention Gardner's Socio-educational model (Gardner, 1985) which draws attention to the language acquisition context and emphasizes the role of affective variables of individuals: motivation, attitudes and anxiety. Since many negative correlations were found between motivation and anxiety and the relationship seems to be bi-directional, they are considered to be the cause and result of each other (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2004). This important psychological phenomenon was rather well-documented and described by two widely accepted conceptualizations: foreign language (FL) anxiety as specific anxiety reactions, and a more classroom language performance-oriented model including communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation (Horwitz, 1986). In fact, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986, p. 128) define language anxiety as a "distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process."

This phenomenon is generally expected to have a negative effect on language learning because the feelings of tension, unease and discomfort arising from stressful classroom experiences influence learners' self-confidence, lower their motivation and slow down their information-processing abilities (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). Thus, over the years anxiety has been investigated by comparison to a number of other individual variables, gender (Cambell & Shaw, 1994; Ezzi, 2012; Mahmood & Iqbal, 2010;), intelligence (Verma & Nijhawan, 1976), FL proficiency (Chen, 2001), aptitude (Ganschow, Sparks, Anderson, Javorsky, & Patton, 1994), language exposure (Pierchurska-Kuciel, 2008), personality traits (Brown, Robson & Rosenkjar,

2001) and also classroom environment (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002; Piniel, 2006; Young, 1994; Tóth, 2008).

In the Croatian context of FL teaching, especially important contributions were published by Mihaljević Djigunović (2002, 2008) who investigated many possible sources of FL anxiety and variables contributing to it such as self-perception, language use inside and outside of classroom, language characteristics, fear of making mistakes and being evaluated, monolingualism, bilingualism, willingness to communicate and the teacher. Her research results point to the fear of using the language in classroom situations and to the evaluation as the most common and strongest sources of FL anxiety, especially with young learners and teenagers (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002). Other studies found fear of making mistakes in the classroom and being corrected by the teacher to induce anxiety also in university students (Kostić-Bobanović, 2009; Mihaljević Djigunović, 2008; Tóth, 2008).

Furthermore, although it is generally presumed that levels of FL anxiety will decrease with higher levels of proficiency, the results of other studies (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2004; Tóth, 2008) showed that high achievers in English have higher expectations and are more critical of their performance.

A more recent study (Puškar, 2010) confirmed those findings in a population of university students of English and German who had chosen the study of those languages as a career choice. Although both groups had medium level of FL anxiety, German majors reported higher levels than English majors due to different teaching traditions and a status of English as a lingua franca, so Puškar concluded that German was perceived as a “real” foreign language. The sources of anxiety for both groups were exams, fear of making mistakes and being corrected in the lessons as well as attitudes towards their language teachers. Further variables contributing to higher FL anxiety were gender, place of residence, lack of motivation, low proficiency levels, length of language exposure and learning experience. Puškar’s findings (2010) are similar to those obtained by Piniel (2006) for high school students learning both French and English simultaneously; however, they contrast findings of Rodriguez and Abreu (2003) with student teachers of English and French at Venezuela’s universities, who found no significant differences between the two language groups. Therefore, there is a need for further investigation, especially of learners who study two languages simultaneously.

Although university students participated in a number of studies on FL anxiety (Ezzi, 2012; Ganschow et al., 1994; Mahmood & Iqbal, 2010; Mihaljević Djigunović, 2004) few future language professionals were involved. Also the choice of a language seems to be prevalently English, nowadays considered a “global” language. So, further investigation is needed in order to clarify the influence of variables connected to FL anxiety for learners of other FLs.

Aim

The aim of the present study is to examine the level of FL anxiety of undergraduate and graduate students majoring in “less frequently learnt” FLs (Italian, French and Spanish). These languages are considered to be “minor” due to the low number of students studying them at Croatian universities. For example, at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb, the average number of students majoring in Italian, French and Spanish is 30-60 per year, while the number of English and German majors is 200 and 100, respectively. This population is especially interesting because they are professionally oriented individuals who are experienced FL users, and it is reasonable to assume that they are intrinsically motivated. Although, it should be pointed out that the FLs in this study are not compulsory high school subjects and many students start learning them in private schools. Also, it should be mentioned that these language majors (Italian, French and Spanish) require only A1/A2 level at the admission exam while the English department of the same faculty requires B2 level and the German department requires B1 level. Since the students in our sample major in “minor” languages, they have limited exposure to them outside the university lessons, which could be considered another factor contributing to their level of FL anxiety.

Based on the results of a previous study conducted with the university students of the same faculty (Puškar, 2010), the following hypotheses were put forth:

1. Students majoring in minor languages will experience a high level of FL anxiety.
2. Undergraduates will experience higher levels of foreign language anxiety than graduates.
3. There will be significant differences in levels of FL anxiety among Italian, French and Spanish language groups.
4. Residents of bigger cities will have a lower level of FL anxiety.
5. Students with a high level of self-reported proficiency in English will have a lower level of FL anxiety in other languages.
6. Students intending to learn other FLs have lower levels of FL anxiety.
7. Students with a decreased level of motivation will have a higher level of FL anxiety.
8. Students with negative experiences regarding language teachers have a higher level of FL anxiety.
9. There is a positive correlation between higher levels of motivation and positive experiences with language teachers.

Methodology

Participants

The sample consisted of 125 students (75 undergraduate students in their final year and 50 graduate students in their final year) of the University of Zagreb, majoring in FLs at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. The students were all between the ages of 21 and 29, with a mean age of 22.

Table 1. Participants (N= 125)

	Italian	French	Spanish
Undergraduates	25	25	25
Graduates	34	9	7
Total	79	34	32

Instruments

In this mixed method study both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered by means of a questionnaire and a follow up discussion with participants. The questionnaire used for measuring FL anxiety consisted of three parts:

1. five questions regarding the student's biodata (age, gender, place of residence, employment) language learning autobiography, and a question about their intention of learning other foreign languages;
2. a Croatian translation of *FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale)* (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002), a 33-item questionnaire accompanied by a 5-point Likert-type scale of agreement which measures participants' communication apprehension, test-anxiety and fear of negative evaluation and focuses on speaking in the classroom context; this version has been used in studies in Croatian universities and the reliability of the instrument was checked and it proved to be satisfactory, $\alpha = 0.938$;
3. five open-ended questions regarding experiences with FL teachers, attitudes and motivation, suggestions of improvement.

Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed in 2012 among the students during the university language lessons without the presence of their language teachers and it was explained that their participation was voluntary. The data collected from the questionnaire were computed and analyzed using SPSS (version 21). Content analysis by means of identifying recurring themes and categorizing the answers was applied to analyze the qualitative data.

Results and discussion

Analyses of the first part of the questionnaire showed (Table 2) that only 4.8% of participants were male, which is a common ratio for the population involved in the study, so this variable was excluded from further research. Almost two thirds of the participants resided in big cities, so the sample was not balanced (see *Hypothesis 4*). Also, almost all of the students were unemployed (full time students) and only a small percentage stayed abroad in a target language country which implies a limited contact with native speakers of the respective languages.

Table 2. Biodata of participants (N= 125)

Gender	female	male
	95.2%	4.8%
Place of residence	big cities	small towns and villages
	61.6%	38.4%
Employment	employed	unemployed
	4%	96%
Stay in the target language country	yes	no
	12.8%	87.2%

As for their language learning experiences, all participants were experienced language learners. All reported speaking English, which is consistent with a national FL policy: 76% of the participants claimed to have a high level of proficiency in English and they had been learning it for 4 to 20 years. The other most frequently known FL was German, 47.2%, with much lower self-estimated levels of proficiency: 43.4% of participants claimed to have only basic knowledge of German, even

those who had learned it for eight years. Apart from English and their university major, all participants reported knowing at least one more language, ranging from Neo-Latin languages to Slavic languages and even Chinese or Japanese, and 66.4% claimed to intend to learn another FL. Findings regarding variables of English proficiency and intention of learning other foreign languages are explained further below in discussions of *Hypotheses 5* and *6*.

The results of the overall anxiety level in the whole sample indicate a moderate level $M = 91.1$ ($SD = 23.364$) on the FLCAS scale, scores ranging from 33 to 165. The high SD results indicate that the sample was not homogenous in terms of how anxious students were and this finding was confirmed by the qualitative data, as explained further on.

The results are similar to the ones obtained in the previous study (Puškar, 2010), so *Hypothesis 1* about higher levels of FL anxiety in this population and a presumed effect of minor language exposure was not supported. However, the results of the Puškar's study (2010) confirmed the positive influence of longer language exposure of German majors previously living and studying in German-speaking countries. This was not the case in our sample; FL exposure can be considered only in terms of university lessons with a very low level of additional exposure, confirmed by the students' statements in follow up discussions.

A comparison of scores of FL anxiety between undergraduate and graduate students did not show statistically significant differences $t = 1.055$; $df = 118$; $p > 0.05$ so *Hypothesis 2* was not confirmed; longer exposure to FL in the highly demanding university context did not seem to influence students' self-confidence, similarly to findings in previous studies (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2004; Puškar 2010).

However, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) confirmed *Hypothesis 3*. Significant differences were found between the three language groups comprised in the sample ($F = 5.209$; $p < 0.01$). The students of Spanish had lower scores on the FL anxiety scale than students of French and Italian (see Table 3).

Table 3. Mean values of FL anxiety in the three language groups

	Italian		French		Spanish	
FL anxiety	M=94.4	SD=23.651	M=95.96	SD=18.789	M=79.6	SD=23.937

In follow-up discussions on these results, the students of Spanish indeed stated that they felt comfortable using Spanish in their university lessons and in a friendly, not too competitive atmosphere, especially with native speakers. To further explain these results, the highest and lowest scores on the FLCAS items for each language group are shown in Tables 4, 5 and 6:

Table 4. Highest and lowest scores on FLCAS items for students of Italian

FLCAS item	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
(11) I understand why some people get so upset overFL classes.	1	5	3.55	1.329
(33) I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	1	5	3.49	1.006
(31) I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the FL.	1	5	2.12	1.146
(19) I am afraid that my teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	1	5	2.03	0.964

Table 5. Highest and lowest scores on FLCAS items for students of French

FLCAS item	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
(23) I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.	1	5	4.06	5.404
(1) I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.	1	5	3.53	1.051
(31) I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the FL.	1	5	1.76	0.955
(19) I am afraid that my teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	1	5	1.79	0.946

All three groups reported low self-confidence in using a FL in the lessons; French students seemed to have a tendency to compare themselves with others and students of Italian worried about being unprepared. None of the groups had high scores on items regarding being laughed at, unlike the findings in other studies (Tóth, 2008; Puškar, 2010), where a high level of competitiveness meant a problem for students of English or German. This difference could be explained in terms of more competitive classes, with more emphasis on accuracy and fluency and less relaxed atmosphere during the lessons.

Table 6. Highest and lowest scores on FLCAS items for students of Spanish

FLCAS item	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
(1) I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.	1	5	3.28	1.143
(14) I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.	1	5	3.53	1.051
(31) I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the FL.	1	5	1.59	1.043
(20) I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.	1	5	1.79	0.946

Unlike the previous study conducted at the same university (Puškar, 2010), the results of the ANOVA test did not confirm the relevance of the demographic variable of place of residence, $F=1.605$; $p>0.05$ (*Hypothesis 4*). This finding could be explained by the high ratio of participants from big cities (see Table 2).

The self-reported proficiency level in English and the intention to learn other languages (*Hypothesis 5 and 6*) did not seem to be connected with the levels of FL anxiety ($t=0.803$; $df=117$; $p>0.05$; and $t=0.043$; $df=117$; $p>0.05$), so the positive effect of experience in FL learning found in Puškar (2010) was not confirmed in this study. In contrast, results of the ANOVA test confirmed *Hypothesis 7*. Students who reported a decreased level of motivation during their studies at the university had significantly higher levels of FL anxiety ($F=2.938$; $p=0.057$).

Content analyses of students' answers confirmed these results. Even though the choice of studying a FL is a career choice for this population, as many as 50.5 % ($N=63$) reported a decrease of initial motivation, and their reasons included unfulfilled expectations (9.6%, $N=12$) and dissatisfaction with the organization of the university syllabi. They commented on these issues in this way: "I did not know what I was getting into", "the courses are not organized, the department is not very good", "the progress is minimal", and "I expected more."

In fact, 39.2% ($N=49$) of participants stated a decline in their attitudes towards studying their FL at the university: "I think I know less now", "the courses are very demanding, uninteresting, difficult", whereas 32.8% ($N=41$) reported to have improved: "Now I like the language more, I've broadened my horizons", "It is still my future career". About a quarter of the respondents (24.8%, $N=31$) reported having the same attitudes as in the beginning: "I feel the same way as before."

As for participants' motivation, 29.6 % ($N=37$) reported no change in their initial motivation and 24% ($N=30$) reported an increase of motivation or a transformation of intrinsic to instrumental motivation in terms of wanting to get a degree and find a job, "I want to travel and find a job abroad". However, at the negative ex-

treme, some of the students reported such a decrease in their level of motivation that they actually decided to drop out.

The data confirmed *Hypothesis 8*. As in the previous study (Puškar, 2010), those students who reported negative experiences with their language teachers had higher levels of FL anxiety, ($F=5.632$; $p<0.01$). The results of Pearson's correlation test indicated a weak but significant connection between levels of FL anxiety and the role of teachers. Students who had negative experiences reported higher levels of FL anxiety, as shown in Table 7:

Table 7. Correlations between FL anxiety and experiences with language teachers

		FL anxiety	Stud.group1	Experiences with LT
FL anxiety	Pearson Correlation	1.000	-.226*	.280**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.013	.002
	N	120	120	115
Stud. group1	Pearson Correlation	-.226*	1.000	-.238*

* $p<0.05$; ** $p<0.01$

While it seemed that experiences with language professors were linked with the phenomenon of FL anxiety, they did not seem to be connected with the levels of students' motivation. The results of Pearson's test did not confirm *Hypothesis 9*; there were no statistically significant correlations between the levels of motivation and experiences with language teachers, as shown in Table 8.

Finally, the content analysis of students' answers about their experiences with language teachers showed that 72.8% ($N=91$) reported friendly, open and respectful attitudes. But it should also be noticed that 38.4% ($N=48$) reported situations of unprofessional behaviour (10% in Italian, 4.8% in French and 5.6% in Spanish lessons, respectively), and 13.6% stated having experienced open belittlement or favoritism of some students. Comments like these were typical: "they suggested that I should give up", "they expect too much", "they are revolted by our mistakes", "some are too strict, others too lenient", "sometimes their comments are sarcastic and unprofessional."

Table 8. Correlation between levels of motivation and experiences with language teachers

		Motivation	Experiences with LT
Motivation	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.084
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.364
	N	123	120
Experiences with LT	Pearson Correlation	.084	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.364	
	N	120	120

$p > 0.05$

Students' suggestions on ways of improving their university courses mostly concerned the need for more conversation and less grammar (23.2%, $N=29$), an increase of language lessons, 20% ($N=25$), and changes in the university syllabi, 37.6% ($N=47$) in terms of fewer literature courses, the amount of content in courses or repetition of content in certain courses. They suggested that their language teachers be more objective and fair in evaluation, apply clear criteria for all students, give more feedback and show more positive attitudes.

Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that Italian, French and Spanish can indeed be considered "real foreign languages", unlike English, which is often present in people's everyday lives and spoken by the majority of students. Although participants might be considered "future language professionals", the students majoring in Italian, French and Spanish experience FL anxiety at similar levels to those of the students majoring in German (Puškar, 2010). Although all participants in this study were multilingual and experienced FL users, the results indicate that previous learning experience does not influence the levels of FL anxiety in their current language learning. Also, the presumed effect of a higher linguistic self-confidence due to longer exposure to language learning in a university context was not confirmed; no differences were found between undergraduates and graduates.

The findings about a relative decrease of motivation should be taken into account and investigated further. A mismatch was found between the students' goals of studying a language at the university and the reality thus indicating a problem in communication between students and language departments.

The results confirmed that language teachers have an important role in inducing FL anxiety among university students even with high intrinsic motivation. In order to reduce students' FL anxiety, language teachers should encourage their students through employing non-threatening teaching methods in a relaxed, anxiety-free and supportive atmosphere. They should create positive relationships with their students and encourage them to speak freely to overcome language anxiety.

Finally, combining quantitative and qualitative research methods to study FL anxiety gave a broader perspective of this phenomenon. Further research is needed, especially with students of other "minor" languages, such as Slavic ones, in order to clarify other sources of FL anxiety. Also, more comparative studies with students studying two languages simultaneously could give a clearer picture of FL anxiety.

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Who's Afraid of Language Still?

A Comparative Study of Foreign Language Anxiety in English and German Majors

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Introduction

Most research on foreign language (FL) anxiety to date has focused on learners for whom the FL is more of a means for achieving some non-linguistic goals than an intrinsic goal. It seems that university FL majors have by default been considered highly motivated and free of language anxiety. The author of this paper, however, can testify to the fact that anxiety exists among FL majors as well and that it is a phenomenon worth researching. Another motivation for the study stems from a lack of literature on comparative studies of FL anxiety among learners studying simultaneously two FLs. This is quite surprising since today a growing number of individuals study two or more FLs and their insights could be invaluable in understanding the role of FL anxiety in language study.

Conceptualisations of FL anxiety

The concept of FL anxiety is perhaps one of the most well documented psychological phenomena in second language acquisition (SLA) field. Even though extensive research had been done already in the 1960s, the FL anxiety construct was actually first proposed in the mid-1980s by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986). When limited to language learning situation, anxiety falls under the rubric of specific anxiety reactions (MacIntyre, 1998). Spielberger (1983, p. 19) defines general anxiety as "an unpleasant emotional state or condition which is characterized by subjective feelings of tension, apprehension, nervousness and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system". According to this definition, general anxiety shares similar characteristics with FL anxiety. However, MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) emphasize that it is necessary to distinguish FL anxiety from general anxiety. They define FL anxiety as "the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening and learning"

(MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994, p. 284). In particular, what distinguishes this situational apprehension in the SLA process from other types of apprehension is the fact that people may be comfortable speaking the language until they become conscious that someone may be judging their performance or they develop negative attitudes toward the target language (TL) and language learning in general due to stressful classroom experiences.

As for language performance, there are three related types of performance anxiety suggested by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) in their model of FL anxiety. The first is called communication apprehension, generally characterized by anxiety about interpersonal interaction or public speaking. The second type is test anxiety, which inherently deals with a fear of failure: test-anxious students perceive anything less than a perfect test performance as underachievement. The last one is fear of negative evaluation, which leads to avoidance of all evaluative situations and is not limited to test-taking situations.

Language anxiety is not a simple combination of these fears applied to FL learning. Rather, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1991, p. 31) define it “as a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process.” FL anxiety manifests itself through four distinct language anxiety components: cognitive, emotional, behavioural and physiological components. The cognitive component refers to negative self-assessment, worry about other people’s portrayal of oneself, and the feeling of incompetence to humour social demands. The emotional component implies feelings of unease, discomfort and tension, whereas the behavioural component includes clumsiness, restraint and disturbances in gesture and speech. The last one, the physiological component, implies various psycho-physiological symptoms commonly associated with anxiety in FL learners such as ‘butterflies in the stomach’, blushing, profuse perspiration, palpitations, shaky voice, sleep disturbances, tenseness, trembling, and fidgeting. These may exert a strong influence on a person’s perception of the situation they find themselves in. In the FL classroom, the more FL students worry about experiencing these symptoms, the greater the possibility that they would identify the symptoms with their classroom experience.

Impact of FL anxiety on SLA and language behaviour

It is vital that we differentiate between facilitating (positive) and debilitating (negative) anxiety. Although it is claimed that all anxiety occurring during the FL learning process is debilitating, lower levels of anxiety have showed a tendency to actually facilitate the process of SLA by triggering the proper amount of stimulating incentive. Another way of putting this is to say that positive emotions tend to supply mo-

tivation necessary for learning, whereas negative emotions, which are then associated with the FL itself, can seriously impede the SLA process. Scovel (1978, p. 139) describes debilitating anxiety as an anxiety that “motivates the learner to ‘flee’ the new learning task; it stimulates the individual emotionally to adopt avoidance behavior.” He claims that severe language learning anxiety can cause various problems. Among many things, students’ classroom-related self-esteem is lowered, their self-confidence as language learners is seriously undermined, willingness to take risks is diminished and the probability of achieving a high degree of language proficiency and fluency is decreased. All these present serious impediments to the development of learners’ second language (L2) fluency and performance in general, eventually resulting in achievement that is below their potential. Learners may also become extremely reticent, reserved, and uncommunicative. Their memory, concentration and creativity can become limited. Such learners may demonstrate task avoidance and procrastination more frequently than non-anxious individuals. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) point out that FL anxiety may influence various cognitive operations, such as information-processing abilities which may become limited during all the three stages of input, processing and output.

Sources of anxiety

Researching anxiety-provoking contexts, Young (1990) found that students generally become anxious when they have to use the TL in front of others. It has been shown (Brown, Robson, & Rosenkjar, 2001) that personality traits are also associated with FL anxiety. Anxiety arousal is more frequent in introverts, who usually prefer individual work to group work, in contrast to extraverts. Low-proficiency learners who lack the necessary cognitive resources are also likely to experience much higher FL anxiety levels when surrounded by more proficient learners. Gardner and MacIntyre (1993, p. 5) characterized FL anxiety as “the apprehension experienced when a situation requires the use of a second language with which the individual is not fully proficient.” In other words, FL anxiety is found to be inversely proportional to students’ language skills (Chen, 2001) and FL aptitude (Ganschow, Sparks, Anderson, Javorsky, Skinner, & Patton, 1994). Also, Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) found that some students’ language anxiety may stem from their perfectionist tendencies: students who were more inclined to perfectionism were found to report significantly higher levels of FL anxiety than students not striving for perfection. Furthermore, Piechurska-Kuciel (2008) found that students with shorter language exposure have higher levels of FL anxiety than students with longer language exposure; she concludes that FL anxiety may be significantly reduced after longer stays in those countries where people speak the TL.

According to some studies (e.g., Sparks & Ganschow, 1991, 1993, 1995; Sparks, Ganschow, & Javorsky, 2000), FL anxiety is the consequence of deficits in first language (L1) learning aptitude, which is considered to constitute the basis for FL learning. However, Horwitz (2000) claims that not all students seem to have cognitive disabilities: participants in anxiety studies are usually university students who have been selected on the basis of rigorous entrance exams, which is, according to her, a piece of evidence that discounts the role of L1 deficits. Interestingly, Verma and Nijhawan (1976) found that higher levels of FL anxiety in highly intelligent students can facilitate FL learning, whereas in students with low intelligence FL anxiety they can have a negative effect.

The relationship between FL anxiety and gender in the language classroom (Campbell & Shaw, 1994) is also one of the foci in FL anxiety research. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), students experiencing FL anxiety tend to learn more than their more relaxed peers, but their results often do not seem to equal their efforts. Besides differences in learner types, such factors as the FL course and types are also important for understanding sources of FL anxiety. Young (1994) claims that unnatural classroom procedures, for instance, the way teachers correct students' errors and interact with their students, can all potentially trigger FL anxiety.

FL anxiety in the Croatian context

In the light of extensive research into FL anxiety, one must mention a significant Croatian contribution. In the last two decades, a number of studies have looked into FL anxiety of, mostly, learners of English. Croatian researchers focused on sources of FL anxiety, the relationships between anxiety and other individual learner factors, differences between monolingual and bilingual learners of English.

In her study of the relationship of FL anxiety and language learning strategies Mihaljević Djigunović (2000) found that this relationship interacted with the age of learners. Although no significant correlations were found in the primary school age group, secondary school learners of English who felt anxious while speaking in class and who felt that their peers outperformed them used fewer communicative strategies and more frequently missed the opportunities for out-of-class learning. Adult learners who felt too embarrassed to volunteer answers, who were insecure when speaking in class fearing others may laugh at them and who felt that others in the group outperformed them were found to use communicative strategies infrequently.

In a later study out with Croatian political science and psychology undergraduates Mihaljević Djigunović (2004) reported an unexpected positive correlation between language achievement and language use anxiety. She explained this by as-

suming that successful learners have higher language awareness, are more critical and have higher expectations than low achievers.

Legac (2007) investigated listening anxiety among monolingual and bilingual learners of EFL. His participants were primary-school learners aged 12-14 years. Using elaborate research methodology, Legac showed that bilingual learners experienced significantly lower listening anxiety than monolinguals. FL anxiety proved to be a very good predictor of achievement in monolingual learners but its predictive value, interestingly, was much lower in the case of bilinguals. Legac stressed the key importance of teachers detecting FL anxiety in their learners.

Looking into the relationship between FL anxiety and listening comprehension in monolingual and bilingual learners of English, Mihaljević Djigunović and Legac (2008) found significantly higher FL anxiety among monolingual than among bilingual learners. This was true about all three stages of the FL learning process. Another important finding was the significantly higher levels of listening comprehension achieved by bilingual learners compared to monolingual learners. Significant negative relationships between language anxiety and achievement in EFL listening comprehension were found for both monolinguals and bilinguals.

The findings discussed above are extremely valuable. They relate to primary, secondary and adult learners of English as a FL in Croatia. However, one area where research on FL anxiety is conspicuously missing is university FL majors.

A study of FL anxiety among university majors in English and German

Aim

As stated in the previous section, university FL majors have not been, in the main, the focus of anxiety research. This is regrettable because FL anxiety may result in highly relevant consequences since for such majors the success in FL studies is of crucial importance. Also, rare research of FL anxiety among university FL majors, although invaluable, concentrated for the most part on majors in English (e.g., Tóth 2006, 2008a, 2008b). Apart from considering this area important to study, we were also prompted to focus on another aspect of FL anxiety. To my knowledge, there are no studies that compared FL anxiety of learners studying two FLs simultaneously. It may be revealing to look into the relationship of anxiety the same individuals experience in two FLs. This is why we decided to investigate university majors in English and German. We wanted to find out if FL anxiety transferred from one FL to another, if interactions of anxiety with other relevant factors (e.g., gender, place of residence) were the same in two different FLs.

The aims of this study were to determine the presence and compare the levels of FL anxiety in undergraduate English and German majors at Zagreb University's

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences; to look into the relationship of language anxiety and gender, age, place of residence, FL exposure, and FL achievement; FL anxiety and student motivation for studying those languages, and classroom experience.

Hypotheses

Based on the findings of FL anxiety research to date eight hypotheses were formulated. The first hypothesis (H1) was that German majors experience higher levels of FL anxiety than English majors. There are possibly two broad bases for this hypothesis. Even though English and German are related and belong to the West Germanic languages, they differ considerably in many linguistic aspects, as well as in the status they enjoy nowadays – English being, unlike German, a sort of *lingua franca*. Based on our individual observations and some previous research, it was assumed that the differences in FL anxiety levels could be largely due to different classroom experiences possibly caused by different teaching traditions of the two languages.

It was hypothesized (H2) that first-year English and German majors experience higher levels of FL anxiety than second- or third-year students do. An explanation for this could be the fact that the switch from relatively easy high school FL classes to more demanding university FL classes could be more anxiety-provoking for first-year students, whereas older students would become more accustomed to university demands. Furthermore, it was supposed that language anxiety may be reduced after spending some time in the countries where the TL is spoken. Therefore, the next hypothesis (H3) was that students with shorter language exposure have higher levels of FL anxiety than students with longer language exposure. Evidence in this direction has been suggested by, for example, Piechurska-Kuciel (2008). It was also hypothesized that some social factors could affect FL anxiety. In particular, because of the fact that women usually take a more serious approach to their work and that many expectations and great pressure are put on them, often resulting in higher levels of FL anxiety (Campbell & Shaw, 1994), the relationship between language anxiety and gender was examined (H4): female students are more anxiety-ridden than their male counterparts.

As there have been no studies taking into account the place of residence and its relationship with FL anxiety, the following hypothesis was formulated (H5): students from small towns and villages experience higher language anxiety levels than students from the city. It was assumed that this could be related to higher exposure to the FL in larger places. It was assumed that students with lower FL achievement suffer from higher FL anxiety levels than students with higher FL achievement (H6) (Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, & Daley, 2001).

H7 stated that students who have positive attitudes to their FL instructor and course have lower levels of FL anxiety than those with negative attitudes. As found in some studies (Marchand & Skinner, 2007; Wentzel, 1990), negative language instructor attitudes tend to be significantly related to higher FL anxiety levels. H8 concentrated on motivation: lower motivation is related to higher language anxiety.

Participants

The sample comprised 386 randomly selected university-level Croatian L1 majors of English or German (L2) enrolled in first-year (2nd semester), second-year (4th semester) and third-year (6th semester) classes at the University of Zagreb. To be more precise, 270 English (60 male and 210 female) and 116 (26 male and 90 female) German majors voluntarily participated in the study in March 2010. Demographic characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the sample (N=386)

	Variable	N	%
Gender	Female	300	77.7
	Male	86	22.3
Place of residence	Village	15	3.9
	Town	171	44.3
	City	200	51.8
Major	English	270	69.9
	German	116	30.1
Year	First	130	35.8
	Second	128	33.2
	Third	120	31.1
Language exposure	No	319	82.6
	Yes	67	17.4
Language exposure influence (self-reported)	No influence	319	82.6
	Small influence	9	2.3
	Medium influence	11	2.8
	Big influence	47	12.2

As can be seen in Table 1 and in Figures 1 and 2, the sample was not balanced in all its characteristics.

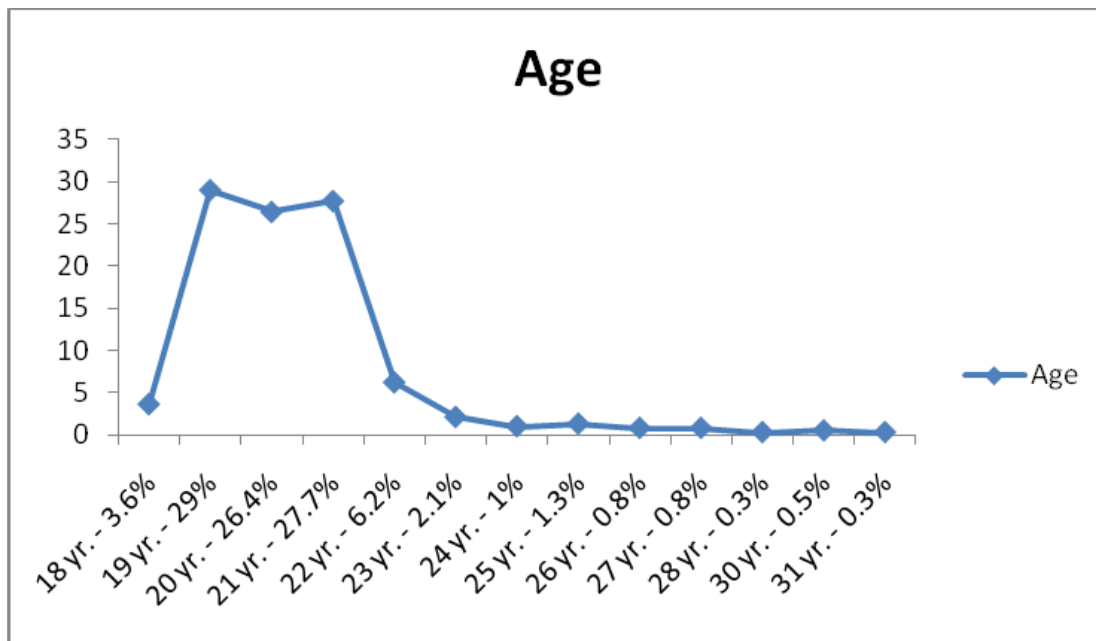


Figure 1. Participants' age in percentages

As for participants' age (Figure 1), the expected years (19, 20, 21) were fairly equally represented; the majority of students seem to be in the 18-22 age range (92.9%), while the 23-31 age range (7.1%) expectedly displays a falling tendency. Regarding students' second majors (see Figure 2), 42.2% had non-language majors, whereas the rest was distributed among the many languages on offer at the Faculty.

The instrument for eliciting data was a questionnaire consisting of three parts. In the first part, the participants were asked to provide basic biodata (age, gender, place of residence, academic majors, etc.) and average grades they obtained in their FL major(s), to self-assess their competence in their FL major(s) and other FLs they had learned, to supply information on the number of years of experience with the FLs as well as on intentions of continuing studying other languages. Besides these, English and German majors were asked by means of yes/no items if they had ever failed their language exams, and if they felt they were talented for learning languages. They were also asked about having spent time in a country where the FL was spoken as L1. Participants who visited their FL-speaking country were asked to self-report how big an influence their stay exerted on their choice of language major.

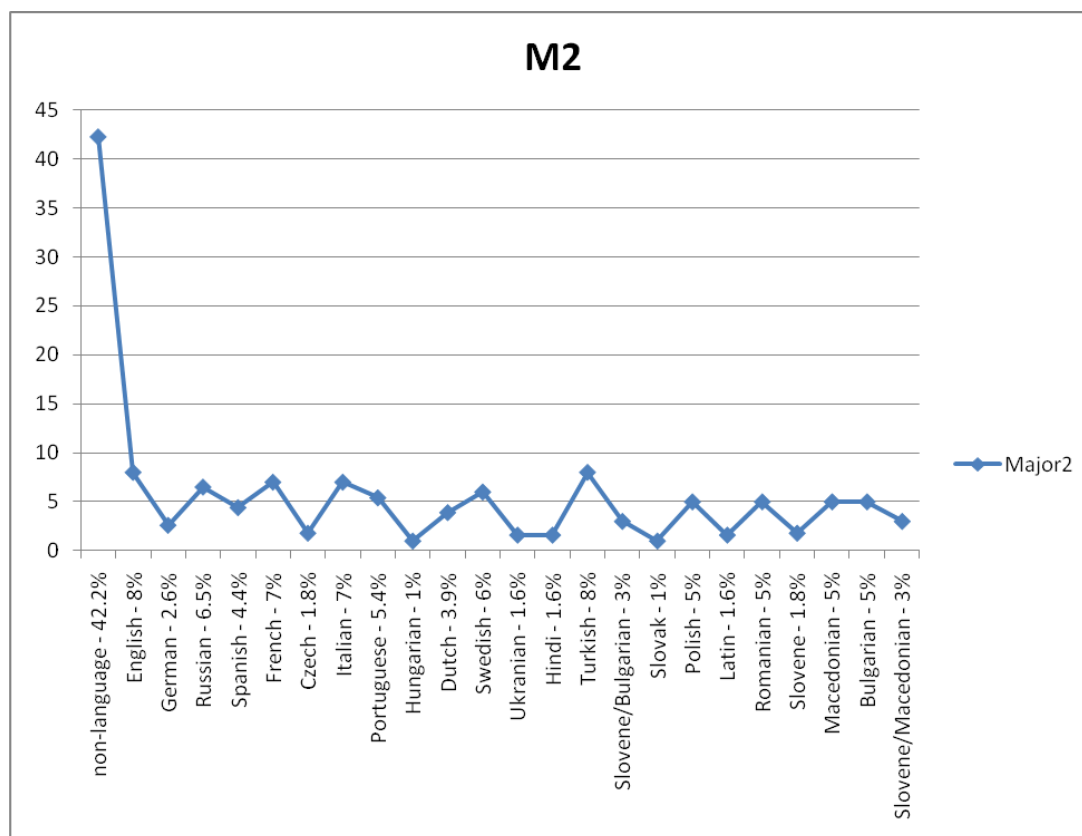


Figure 2. Second majors in percentages

Data collection instrument

The second part of the questionnaire contained the FL Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz (1986). Since the mid-1980s, the FLCAS has been the best known FL classroom anxiety scale measuring the level of general FL anxiety with a strong speaking anxiety element. Relying on its good metric characteristics shown in previous studies, it was decided that this widely used scale was also appropriate in the context of this study. Each participant filled in this 33-item (all L2-related) questionnaire using a 5-point self-report Likert-type scale of agreement. These items are designed to give an insight into various anxieties (test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation or communication apprehension), as well as FL learning specific anxiety. Of 33 items, 16 are related to the output stage, ten to attitudes toward FL study, four items measure input anxiety, and three items are reflective of processing anxiety (Horwitz, 1986, p. 559). Negative performance expectancies (e.g., item 10: *I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.*), social comparisons (e.g., item 23: *I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.*), psycho-physiological symptoms (e.g., item 26: *I feel more tense and nervous*

in my language class than in my other classes.) and avoidance behaviours (e.g., item 17: *I often feel like not going to my language class*) are also tapped into.

What proved innovative in our study was the fact that our questionnaire consisted of two side-by-side unaltered FLCAS scales translated into Croatian with the intention that those participants who had two language majors continually and simultaneously assess their FL anxiety in both of their languages. Interestingly, in many of the filled-in questionnaires some corrections made by participants were noticed when they had to compare FL anxiety in their two languages.

During data processing the scores on nine items (items 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 22, 28, and 32) were key-reversed before scoring so that higher scores on the FLCAS always indicated higher levels of anxiety. With possible scores ranging from 33 to 165, here follow the criteria for establishing language anxiety according to the FLCAS:

- Less than 76 points: low anxiety
- 76-119 points: moderate anxiety
- More than 119 points: high anxiety

The third part elicited information by means of open-ended items on FL instructor-student and FL instructor-other students interactions. The participants were also asked about changes in their attitudes and motivation for studying their FL majors and about what usually had an influence on them. The last question asked participants to voice any negative feelings about their FL classes at the university.

Procedure

All participants filled in the questionnaires in class in about 20-25 minutes, but not during their usual FL classes. Concerning students' reactions, mixed responses have to be pointed out. Some participants, for instance, expressed their surprise at such a study. Although it was an anonymous questionnaire, some students expressed a concern that their opinions about their major, language classes and language instructor as well as their identity would be somehow revealed. We did our best to put their worries to rest. On the other hand, other participants expressed great satisfaction with the study, concluding that it was about time somebody posed these kinds of questions.

Quantitative and qualitative analyses were performed, the former carried out using *SPSS for Windows 14.0*.

Results and discussion

The study confirmed several hypotheses. First, it provided evidence that German majors indeed experienced higher levels of FL anxiety than English majors ($t=-2.756$, $p=.006$) (H1). Thanks to the specific methodology, we were able to measure FL anxiety among learners studying two FLs simultaneously. This enabled us to find that the higher the levels of FL anxiety students (especially English majors) experienced in their first FL, the greater the chances were that they would experience higher anxiety in their second FL. In both of their majors participants scored highest on the same FLCAS items. The most frequent sources of anxiety for them were failing at language exams (first major $M=3.91$; second major $M=3.87$) and making mistakes during their FL classes (first major $M=3.43$; second major $M=3.43$). In a future study it would be important to investigate and compare language anxiety levels among students majoring simultaneously in both English and German. As pointed out above, practical FL classes are a very important part of FL studies at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb because students cannot progress at the required pace through their programme unless they manage to develop their language competence well enough to pass the required language exams in order to enrol into the subsequent year.

Contrary to H2, English and German majors displayed similar levels of language anxiety in all the three undergraduate years (German majors: $F=1,920$, $p=.151$). This suggests that FL anxiety levels are balanced throughout undergraduate education. This is probably so because practical language classes are carried out in generally the same way during the two years and have the same aims. It would be very interesting to see if the same trends can be perceived at the graduate level. We would like to suggest that the case study methodology be applied since it would add depth to investigations of FL anxiety at different levels of university education.

Exploring H3 led to more conclusive findings that confirmed those of a study carried out in Poland (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2008). A significant difference ($t=4.875$, $p=0.000$) was found in language anxiety between German majors who had not lived (61.2%) in a German-speaking country and majors who had (38.8%). Students of German with shorter language exposure had higher FL anxiety than students with longer language exposure. This is, we believe, a consequence of important differences in language status. It seems to us that the availability of English in Croatia balances out possible differentiating effects of longer stays in English-speaking countries. However, only a minority of German majors who had not managed to visit a German-speaking country for a longer period commented that there were obvious differences present between students with extensive previous exposure and those without exposure. As we managed to find out from open-ended questions, they thought the latter were at a disadvantage and concluded it was unfair that students of German with considerable language exposure enjoyed a better treatment by

language instructors. As a solution, some of them demanded a more difficult FL entrance exam in order to prevent the mixing of these two different groups, as well as streamed language classes, one for native speakers (*Muttersprachler*) and one for ordinary students of German, which would greatly facilitate perceived peer pressure. In the context of university-level German classes at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb, there is this additional aspect of student bilingualism that makes the picture more complex.

As expected, participants who had not learned English or German longer and had poorer language skills displayed significantly higher language anxiety levels than students who had learned it for a longer period of time and had better language skills (cf. Chen, 2001; Ganschow et al., 1994). The negative experience of failing a language exam was also associated with higher levels of FL anxiety. The language exam is a high-stakes exam and it is a source of anxiety for FL majors. Therefore, it is essential that language instructors should be familiar with different student affective profiles and their previous experiences with the TL.

No significant relationships were found between language anxiety and the number of FLs learned, the intention of learning more languages, and self-perception of aptitude for languages in English majors. We are inclined to think that perhaps high exposure to English counterbalances the significance of knowledge of other languages. Such an explanation is based on the suggestive findings in our study that German majors seemed not to be quite sure that they possessed high FL aptitude. A significant (though low) negative correlation between FL anxiety and the number of other languages learned ($R = -.19$, $p = 0.038$) suggests that German majors with less language learning experience perhaps lacked the required level of linguistic self-confidence, which led to both lower competence in German as well as higher language anxiety.

Data from open-ended items pointed to an interaction between language anxiety and attitudes to language instructors (Marchand & Skinner, 2007; Wentzel, 1997), FL achievement (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2001) and FL anxiety. The role of language instructors in FL anxiety should definitely be investigated further as our findings suggest such investigations might offer extremely relevant insights. A lack of motivation among German majors could also be one of language anxiety predictors explaining differences in anxiety between English and German majors.

Regarding differences in FL anxiety between male or female students (H4), female students reported higher levels of language anxiety, as was found in Campbell and Shaw (1994). However, the gender difference was not significant in the German group ($t = 1.903$, $p = .60$), most probably because of the low number of male participants, especially in the second and third years of study.

The hypothesis (H5) dealing with the role of participants' place of residence was also confirmed at the level of the whole sample. Participants from villages or towns indeed experienced higher FL anxiety levels than participants from cities. The find-

ings are significantly related to the first major only ($M=92.54$). A possible explanation might be that participants who were studying outside their original place of residence considered their first major (either English or German) more important in their life and therefore perceived it as more stressful. Future investigations that would apply the case study methodology might throw more light on this finding.

As regards students' comments on the open-ended sections, many classroom aspects were brought to the fore. In particular, many of the remarks concerned class rate (which some students considered too slow- and others too fast-paced), a heavy or not so heavy workload, too little or too much grammar, complicated grammar books, too much homework, too few conversations and class debates, boring and dull classes, too many students in language classes, absence of some other classes (e.g., phonetics classes or an additional class dealing only with grammar), and too little contact with native speakers. These remarks were mentioned by participants experiencing mainly low levels of FL anxiety. Participants reporting higher levels of language anxiety actually stressed too difficult (final) exams, only few language test-taking opportunities, stressful classes, pressure, competitive classroom atmosphere, inadequately educated language instructors, too little outside class student-instructor interaction (for instance, open invitations to office hours), large differences in instructors' demands and too strict instructors who are, because of their dubious pedagogical principles, perceived by students as not quite understanding (especially in the Department of German). The latter classroom aspects and their actual role in inducing FL anxiety would be particularly important to investigate at the university level. Even though low- and high-anxiety students differed in their remarks, the majority of participants singled out what was in their opinion most lacking in language classes. Language instructors should ask students for more feedback which could be of help to them in terms of enhancing the quality of language instruction and, in that way, reducing language anxiety.

Implication for further study

Since this study dealt with the processing and interpretation of quantitative data, further research should be aimed at gathering qualitative data. They could be collected in language (auto)biographies of English and German majors so that a more personal research approach may give us deeper understanding of FL anxiety as well as other aspects of FL learning.

Conclusion

This study has shown that FL anxiety is a complex phenomenon worth researching. In contrast to popular belief, language anxiety exists among university FL majors, students who have chosen a FL as the focus of their studies and future career. This comparative study that looked at students studying two FLs at the same time enabled us to get some new insights. It confirmed several hypotheses relevant for either English or German majors, or both. In particular, it confirmed that German majors tend to experience higher levels of FL anxiety than English majors. Although we did not find that either first-year English or German majors experienced higher levels of FL anxiety than second- or third-year students, we did find that students of German with shorter language exposure had higher levels of FL anxiety than students with longer language exposure. We related this to the different status of German and English in Croatia today. Female students of English were more anxiety-ridden than their male counterparts. At the level of the whole sample the study found that students from small towns and villages tended to experience higher language anxiety levels than students from the city. Both students of English and German with lower FL achievement and negative attitudes to their FL instructor suffered from higher FL anxiety levels than more successful students with positive attitudes to their instructor. Lower motivation was related to higher language anxiety, but only in the case of German majors.

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Testing Metaphors of Political Morality: A Pilot Study

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Introduction

This study is part of my research project investigating how metaphors of morality are used in political discourse. The purpose of the project is to generate findings that may lead to a better understanding of the universality and variance in the uses of metaphors of morality in political discourse. The aim of the current study is to validate a questionnaire which is based on the model of political morality proposed by George Lakoff (1996, 2008).

I will present a study conducted in the spring of 2013 at the University of Pécs. First, I will discuss the theoretical background to the study in cognitive linguistics in general and Lakoff's model in particular. Then, I will present the methodology and the questionnaire used to collect data. The questionnaire had two parts. Sixteen items were devised by the author, based on the works of George Lakoff (1996, 2008) and thirty other items were borrowed from the Moral Foundations Questionnaire ("Morality Quiz" n.d.). I present the results of the Spearman's rho correlation between the Moral Politics Measure and the Moral Foundations Measure, the two values that measure participants' moral preferences based on the first sixteen items of the questionnaire and the last thirty, respectively.

Theoretical background

Discourses are like icebergs: much of their meaning is implicit, and only accessible with the help of the right knowledge and mental models (van Dijk, 2012, pp. 587-603). The field of cognitive linguistics (CL) was pioneered by Lakoff (1987; Lakoff & Kövecses, 1987), Johnson (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980/2003), Turner (Lakoff & Turner, 1989), Gibbs (1994) and Kövecses (1990) in the 1980s and early 1990s. It is an approach to the study of language that has mostly "focused on semantics, but a significant proportion also is devoted to syntax and morphology, and there has been

cognitive linguistic research into other areas of linguistics such as language acquisition, phonology and historical linguistics” (Croft & Cruse, 2004, p. 1).

CL is an approach “that has adopted a common set of guiding principles, assumptions and perspectives which have led to a diverse range of complementary, overlapping (and sometimes competing) theories” (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 3). This “common set of guiding principles, assumptions and perspectives” is based on three main statements: “(1) language is not an autonomous cognitive faculty; (2) grammar is conceptualization; and (3) knowledge of language emerges from language use” (Croft & Cruse, 2004, p. 1).

Research into metaphors, emotions and the embodiment of concepts (e.g., Feldman, 2006; Gibbs, 2005; Johnson, 1987; Kövecses, 2000) and questions of universality and variance (e.g., Kövecses, 2005; Lakoff & Johnson 1980/2003) are among the most prominent directions of cognitive linguistics.

How “language choice is manipulated for specific political effect” (Wilson, 2001, p. 410) is often dealt with in Lakoff’s works, who since the early 1990s has been working on framing issues in political discourse (Chilton & Lakoff, 1995; Lakoff, 1992, 1995, 1996, 2004, 2006, 2008; Lakoff & Wehling, 2012). Lakoff’s argument regarding political discourse rests on the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), a framework of understanding human cognition on the basis of conceptual metaphors, first proposed in a 1980 book co-authored with Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*. They claim that a metaphor is not merely a “device of the poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 4), but central to our everyday functioning. They argue that

[o]ur concepts structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people. Our conceptual system thus plays a central role in defining our everyday realities. If we are right in suggesting that our conceptual system is largely metaphorical, then the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor. (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 3)

According to the Cognitive Metaphor Theory, the human mind makes heavy use of cross-domain mapping (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 286), typically based on perceived resemblance in our experiences relating the two domains of experience (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, pp. 245-246). Many of our metaphors are based on our embodied experiences, in other words, on how the structure and layout of our bodies determine our perception of the world around us, for example, “front and back, up and down, inside and outside” (Clark, 2008, p. 44). These experiences are pre-conceptual, a natural part of human thought (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 248) and serve as a basis for more complex conceptual metaphors (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 286).

Conceptual metaphors, and the metaphor systems built on them, are almost inescapable parts of our everyday language (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, pp. 44-45), and have a significant influence on how we understand language and conceptualize our world (Lakoff & Chilton, 1989, p. 5), for example, by hiding aspects of reality as political and economic metaphors do (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 236). According to Kövecses “metaphor does not occur primarily in language, but in thought” (2005, p. 2). We see the world through the lens of metaphors and our knowledge is therefore largely metaphorical. Communities sharing a metaphor system also share knowledge about the world. Knowledge is not about absolute truth; it is “belief shared by the members of an (epistemic) community” (van Dijk, 2012, p. 587). In their book Wehling and Lakoff state that the frames in politics are morally based and “to discuss political language is to discuss morality and policy” (Lakoff & Wehling 2012, p. 9).

Lakoff claims that the reason why liberals and conservatives have different beliefs is actually a conceptual metaphor they share. Moreover, in countries around the world, the left-right political dichotomy is based on two competing models of making sense of this conceptual metaphor (1996, pp. 153-156). Both liberals and conservatives use the NATION IS A FAMILY conceptual metaphor when they think and talk about politics. However, what a family is, and how it should function is up for interpretation. There are two models, two competing systems of conceptual metaphors of ideal families, which form the basis of two opposing understandings of political morality. Liberals use the Nurturant Parent model of what an ideal family should be, and in turn through cross-domain mapping – from the family to the nation – they apply their beliefs to politics. The conservative model is called Strict Father model, and serves the same function. Both of these models activate a set of moral priorities based on their logic. When encountered with everyday issues people make up their minds based on these moral priorities, which will of course differ from the opinions of people with differing moral priorities.

The metaphors with the highest priority in the Nurturant Parent morality form the Nurturance Group. It includes MORALITY IS NURTURANCE, MORALITY IS EMPATHY, MORALITY IS FAIR DISTRIBUTION, among others. Conservatives, on the other hand, attribute the highest priority to the metaphors that constitute the Strength Group. It includes MORALITY IS STRENGTH, MORAL AUTHORITY IS PARENTAL AUTHORITY, IMMORALITY IS DEGENERATION and IMMORALITY IS DISEASE, among others. Lakoff explains the models and their metaphor structures in more detail in *Moral Politics* (1996).

An empirical study on metaphors of political morality

Aim

A pilot study was designed to find out how Lakoff's model of political morality works in practice. The aim of the study is to test the validity of the model, which claims that conservative and liberal ideologies are based on two competing models of ideal families. Lakoff's theory is supported with examples of political language selected by him. While his arguments are convincing, and the selected examples fit his model, to my knowledge, no systematic empirical study was conducted to prove his theory.

Participants

Forty-eight first- and second-year BA students of English at the University of Pécs took part in the study between March 26-28, 2013, in four groups. They were participants of Reading and Writing Skills seminars at the university during the spring semester of 2013. They all had language proficiency certificates at least at a B2 level. However, their levels of language competence were certainly varied.

Hypothesis

The pilot study aimed to test the following hypothesis:

The participants who are liberal according to the Moral Foundations Theory are also predominantly liberal according to Lakoff's model of political morality.

This would indicate that a person's political orientation can be measured with the help of questionnaire items designed on the basis of Lakoff's model of political morality. To test this hypothesis a data collection instrument was composed which is presented in detail in the next section.

Data collection instrument

The participants were asked to take a Likert-scale questionnaire with 46 items. The first 31 items constituted Part 1 of the questionnaire; the next 15 were Part 2. In Part 1 the participants were asked to indicate the level of their agreement with each statement on a scale from 0 to 5, where 0 indicated strong disagreement and 5

strong agreement. In Part 2 the participants were asked to indicate on a scale from 0 to 5 how relevant the ideas presented in the items are to their thinking when they decide if something is right or wrong.

The first sixteen items were designed based on Lakoff's model of political morality and on two books in general, *Moral Politics* (Lakoff 1996/2002) and *The Little Blue Book* (Lakoff & Wehling, 2012). Items 17 to 46 were borrowed by the Moral Foundations Questionnaire which

proposes that several innate and universally available psychological systems are the foundations of 'intuitive ethics.' Each culture then constructs virtues, narratives, and institutions on top of these foundations, thereby creating the unique moralities we see around the world, and conflicting within nations too. (Moral Foundations Theory, n.d.)

Items measuring political morality

The first 16 items cover eight issues – family, education, crime and punishment, taxation, work and prosperity, environment, social responsibilities, role of the government – with two statements each. For each issue one statement corresponds to the Nurturant Parent and one to the Strict Father models. In the next paragraphs I present some of the items and discuss which conceptual metaphor they are based on.

As for *family*, the liberal item (#1: Open communication and shared decision making makes a family stronger) on the conceptual metaphor MORAL ACTION IS THE NURTURANCE OF SOCIAL TIES., whereas the conservative item (#10: A spoiled child will be dependent for life) is based on the conceptual metaphors PUNISHMENT IS NURTURANCE and MORALITY IS SELF-DENIAL.

Regarding the second issue, that of *education*, the liberal item (#9: The aim of education is to make people good citizens, community members and parents) is based on the conceptual metaphor MORAL ACTION IS THE NURTURANCE OF SOCIAL TIES. The conservative counterpart of this item (#5: Good grades are valuable only if the most diligent and talented students have them) is based on the conceptual metaphors PUBLIC EDUCATION IS BUSINESS, SCHOOLS ARE COMPETITIVE MARKETS and GOOD GRADES ARE PROFITS.

With regard to *crime and punishment*, the liberal item (#11: Crime has many reasons; the most important are poverty, bad education and bad parenting) is based on the conceptual metaphor MORALITY IS EMPATHY. The corresponding conservative item (#16: The enforcement of rules must be strict or they won't be followed) is based on the conceptual metaphors PUNISHMENT IS NURTURANCE AND EVIL IS A FORCE

The rest of the items are likewise based on conceptual metaphors of political morality proposed by George Lakoff and Elisabeth Wehling (Lakoff 1996, 2008; Lakoff & Wehling 2012).

Items borrowed from the Moral Foundations Questionnaire

The MFQ measures people’s reliance and endorsement of five dimensions of morality, the “1) harm/care, 2) fairness/reciprocity (including issues of rights), 3) in-group/loyalty, 4) authority/respect, and 5) purity/sanctity” dimensions (“Morality Quiz” n.d.).

Haidt claims that human morality is the result of biological and cultural evolutionary processes that made human beings sensitive to many different - and often competing – issues (2012, p. 4). The first two moral foundations represent the issues regarding other individuals’ well-being. The last three represent issues about how to be a good member of a group or supporter of social order and tradition (“Morality Quiz” n.d.).

Haidt’s hypothesis about the nature of political morality was that liberals allocate higher significance to the first two foundations than the other three, while conservatives consider all five foundations as almost equally important (Graham et al., 2012, p. 21). Originally, the questionnaire was filled out by a random sample of 1,600 participants. Haidt’s hypothesis was compatible with the results (Graham et al. 2012, p. X).

The numbering of the items in my questionnaire differs from the original MFQ. Each foundation is however measured by the same six items, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Moral foundations and corresponding items

Foundations	Related items
Harm/Care	17, 22, 27, 32, 37, 42
Fairness/Reciprocity	18, 23, 28, 33, 38, 43
Ingroup/Loyalty	19, 24, 29, 34, 39, 44
Authority/Respect	20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45
Purity/Sanctity	21, 26, 31, 36, 41, 46

Procedure

Because of the varied levels of language competence of the participants, to make sure the questionnaire was understandable in its design and language, I asked four experts for their opinions at the Institute of English Studies, University of Pécs. I implemented several changes to the layout and the language based on the feedback. I also asked two participants to look at the questionnaires separately, one at a time, and fill it out while thinking aloud about the tasks and items. The two dummy items of the MFQ were dropped, because the participants providing the think-aloud feedback found them disturbing.

Based on the expert opinions and the think aloud feedback, in item 17 the word crucial was changed to important. In item 31 the phrase “I would obey” was changed to “I would do as I was told”, and in item 32 the word chastity was changed to decency, but as even this deemed to difficult for participants, the Hungarian translation that seemed most suitable, “illendőség”, was indicated in brackets.

I was present during the data collection, and tried to clarify points whenever the students had a hard time understanding the tasks or the language. No participant indicated problems of comprehension about the items, although understanding Part 2 needed some explanation in some cases. In Part 2 the participants were asked to indicate if some considerations are relevant to their thinking when they decide if something is right or wrong. Two participants were concerned that just by indicating that some considerations are relevant to them I would not be able to know if they consider it positively or negatively.

Results

In order to correlate results of the participants’ responses to the first 16 items measuring participants’ morality according to George Lakoff’s model, and the last 30, which did the same according to the Moral Foundations Theory, the results needed to be reduced to two variables. I refer to these two variables as the Moral Politics Measure (MPM) and the Moral Foundations Measure (MFM).

After calculating the mean of the first 16 (eight conservative and eight liberal) statements, I subtracted the conservative mean from the liberal mean. The resulting number, the MPM, indicated the participants’ moral leanings according to the model of political morality by Lakoff. The lower the number the more a person agreed with the conservative statements and disagreed with the liberal statements, and vice versa. Interestingly only two participants had a value below zero, with a value of -13. Therefore, according to this questionnaire 46 of the 48 participants used their liberal moral principles predominantly, when interpreting issues. The mean value

was 1.35, the median 1.37 and the mode 1.38, which points to a fairly normal distribution of results. The highest value was 3.

As for the 30 items borrowed from the Moral Foundations Questionnaire the main difference between the typical liberal moral matrix and the typical conservative moral matrix in Jonathan Haidt's model is the standard deviation from the mean of the five moral foundations. Based on the results of self-identified liberals and conservatives posted at YourMorals.org ("Morality Quiz", n.d.) the standard deviation of the typical liberal is 1.07 and a typical conservative is 0.14. The numbers show that liberals tend to differentiate between the importance of the five moral foundations more, while conservatives display similar importance of the foundations, hence the lower standard deviation in their case. From this I concluded that the higher the deviation the more liberal the participant; therefore, I computed the standard deviations of five moral foundations for the 48 participants, and called it the Moral Foundations Measure. For the results see Table 2 in the Appendix.

Finally I ran a Spearman's rho analysis on the MPM and the MFM. Based on the analysis there was no statistically significant correlation between the two variables ($r_s = -0.2$, $p > .05$). This means that the first 16 items, based on Lakoff's model, and the items borrowed from the Moral Foundations Questionnaire do not measure the same phenomenon.

Conclusion

The initial assumption was that the Moral Foundations Questionnaire measures the same phenomenon, morality, along a liberal-conservative dimension, as the 16 items designed based on Lakoff's model of political morality. A strong correlation between the MFM, which relates to the five moral foundations and the MPM of the first 16 items, would have indicated that the assumption was true. However, the Spearman's rho correlation showed that there is no statistically significant correlation between the variables. We have to consider four possible reasons that can account for this.

It is possible that the participants had found the language of the questionnaire too challenging. I tried to make sure throughout the data collection procedure that this was not the case. The participants were all students of English at the University of Pécs, with language examinations at least at B2 level. However, their levels of language competence were varied. I asked the opinions of four experts at the Institute of English Studies, and asked two participants to provide think aloud feedback while completing the questionnaire. I implemented several changes to the layout and the language based on this feedback. During the data collection, no participant indicated problems of comprehension about the items, although two asked for clarification on the task in part 2.

A second possible reason why there was no statistically significant correlation can be that items 1 to 16 are flawed and do not represent the model of political morality proposed by George Lakoff. A third possible reason might be that the Moral Foundations Questionnaire and the 16 items written to test Lakoff's model do not measure the same phenomenon, and what Haidt and George Lakoff call liberal and conservative morality do not overlap.

If the language of the questionnaire was appropriate, if the questionnaire items represent the model well, if two models try to explain the same domain when they talk about liberalism and conservatism, the fourth possibility is that Lakoff's model of political morality is flawed. Unfortunately, this study was not designed to determine which one of these possibilities is true; however, I find it problematic that 46 out of 48 participants had a moral politics value above zero, meaning that they were liberal according to the model. This is a very high percentage, even if we think that university students have a liberal bias, and might indicate that the items based on Lakoff's model have a liberal bias, which in turn might indicate that Lakoff's model has a liberal bias, and does not fit the data.

To determine if this is indeed the case might be the topic of further research.

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Appendix A

Tables and figures

Table 2. The MFM and MFM

Participant code	Moral Politics Measure	Moral Foundations Measure
43	0,5	0,99
8	1.13	0.77
60	2.38	1.18
5	3	0.79
45	1.25	0.72
7	0.38	0.25
61	1.25	0.68
46	0.88	1.89
48	-0.13	0.75
64	0.38	0.72
42	0.5	0.89
41	1.88	0.51
49	0.75	0.75
32	1.38	0.33
10	2.25	0.36
44	1	0.7
66	-0.13	0.41
57	1.88	0.75
18	1.63	0.4
47	1.75	0.45
17	2.13	0.48
29	1.88	0.43
63	1.5	1.13
9	2.63	0.98
16	0.5	0.65
52	1.13	0.52

33	1.75	0.43
19	1.75	0.61
31	1.38	0.43
67	1.38	0.49
65	1.88	0.4
59	1.75	0.14
11	1.75	0.82
55	0.38	0.61
3	1.13	0.58
6	1.13	0.25
14	1.13	0.25
12	1.38	0.73
50	1.75	0.95
13	0.88	0.47
35	1.88	0.67
56	2.25	0.51
54	1.38	0.5
30	1.38	0.43
58	0.88	0.56
15	1.38	1
4	2.25	0.73
34	0.63	0.76

Table 3. Correlations

			MFM	MPM
Spearman's rho	MFM	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.020
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.892
		N	50	48
	MPM	Correlation Coefficient	-.020	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.892	.
		N	48	48

Appendix B

The questionnaire

Dear Student,

Please fill in a questionnaire about your morals and values to allow me to understand your worldview better. Please answer the 48 questions honestly, there is no right or wrong answer.

In the first part indicate your level of agreement or disagreement on simple statements. In the second part you are asked whether some factors are relevant to your thinking when you have to decide if something is right or wrong.

You have 40 minutes to complete the questionnaire. If you have any questions, please ask me.

Thank you for your contribution.

Zoltan Krommer

Part 1 Please read the following sentences and indicate your agreement or disagreement:

[0]	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

- | | | |
|-----|--|----------|
| 0. | Example: When the traffic light is red you must stop. | <u>5</u> |
| 1. | Open communication and shared decision making makes a family stronger. | ___ |
| 2. | Hard working people shouldn't be taxed to help the jobless. | ___ |
| 3. | Nature is a resource to be used by man, with regard to cost and benefit. | ___ |
| 4. | Parents teach their children right from wrong by setting rules and enforcing them. | ___ |
| 5. | Good grades are valuable only if the most hard-working and talented students have them. | ___ |
| 6. | A corporation should make use of its human and material resources maximally at minimal cost. | ___ |
| 7. | Government should be caring, and support those, who can't take care of themselves. | ___ |
| 8. | The infrastructure the public provides is essential to any businessman's success. | ___ |
| 9. | The aim of education is to make people good citizens, community members and parents. | ___ |
| 10. | A spoiled child will be dependent for life. | ___ |

11. Crime has many reasons; the most important are poverty, bad education and bad parenting. —
12. In an ideal country the talented and the diligent do well, and those who are poor are probably not working hard enough. —
13. Everyone should feel empathy for those in need. —
14. As it is our only home, this planet should be cared for and kept clean. —
15. People's usefulness to society is in most cases not reflected in their income —
16. The enforcement of rules must be strict or they won't be followed. —
17. Compassion for those who are suffering is the most important virtue. —
18. When the government makes laws, the number one principle should be ensuring that everyone is treated fairly. —
19. I am proud of my country's history. —
20. Respect for authority is something all children need to learn. —
21. People should not do things that are disgusting, even if no one is harmed. —
22. One of the worst things a person could do is hurt a defenseless animal. —
23. Justice is the most important requirement for a society. —
24. People should be loyal to their family members, even when they have done something wrong. —
25. Men and women each have different roles to play in society. —
26. I would call some acts wrong on the grounds that they are unnatural. —
27. It can never be right to kill a human being. —
28. I think it's morally wrong that rich children inherit a lot of money while poor children inherit nothing. —
29. It is more important to be a team player than to express oneself. —
30. If I were a soldier and disagreed with my commanding officer's orders, I would do as I was told anyway because that is my duty. —
31. Decency(*illendőség*) is an important and valuable virtue. —

Part 2 When you decide whether something is right or wrong, to what extent are the following considerations relevant to your thinking? Please rate each statement using this scale:

[0]	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
not at all relevant	not very relevant	slightly relevant	somewhat relevant	very relevant	extremely relevant
0. <i>Example: Whether or not someone eats an apple every day. (This has nothing to do with my judgments of right and wrong)</i>					<u>0</u>
32. Whether or not someone suffered emotionally					—
33. Whether or not some people were treated differently than others					—
34. Whether or not someone's action showed love for his or her country					—
35. Whether or not someone showed a lack of respect for authority					—
36. Whether or not someone violated standards of purity and decency					—
37. Whether or not someone cared for someone weak or vulnerable					—
38. Whether or not someone acted unfairly					—
39. Whether or not someone did something to betray his or her group					—
40. Whether or not someone conformed to the traditions of society					—
41. Whether or not someone did something disgusting					—
42. Whether or not someone was cruel					—
43. Whether or not someone was denied his or her rights					—
44. Whether or not someone showed a lack of loyalty					—
45. Whether or not an action caused chaos or disorder					—
46. Whether or not someone acted in a way that God would approve of					—

Thank you very much. This is the end of the questionnaire.

Succeeding the Repracticum: Looking at the Period in Retrospect

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Introduction

A wealth of research exists in the field of pre-service education in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL), primarily concerning the teaching practice. However, there is a need to become more aware of what exactly leads to improved trainee performance in the period of teaching practice after experiencing a practicum failure in the previous academic year. This article offers insights into a small-scale qualitative study which narrows down the broad scope of research to that particular area. The study was conducted with a student teacher involved in teaching secondary school students. The main objective was to find out about the trainee's increased self-confidence and consequent thorough success to reach the goals in the repracticum. The outcomes reveal important conditions and circumstances for achieving better results in teaching towards development. The paper elaborates further on the findings and provides a description of the many different points raised in this specific situation of teaching and learning to teach. The findings of the research can have practical implications for teacher trainers, student teachers and policy makers taking part in school-based programmes.

Background to the research

Due to the increasing importance of English, considered as the lingua franca (Goldfus, 2011; Seidlhofer, 2005), special emphasis is placed on TEFL. This leads to the need to prepare better teachers and explains the parallel attempts to gain more profound understanding of the nature of pre-service TEFL education. Language teacher education is a demanding process. It allows student teachers to take part in effective professional training in university programmes and subsequently provides opportunities for them to merge theory and practice in classroom settings (Cochran-Smith, 2005). This study supports the view (Freeman, 1989; Wallace, 1991) that the period takes pre-service teachers in the direction of professional improvement and change

over the course of their studies. There is agreement among researchers (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Freeman, 1989; Wallace, 1991) that professional growth and change over time is a result of receiving not only theory but also practice of language teaching.

In the main, the model of teaching embodies the four crucial elements described by researchers (Freeman, 1989; Wallace, 1991): knowledge, skills, attitude and awareness. It is essential to clarify that the knowledge about applied linguistics, language acquisition and methodology is referred to as the “knowledge base of teaching” (Freeman, 1989, p. 31) or “received knowledge” (Wallace, 1991, p. 12) as it is received rather than experienced in professional action. Along these considerations, it is apparent in recent publications (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Richards, Conway, Roskvist, & Harvey, 2013) that the knowledge of teaching is connected closely to the actual teaching in the classroom. Reflection (Richards, Conway, Roskvist, & Harvey, 2013) upon classroom practices gives an insight into the underlying assumption that the level of effectiveness in instruction is dependent on teachers’ subject knowledge, for instance, their language proficiency. Within the new directions, Cochran-Smith (2005) addresses the question of accountability in teacher education and argues that the emphasis in the area of teaching should be shifted from the importance of content and input to the outcomes and results of prospective teachers.

While discussion emphasizes one element or another in teacher formation, Kagan (1992) highlights the notion of change in novice teachers’ images, beliefs or perceptions, which implies that the learning process of teachers has a multidimensional aspect. There are various issues (Barócsi, 2008; Farrell, 2007, 2008; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999; Gürbüz, 2006) which interact in pre-service teacher preparation and may help or hinder the process. It is implied that development of awareness and attitude are especially important factors which affect the level of success. It also emerges that pre-service teachers’ enthusiasm, motivation as well as anxiety determine professional growth. There is another important issue which has a significant bearing on effectiveness. As Barócsi pointed out (2008), willingness to cooperate with others is necessary and essential in order to achieve intended results. With reference to the literature (Widdowson, 1997; Yates & Muchisky, 2003), it becomes obvious that circumstances for individual learning are never identical. Development of teaching competence is strongly associated with the particular context and varies from one individual to another. On the whole, the implication is that working toward becoming a successful teacher is one of the main objectives in the period when gained knowledge is put into practical experience.

As the period of teaching practice is recognized (Farrell, 2007; Freeman, 1989; Wallace, 1991) to be one of the most important components of language teacher education programmes, numerous studies investigate the area. However, the belief is that there is limited literature on cases of failing the practicum (Farrell, 2007).

Whereas Farrell focuses on the reasons why pre-service teachers fail the teaching practice and gives attention to the discrepancies between trainees' expectations prior to the actual teaching and the outcomes during it, the current study examines the circumstances of succeeding the re practicum itself. In this respect, the ultimate aim of the current research is to shed light on the re practicum as an uncommon occurrence in language teacher education.

Rationale and research questions

As a teacher of English, one of my major interests with respect to my job is in the role of a school-based teacher trainer. In 1993 I obtained a mentor certificate and have been mentoring pre-service teachers of English during their teaching practice ever since. The student teachers participate in the TEFL programmes at Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest. The institution occupies a distinctive place in education in the Hungarian context and has provided a large number of training programmes (Barócsi, 2008) over the years. In this paper I will focus on the teaching practice component which is the focal point of the programmes.

In terms of content and objectives (Barócsi, 2008), the periods of teaching practice within the programmes are practically the same; however, regarding their length, the difference is significant. Previously, student teachers took part in an extended period of teaching practice lasting a whole school year or a semester. Current programmes have reduced the time of teaching experience in schools to a range of 17, 10 or 5 weeks. The number of lessons to observe and teach also depends on whether trainees are single- or double-major.

The study is related to the academic year of 2010/2011 when I worked with a pre-service teacher during the fall semester. This was a trainee who had failed the teaching practice in another school in the previous academic year. The student teacher shared this fact with me the very first day we met. She made the announcement in an embarrassed and nervous way and I was impressed by her decision to inform me about the failure. In fact, I had received no formal reports about the situation; therefore, I would not have known about the trainee's previous experience if she had not given information about it. I asked her about the reasons for the lack of success and she admitted that she possessed no knowledge of them. According to the trainee, the experience had been a complete failure and the teacher trainer had interrupted her teaching practice after three weeks.

At the time I had the opportunity to talk to her previous teacher trainer who pointed at reasons such as the trainee's inappropriate attitude, lack of effort and difficulties with time management. The encounter was exceptional as at that time I had had worked with 76 pre-service teachers; however, no one had failed the teach-

ing practice before. In fact, within the boundaries of language teacher education it is quite uncommon for student teachers to fail to complete their teaching practice (Farrell, 2007). The situation raised my interest and I decided to investigate it.

In line with the situation, three research questions were formulated:

- How can a student teacher succeed after experiencing a practicum failure in the previous academic year?
- What benefits can be derived from the re-practicum personally and professionally?
- Why is the sense of achievement at the end of the period of teaching practice useful and of crucial importance?

Research method

In a similar way to my previous research (Barócsi 2007, 2008, 2010), in order to collect and analyse data, a qualitative approach was used. The choice of method was based on four considerations: first, the complexity of the conditions and facts that were connected and affected the teaching practice; second, the low number of participants; third, an interest in the participant's detailed experiences and personal impressions about teaching practice; and fourth, the main aim to carry out in-depth investigation and gain profound understanding and knowledge of the main issues concerned.

The core of data was obtained from one pre-service teacher from Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest. The participant, a double-major in her final year of a five-year programme, was a female trainee (age 24). The teaching practice component required her to observe 15 lessons and consequently conduct 15 lessons individually. The weight of work was related to lesson planning, pre-and post lesson discussions and observations. The study included data from 30 students as the pre-service teacher taught two groups of students who were at different levels. Both the trainee and the students volunteered to contribute to the study as the aims and the importance of the research were explained. As far as the source of the data was concerned, strict confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed.

Description of data collection and data analysis

In line with the qualitative approach, no propositions or hypotheses were formulated prior to data collection and analysis. Data were collected mainly through an audio-recorded semi-structured interview and field notes from direct observations. The research method followed the stages of Mc Cracken's (1988) four-step model for carrying out a long qualitative interview. In order to support the research findings, triangulation, particularly data triangulation was used (Bachman, 2004; Crookes, 1992; Davis, 1995; Holliday, 2004; Lazaraton, 2003; Mc Groarty & Zhu, 1997; Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). The transcripts of the interview were triangulated with other sources of data: a) the student teacher's reflections attached to lesson plans; b) my observational field notes taken during classroom observations; and c) 30 students' feedback given to the pre-service teacher at the completion of the teaching practice.

The data were analysed using the constant comparative method described by Maykut and Morehouse (1994). Qualitative analysis and thematic analysis of the text were also applied (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Findings

The key to success after experiencing a practicum failure in the previous academic year

The data from the interview with the pre-service teacher and the additional sources were strongly related to the four main pillars of teacher education: knowledge, skills, appropriate attitude and awareness (Freeman, 1989; Wallace, 1991). In more specific terms, the key to success seemed to be based on central issues summarized below.

First, it appeared that the trainee was more successful than in the initial practicum as involvement in the process was placed in the centre of attention this time. Alongside true intention, the student teacher demonstrated a firm decision to cope with the tasks in the training experience. Second, it emerged that the novice teacher's results were mainly due to the development of appropriate attitude to the period of teaching and learning. There was evidence of willingness to work with the utmost care in order to improve and meet the requirements of teaching practice. The following comments illustrate the determination to change towards becoming a more professional teacher:

I tried to improve based on my teacher trainer's comments.

I wanted to do my best.

Third, the outcomes of the investigations revealed that besides appropriate commitment, development of awareness played a major role for the level of success. The student teacher reported that on the way assistance for raising awareness was derived from three main sources: (a) feedback gained from the students and the mentor, (b) ongoing encouragement and support provided by the mentor; and (c) multiple opportunities for reflection during pre- and post-lesson discussions. In this respect, on comparing learning results, the participant expressed an increase of knowledge about her personal qualities, strengths and weaknesses. Interpretations of the data implied that the growing awareness of personal and professional skills had provided an opportunity for development. It was further found out that the higher degree of self-awareness, self-esteem and self-criticism were also crucial for becoming a better teacher. The issues discussed above were raised in reflections similar to the following:

I don't think I did it in a very professional way last year.

Every person has his or her own problems, difficulties and I have mine with timing and deadlines.

It also emerged that the pre-service teacher's attitude and higher awareness resulted in considerable enthusiasm for her work with the students. Furthermore, there was substantial evidence to suggest that in the course of time the trainee became more motivated and interested in the teaching and learning demands. This points at the idea of change (Freeman, 1989) which is not necessarily immediate or complete and does not necessarily mean doing something differently. In terms of change, the observation field notes contained evidence that initially there was strong presence of anxiety which hindered the student teacher's performance of duties. As worries, nervousness and fears about teaching started to disappear, she became more efficient at her work. Therefore, it was plausible to assume that success was dependent on the level of anxiety and the ability to overcome it, which required longer time. For example:

I felt thrown into deep water without any help when I started to teach for the first time.

My fears have been alleviated a bit because of the practice.

Another consideration in this study highlighted the role of preparation for teaching practice. The participant argued that appropriate university training was an essential prerequisite for success and sense of achievement during the period of practicum. It appeared that teacher training within the university domain was particularly important as it provided the necessary background for success and further development.

Specifically, the view was that university training could be more useful for beginning teachers if it provided better opportunities for observing and planning lessons. The following quotations illustrate this conclusion:

Maybe if I had to observe more lessons in a professional way... if I had to write lesson plans, lots of lesson plans with professional help from my teachers or if I had to prepare lessons, it would have been easier.

Besides, analyses of the qualitative data revealed perceptions about a need to gain more practical knowledge prior the school experience. In particular, the pre-service teacher emphasized the necessity for multiple opportunities to micro-teach in university courses. The view was extended to the assumption that micro-teaching was organized in a way which needed reconsideration and improvement.

We had micro-teaching once but this is 10 minutes and you do it in pairs, so it is not a big task and I had to write a lesson plan. It also happened once and I didn't even know what happened with this lesson plan when I wrote it in class.

Teacher training at the university is too hypothetical....I mean we are taught theories but not actual tips or recommendations of how to do things.

I feel there is a large gap between university training and the real thing.

The above reflections from the interview explain the interpretation that while the participant made a clear distinction between receiving theory and practice, the suggestion was that there should be a stronger connection between the university experience and the teaching practice (Barócsi, 2010). The conclusion was that a fairly obvious link between theoretical and practical knowledge should be established. It was also felt that the participant would have liked to be given more practical guidance regarding the particular tasks of her school experience prior the period, however, a different way of carrying out preparation was not suggested.

Personal and professional benefits that can be derived from the re-practicum

As for the positive outcomes, the participant addressed professional learning as understanding and knowledge obtained through the practical experience. From a pre-service perspective, a successful novice teacher was associated with someone who learned about how to achieve goals, respond to students' needs, take high responsibility, perform various roles of a teacher in the classroom, and design better materi-

als for students. The following reflections were selected to show evidence of the trainee's account for achieving beneficial results:

I would like to say now that nothing went smoothly in the beginning and after that I tried to improve. I improved in preparing tasks better. I have a better insight now into how lessons work or what should be expected from students and I think that if I am going to teach some time I won't be a beginner.

I felt the thorough process of learning.

Apart from the student teacher's views about benefits developed from the period of re practicum, the information obtained from the observation field notes revealed significant improvement in the ability to plan and conduct lessons. A comparison was made between notes about initial and end-of-period pre- and post-lesson discussions, and it was observed that the reflective capacity of the beginning teacher had increased to a great extent. Another interesting point to consider is that subsequently the participant demonstrated more successful cooperation with the students and the in-service teachers in the school.

The sense of achievement at the end of the period of teaching practice

As for the third research question, the concept of achievement was used by the participant to describe the feeling of meeting the required standards successfully. Most important of all was that the sense of finding professional fulfilment increased the pre-service teacher's self-confidence which was regarded as crucial for a future career in teaching. The distinct impression of the pre-service teacher was that the successful teaching experience had reinforced her belief in the ability to teach.

Now, I'd like to thank you again for giving me a part of that practical knowledge I've just mentioned; and, most importantly, confidence so that I would be able to stand in front of people and perform for them. I think that is the core of what I took to the heart from this professional teacher training.

Achievement of better results in teaching practice significantly affects performance in a teaching career. Other than that, the findings related to the importance of further development towards what it meant to be a competent professional. While achievement during teaching practice was found crucial, the pre-service teacher identified six main areas in which further improvement was needed: lesson planning, materials design, classroom management, assessment of students, observa-

tion, and cooperation. The following quote exemplifies the view that in order to make progress, it is necessary to gain further experience in the domain of teaching.

It was only the beginning of a long process, a little peek into the whole thing and it was a disappointment that it was over.

As a final point of importance, it emerged that despite the fact that the student teacher had failed the teaching practice before, she formed strong attachment throughout the period of re practicum and discovered it hard to bring closure to the experience.

Conclusion and limitations

Although this is only one case study, it may provide useful conclusions for the people involved in organizing or mentoring the teaching practice of TEFL students. With the awareness that the theme of practicum failure is uncommon within language teacher education, the conclusions of the research can be useful in similarly difficult circumstances.

In order to apply knowledge in particular settings, we need profound preparation for teaching practice. This need makes enormous demands on methodology courses within TEFL programmes which are expected to provide adequate and more practical preparation to students. In light of these considerations there is a need to implement some changes in order to improve the content of pre-service foreign language training systems.

However, student teachers must not be expected to have developed the same skills to the same extent and to possess the same knowledge as others. Learning and development vary according to the person and take time to occur. The key issue throughout the study is that of the importance of sound work during the period of teaching practice. It must be stressed that the study reveals that student teachers' developing capabilities are essential in line with their positive attitude toward the process and raised awareness of classroom instruction. In fact, the conclusion is that positive attitude and increased awareness of student teachers determine the level of success. Ultimately, success in meeting high standards seems to follow when student teachers unite appropriate knowledge and skills with attitude and awareness to learning, teaching and developing.

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Emic Perspectives on an EFL Teacher's Assessment Practice in Grade 7

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Introduction

This paper aims to present results of a follow-up study to a two-year project sponsored by the European Union (TÁMOP 3.1.9), whose overall aim was to develop English diagnostic tests for Hungarian children in grades one to six. The ultimate aim of the project was to improve EFL teachers' assessment practice in the early language learning classroom. This qualitative, exploratory case study was conducted to demonstrate EFL teachers' assessment practices in lower primary school in Hungary.

The relevance of the topic lies in the increasing popularity of starting to learn English as a foreign language at an early age (Nikolov & Mihaljević Djigunović, 2006, 2011). Hungary is no exception to this tendency. Since lower-primary students' language development is slower than that of their older peers, maintaining their motivation is essential (Nikolov, 2011). At this age experiencing progress and success in the classroom is a major driving force (Nikolov, 1999b). Therefore, teachers should collect information on their students' progress, and adjust the syllabus accordingly. Regular feedback on what students are good at and in what areas they need to improve is also essential. Therefore, in the assessment of young language learners two trends have emerged: diagnostic and dynamic assessment (DA). In diagnostic testing the aim is to identify students' strengths and weaknesses (Alderson, 2005, p. 11). Students are provided with immediate detailed feedback on their results. DA represents a shift from the traditional separation of teaching and assessment to the integration of these two entities (McNamara, 2001). According to this approach, when the teacher observes the learner solving a problem alone, it only sheds light on the matured abilities, i.e., the past-development (Poehner, 2008, p. 5); whereas, by scaffolding, providing support, such as leading questions, hints or explanations the teacher can also reveal the abilities that are still developing. Teachers are also required to attend to their students individually rather than address the class as a whole (Edelenbos & Kubanek-German, 2004). In other words, they need

to be able to describe and interpret their students' language competence individually. The typical standardised or teacher-made tests are only partly suitable for such a diagnosis (Edelenbos & Kubanek-German, 2004). Therefore, they need to use and interpret various types of students' language sample. This is when diagnostic competence comes in handy (Edelenbos & Kubanek-German, 2004). Diagnostic competence is "the ability to interpret students' FL growth, to skillfully deal with assessment material and to provide students with appropriate help in response to this diagnosis" (Edelenbos & Kubanek-German, 2004, p. 60).

When it comes to the assessment of young language learners the importance of self- and peer-assessment should also be emphasised. According to Ioannou-Georgiou and Pavlou (2003, p. 10): "Self-assessment is extremely important in that it promotes invaluable learning skills such as monitoring one's own progress, reflecting on one's abilities and learning styles, and setting personal goals."

The role of peer-assessment is similar to that of self-assessment. It allows children to "gain further insight and responsibility in applying assessment criteria" (Ioannou-Georgiou & Pavlou, 2003, p. 11). In addition, it fosters a sense of community in the classroom and makes students realize that they can learn from their peers not only from the teacher (Ioannou-Georgiou & Pavlou, 2003, p. 11).

Research questions

In this paper, answers to the following two research questions will be presented:

- How do teachers assess students' performances?
- What feedback do teachers give to students?

Participants

One EFL teacher, Anikó (all the names of the participants are pseudonyms), and five of her seven graders from the same class, Robi, Béla, Balázs, Anett and Lili, agreed to participate in my exploratory study. They all attended the same prestigious primary school in Pécs. It is one of the schools affiliated to the University of Pécs, where in-service teachers do their teaching practice. Therefore, its students and teaching staff are considered to be well-qualified. As Anikó formulated it, "*Children attending this school are usually bright and hard-working, and come from well-educated families, where parents strongly motivate their kids to take learning seriously.*"

Data collection methods

Data were collected with semi-structured interviews with the teacher and the students. I also observed two classes so that the students and the teacher could get to know me and get used to my presence, and, consequently, to reduce the effect of the observer's paradox (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 176). During the classroom observations I took notes. The dataset elicited during the interviews were analysed for themes and issues (Creswell, 2003, pp. 190-195; Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 178). The language of the interviews was Hungarian, since the aim was not to test the participants' language proficiency, but to elicit information regarding their views and experiences. The Hungarian statements of the participants were translated into English and are printed in italics.

Procedures

In January 2011 the teachers participating in the third phase of the large-scale project were sent an email inquiring if they were willing to take part in a follow-up study of this research. One teacher, Anikó, volunteered to participate. First I observed two of her classes; then I interviewed the participants. The interviews with Anikó were conducted in two sessions in her breaks between classes, because otherwise it would have taken up too much of her time. In the present study the answers to the following questions were analysed (for the complete list of questions please see Hild, 2013):

- How important do you think teacher assessment is in class?
- How often and how do you assess your students?
- Do you differentiate between more and less able students when it comes to assessment? Do you assess the less or the more able students more often?
- What do you give to the students who answered correctly and to those who answered incorrectly?
- How and how often do you assess the students individually?
- Do you invite your students to assess themselves or their peers?
- How often?
- How important do you think self-assessment is? Why?
- When and how do you assist your students in class?
- Do you help them during assessment?

The students were interviewed one-by-one during their regular English classes in a free classroom; thus, I did not take up their free time. In the present study the an-

swers to the following questions were analysed (for the complete list of questions please see Hild, 2013):

- How often and how does your English teacher assess you in class?
- What kind of feedback do you learn most from?
- Whom does your teacher assess more often? (e.g. the more or less able students)
- How often does your English teacher assess your performance individually? What feedback does she give you?
- When and how often do you assess yourself and your peers in English class?
- Why do you think self- and peer-assessment are good?
- Do you like assessing your peers and yourself? Why?
- How and how often does your English teacher help you in class?
- Does she help you when she assesses your performance? How?

Results

Classroom observations

Before the first class I observed, Anikó told me *“I cannot show you anything about these students today; whether they will participate or not; you will not see anything about them”*. The whole class was devoted to discussing the homework, which was to make a “spidergram”, a list of words organised in a cobweb fashion. The students had to collect words in connection with traffic, and group them under headings, for example, rules, people, jobs, vehicles. The teacher and the students discussed who wrote what under the different headings. If unfamiliar words, for example, *ferry* and *cruiser*, were mentioned, Anikó asked the students “Can you explain what it is?” In these cases, the students either tried to give an English definition, or simply gave the Hungarian equivalent.

The students had few opportunities to use the foreign language (FL), and even those times Anikó failed to comment on their performance. Her utterances were limited on only few communicative intentions: 1) asking for more words, for example, “Have you got any other words in connection with railway?”; 2) asking the students to clarify new vocabulary, for example, “What is it good for?”, “Can you explain it?”, 3) asking the students to spell unfamiliar words, for example, “How do you spell it?”, and 4) thanking them for their participation.

In the second class, the students were to give a presentation in pairs about an object they invented. As it turned out during the interviews, they previously prepared the written version of this presentation at home, and submitted it so that Anikó could correct it. In this class, six pairs were given the chance to present their

inventions, for example, a cooking machine, a holowatch, and a supersuit; the rest had already done it in the previous classes. During and after the presentations the teacher did not initiate a discussion; she hardly asked any additional questions and gave little feedback to the students, except for when she inquired where people could buy the holowatch, and how much it would cost.

Next, they opened the coursebook (*Project English 3*, Hutchinson, 2003) and talked about the story, Justin's party, they had covered in the previous class. Anikó asked questions in English and the students answered while looking for the responses in the book. Afterwards, she quizzed the students on the words and expressions of the text. The students often did not wait for the teacher to ask them to reply but shouted in the answers, which Anikó had no problem with. She was content if she heard the correct answer and did not attempt to find out who said it, which was often impossible. It seemed that she assessed the vocabulary knowledge of the whole class, rather than that of the individual students. As for the feedback, she sometimes corrected the students or thanked them for the correct answer. The class was finished off with a competition. She asked for two volunteers who had to stand next to one of the desks. She said words, expressions or sentences in Hungarian, and the student who was quicker to translate them into English could take a step forward. The winner, who received a red point in the end, was the student who reached the teacher's desk first. The other student's performance was not commented on.

The interview with the teacher

When I asked Anikó about the importance of teacher assessment, she said *"It is very important that they receive immediate feedback on whether they did it correctly or incorrectly. Therefore, we assess [students] immediately, be it individual or group work, we correct it, and they get red points or marks 5"*. When I asked her to talk about assessing students not about checking and correcting the tasks, she answered that the students usually received detailed, individual *"feedback after we finish a topic, or, at least, at the end of each semester, when they get a mark for their end of term test"*.

Anikó assessed every student regardless of their language knowledge, since they *"should get positive and negative feedback as well."* She considered this important because smart learners should also see that they *"performed below the required level"*. Except for a few cases, she usually voiced these criticisms in front of the whole class, since *"this is not a secret. It is not a problem if the others can also see that this is a clever student who could have performed better. There is nothing hurtful about it"*.

In class, she gave red points rather than marks, unless some students put in an outstanding performance, which was worth a mark 5. Those who did not perform

well did not receive anything, because *“they can see anyway that it did not go well and they need to do more, because out of ten only seven were correct.”*

Sometimes, Anikó took home one or two exercise books to check their compositions, homework or what they had done during class. On such occasions, she always wrote some comments in them, such as *“This was good or wrong. Nice job. Well done. They can get marks 5. Or I write that this was unsatisfactory, and you can do better than that.”*

I also inquired about how often Anikó invited the students to assess themselves and their classmates. She stated that students’ self- and peer-assessment were not typical in her class, because it was *“not good or realistic.... because students cannot really decide if that sentence was grammatically correct or not. The best ones may be able to judge it, but it isn’t for sure.”* She was of the opinion that these students were not *“at the level of being able to make such decisions for a 100 per cent.”* One occasion when the students could assess themselves was at the end of the semester, when Anikó asked them what mark they thought they deserved, or what they thought of their general performance, and how they thought they could improve it. She believed that this was important so that the learners themselves could *“see where they stand. So they do not over- or underestimate themselves and identify the areas they can still improve. This is how they can develop themselves. They should not hear it from me, but feel it themselves.”*

Since scaffolding is a crucial element of DA, I was interested in how Anikó scaffolded her students’ performance. When the class was *“in a practising phase I naturally help them,”* she explained. She did not tell them what the answer was, but tried to *“lead them to the solution”*. However, if her aim was to find out what the students could or could not do, she did not give students any assistance.

The interview with the students

In the interview with the students, I elicited information about how they assessed themselves and their peers in class, and how the teacher assessed them and gave them feedback. As for self-assessment, three of the five students stated that they did not do it in the English classes. Two of them said that it rarely occurred. As Béla put it, *“at the end of the term, or semester, we are asked what mark we would give ourselves, or how we think we have participated in that year”*. In terms of peer-assessment, the ratio of the answers was the same. According to three students they did not do it, while the others said *“not very often”*. Robi mentioned one such occasion: *“We have to perform something in front of the class, and she asks for our opinions, and then she tells hers.”* Except for Robi, all agreed that both self- and peer-assessment would be useful, and they would gladly do it, because, as Béla formulated it, *“If we can find our own mistakes, that is good. We would have a better idea what we need to improve than when we are only given a correction.”* According to Anett, *“It is good because if I assess him, he can then learn from his mistakes”*. Balázs thought that students would do a better job because *“sometimes she*

[the teacher] *does not tell what's realistic.....because there are students whom she favours.*" The reason why Robi did not want to assess his classmates was that *"It is not my job."* As for self-assessment, he did not *"want to assess myself. I have said what I can. If the teacher likes it, it is ok. If she doesn't, then she doesn't."*

With regards to teacher assessment and feedback, there were some contradictions in the responses. According to Lili and Anett, during assessing their oral performance the teacher did not go into details. Anett stated that *"she is taking notes ... but she only tells us that this was good, or a few things were missing."* Both of them, however, wanted to get more information so that, as Lili put it, *"we would know what we need to brush up"*. The others also mentioned that Anikó was taking notes while they were doing the oral task, but they also indicated that *"she reads aloud her notes"*. Robi added that *"she tells us what exactly we need to pay attention to. For example, I tend to forget about the future tense."* Balázs noted that he usually did not receive any feedback, because he did not *"make mistakes, so she doesn't tell me anything"*. However, if Anikó was not satisfied with his performance she only said that *"I expect more from a student at your level"*, which Balázs did not consider very useful, since *"When I do what she asked, I don't understand why she is saying that"*. The other 'good' student, Béla, confirmed Balázs's statement about feedback: *"She doesn't usually come up to me [and tell him what he needs to practise or improve],but it happens more often if somebody is not so good at English."*

According to the students' reports, Anikó hardly ever gave them feedback individually. One such occasion was when *"for example, with the reading diary. She beckons us to her desk and tells us one by one what mistakes we have made."* After a test, she usually distributed the papers and only provided a general evaluation on the class's performance. According to Lili, in the tests Anikó *"underlines the mistakes or puts a question mark next to them."* Anna reported that the teacher *"gives a mark and everything is scored"*. Béla said that after getting back their papers they, sometimes, *"correct the mistakes, and we write down the correct version in our exercise book"*. However, *"It happens that she goes up to a student and discusses with him what he needs to practice."* When Anikó sometimes took the students' exercise books home, as Lili formulated it, *"to check if we have done everything, and if we have done it correctly"*, she did not talk to them individually, but *"corrects our mistakes, ... and gives it back to us to see it."* According to Robi, at that time Anikó also told the whole class that *"There were very good ideas she could give red points for. But there were quite a lot of mistakes, too."*

As for giving assistance during assessments, all of the participants claimed that Anikó did not help them while writing a test. However, if they did not remember a word, according to Balázs, *"We can raise our hands that we do not know how to say this in English."* Balázs also added that, in the case of oral tasks, if they stopped and could not continue, the teacher *"for example, starts the sentence. Then it comes to our mind and we can continue."*

In class, Anikó usually told the students, as Lili put it, “*who performed well, or was active. And we also get red points.*” Béla reported that when the whole group worked together, they “*discuss it why it is not correct, and what the correct answer is.*” According to Robi, “*below a particular number of mistakes she [the teacher] gives red points, if not, then nothing.*”

Discussion

In the first class I observed, on those few occasions when the students had an opportunity to use the FL, Anikó did not provide them with feedback on their performance. She mainly asked for more words that could go under the various headings of the spidergram. She checked if all the students were familiar with certain words, and, if it was necessary, asked the students to explain the meaning of new vocabulary items. The second class gave students plenty of opportunities to the students to show their oral skills, and consequently, to the teacher to assess them and give feedback on their strengths and weaknesses. However, besides thanking the students for their performance, Anikó failed to comment on their presentations. One reason could be that she thought that since she had already checked the written version, the students did not need feedback. The other reason might be that, as she formulated it in the interview explaining why she did not give feedback to those underperforming on a task, the students “*can see anyway that it did not go well*”.

The interview with Anikó revealed that for her progress testing was primarily about checking and correcting tasks. However, as Alderson (2005, p. 208) pointed out, mere test scores bear little information on learners’ strengths and weaknesses. Nikolov (2011) emphasised that young learners should see they were progressing and achieving higher levels; therefore, teachers’ feedback should be regular, individualised, stimulating and should follow learners’ performance. In the classroom, the students received detailed feedback only at the end of the semester or a larger topic.

Children are sensitive to criticism and may feel intimidated if feedback is given in front of their peers (McKay, 2006, p. 9; Nikolov, 1999a). In the interview, Anikó stated that she gave not only positive but negative feedback to her students in front of the whole class, because “*There is nothing hurtful about it*”. She only rewarded high achievements, whereas less successful students were left with no feedback at all. This practice may have several drawbacks. Firstly, less able students do not receive information as to what domains they need to improve to get to the next developmental stage in their language proficiency. Secondly, lack of feedback also means negative feedback since it suggests that their performance was not worth mentioning. This is especially demotivating for children who are very sensitive to failure and criticism.

Anikó did not go into details about students' weaknesses when she took home their exercise books to check what they had done. The holistic comments she wrote, for example, *"unsatisfactory, and you can do better than that"*, gave hardly any clue to the students as to what they should practice or improve. In addition, if tests are marked by teachers and error correction is not part of the learning process, learners do not benefit from seeing their tests with errors corrected.

Scaffolding young language learners is an important feature of DA. It can allow children to solve the task they could not do alone, and, thus, to feel success and development. By providing support teachers can also reveal prospective development (Poehner, 2008, p. 5), and, hence, can plan the syllabus accordingly. Anikó stated that during the introductory phase of a new topic she often helped her students by providing them with hints and leading questions: *"I'd rather lead them to the solution."* However, when it came to progress testing she rarely gave them assistance. The students reported on similar tendencies. Their answers also revealed that since Anikó expected them to cram texts, the support she gave them mainly aimed at jogging their memory rather than developing their ability by providing hints or leading questions.

Self- and peer-assessment are effective forms of assessment in the early language classroom. They can make young learners more conscious about their language learning, and help them develop learning strategies, which are crucial elements of the sustained process of early FL learning (McKay, 2006, p. 46). However, both the students and Anikó reported that they hardly ever applied self- and peer-assessment in class. Except for Robi, the students liked the idea of assessing themselves and their peers, because, as one of them wisely formulated it, *"We would have a better idea what we need to improve than when we are only given a correction."* Anikó believed that *"It is done properly only when I do the assessment."* This answer explicitly states that she wanted to be in control all the time and did not support learner autonomy, which is one of the long-term aims of language education. Anikó was aware of the importance and use of self-assessment. As she put it, it could help learners to *"see where they stand. So they do not over- or underestimate themselves and identify the areas they can still improve. This is how they can develop themselves."* However, she rarely applied self- and peer-assessment strategies because she did not consider them *"realistic"* enough. She believed that the students did not pay attention to the grammatical mistakes, but concentrated on the meaning, which is exactly where focus should be in early language learning (McKay, 2006, p. 41).

In the interview, while describing what feedback the teacher provided, the students described a variety of techniques, some of which contradicted one another. Two students stated that during an oral test the teacher took notes, but after it she only said, *"It was good"*, without further details. Three students claimed that the teacher read out her notes and told them what to pay attention to next time. This implies that Anikó did not always provide the students with information about the

strong and weak points of their performance, and they had no idea what to improve. The two 'good' students claimed they did not really receive any feedback on their performance because they did not make mistakes. According to them, however, Anikó commented on the lower achievers' performance more often. This practice suggests that in her class feedback mainly focused on what the students could not do, and rarely on what they did well. The students' report also suggested that Anikó concentrated on accuracy while giving information on their performance. It also happened that her feedback was too general or fuzzy, and the students did not understand it. Their report also revealed that when she evaluated their classroom performance her feedback was too general; she only rewarded top achievers, which practice can demotivate less successful students.

In DA, it is important that teachers attend to their learners and 'diagnose' their language competence individually (Edelenbos & Kubanek-German, 2004). However, according to the participating students, Anikó very rarely gave them feedback on a one to one basis. When she assessed their individual written work, she corrected their mistakes and gave very general feedback to the whole class. These general points provided the individual students with little information as to which language domain needed further practising in order to improve their language knowledge.

Conclusion

This paper aimed to give insights into a Hungarian EFL teacher's assessment practices in lower-primary school. In the classroom of early language learning, it is essential that students experience success and progress (Nikolov, 1999b). In order for teachers to accomplish this they should diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses, then provide immediate feedback and tailor teaching to learners' individual levels. Teachers should also let young learners assess themselves and their peers, and scaffold their development even during assessment. The results of the present exploratory case study, however, revealed that practice was very far from theory. Similarly to the results of international studies (Edelenbos & Kubanek-German, 2004; Rea-Dickins & Gardner, 2000), it showed little systematicity regarding a teacher's application of diagnostic procedures. Anikó did not provide her students with regular feedback; and even when she did so, it was often too general and did not contain specific information as to the strengths and weaknesses of their performance. In many cases, only high achievements were rewarded, whereas less successful students received no feedback at all. The students hardly ever received individualized feedback, and they did not know in what areas they needed to improve. During assessment Anikó focused on errors and accuracy rather than fluency, and what the students could not do, as opposed to what they could. Although Anikó understood the positive influence of self- and peer-assessment, she very rarely used

them because she did not trust her students' judgement on their own or their peers' performance. Her concern was that students disregarded grammatical mistakes and only concentrated on whether they understood what their classmates had said, in other words, on the meaning, which is what they should do at this age.

This was a qualitative exploratory case study; therefore, the results are not appropriate for generalisations. More research is needed to find out how other EFL teachers of young learners assess their students' progress in class.

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Different Candidates in Different Language Examination Periods

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Introduction

Ensuring comparability of test results is a fundamental requirement that language examinations have to fulfill. It is tempting to assume that scores on different forms are interchangeable and apply identity equation (Kolen & Brennan, 2004), but evidence has to be produced demonstrating that the test forms are truly parallel. Cook and Eignor (2005) take the extreme position claiming that it is impossible to develop tests that are similar in reliability and difficulty. In lack of such proof, statistical equating methods following the principles of classical test theory (CTT), including linear and equipercentile methods, require random sampling or random assignment, which is not feasible in the case of state-accredited language examinations in Hungary. In this context, a straightforward but not widespread solution for equating multiple test forms is to create a link by means of a common set of items or an anchor test. Even though candidates are not selected at random, exam offices often assume that the samples are of roughly the same level of ability and expect to find similar rates of success from one test administration to the next.

Since the problem outlined relates to the design of tests rather than the methodology of modeling responses, the same issue needs to be addressed when item response theory (IRT) is applied. In a typical language examination setting, candidate and item parameters are both unknown: they have to be estimated from the sample collected at a live administration. Verhelst (2004, pp. 4-5) describes three maximum likelihood estimation procedures comparing their requirements and statistical bases. Joint maximum likelihood (JML) is not recommended because it yields inconsistent estimates (Ghosh, 1995; Molenaar, 1995), and the associated standard errors are not correct (Drasgow, 1989; Karabatsos, 2000). If a link between two administrations is provided indirectly through the assumption that the candidate samples are drawn randomly from a population where theta is normally distributed, marginal maximum likelihood (MML) estimates are available. While in JML each person parameter is estimated individually, in MML only the mean and variance of the distribution are necessary. In a simulation study, Drasgow (1989) found that

MML estimates were far more accurate than JML estimates regardless of sample size or test length. By using common items in multiple test forms, conditional maximum likelihood (CML) estimates can be computed as long as total test scores are available. CML is not systematically affected by the distribution of the calibration sample, although tests still need to be targeted. In contrast with MML, the strength of CML estimation lies in its distributional flexibility, because if within the same design the samples “are not comparable, then it is unrealistic to assume that both groups come from the same population” (Verhelst, 2004, p. 7). Consequently, a false MML design claim might introduce systematic bias: the difficulty of the items administered to the weaker group will be overestimated, whereas the other items will be underestimated.

Previous studies have identified differences between samples in academic settings. Tate and Heidorn (1999) report year-to-year changes in average writing performance for a sample of 188 schools in Florida. In the Netherlands, Hickendorff, Heiser, Van Putten, and Verhelst (2009) applied latent variable modeling to provide an explanation for achievement decrease in mathematics. They claim that the drop was the result of an educational reform where the traditional long term division algorithm was replaced by the strategy of stating the answer without previous written calculations.

In Hungary, research on linking within foreign language testing has focused on either of two areas. First, as the CEFR grew in importance, a number of studies got published on external validation (Dávid, 2009, 2011) and alignment (Csépes, 2012; Szabó & Márcz, 2012). Second and still indirectly related to the CEFR, researchers started to delve into test equation, often questioning the equal difficulty of language exams (Kiszely & Szabó, 2009), or comparing these with the school-leaving examination (Együd, Fazekas, Huszti, Kiszely, & Tóth, 2008a, 2008b; Együd, Kiszely, & Szabó, 2012; Szabó & Kiszely, 2010). Comparison of candidate abilities either horizontally across different examination syndicates, or vertically within a system through time has not been the centre of research.

Despite the concerns discussed, a number of software applications use only JML or MML estimation procedure. Bigsteps, Facets, MiniFac, Quest, and Winsteps apply JML, whereas ConQuest and PARSCALE use MML. CML is the default procedure in LPCM-WIN, eRm, and OPLM (Bond & Fox, 2001; Eckes, 2009).

Method

This study seeks to answer the research question: Are mean ability levels the same in the populations across different test administrations? The measurement model underlying the study is the one-parameter logistic model (OPLM), where “difficulty parameters are estimated and discrimination indices are imputed as known con-

stants” (Verhelst, Glas, & Verstralen, 1995, p. 1). OPLM is similar to the Rasch model in that (a) the properties of stochastic ordering of the latent trait are present, and (b) conditional maximum likelihood estimation of item parameters is possible, but it also resembles the two-parameter logistic model because item ordering is contingent on ability (Sijtsma & Hemker, 2000).

A general assumption of all unidimensional IRT models is that all the items load onto a single main factor or latent trait (Hambleton, Swaminathan, & Rogers, 1991); therefore, the study is composed of three separate analyses. The first investigates the item responses to the Grammar and Vocabulary Paper in Euro examinations, the second looks at Listening, and the third deals with Reading. The data were collected in live exam administrations between March 2009 and December 2012. As a rule, there were four waves of data collection each year (March, May, September, and December), but in July 2012 an extra exam period was added. The intended level of the tests was B2 in general English. Sample sizes varied across administrations, as well as knowledge and skill areas ($M=1409.31$, $SD=432.14$). Given that candidates could also sit for individual test papers, overall sample sizes were also dissimilar: grammar and vocabulary ($N=24,936$), listening ($N=22,007$), reading ($N=24,932$). The research instrument used is the Structural Analysis of a Univariate Latent Variable (SAUL) module in OPLM (Verhelst & Verstralen, 2002).

The items were calibrated according to the OPLM model with the geometric mean of the discrimination indices set to $g=3$. Examinee ability levels were estimated by the Warm-estimator. The data were collected in a NEAT design (Holland, 2007), where the repeated test task (a) did not contain items with $a=1$, (b) the mean task difficulty was close to the standard, and (c) the common task did not contain extremely easy or difficult items.

After each wave of data collection, the common items were recalibrated and the old and new estimated item location parameter values were compared. Although model-to-data fit became less satisfactory as sample size increased, the model was retained because (a) item parameter estimation was always highly consistent ($r^2 > .90$), and (b) the ratio of the fit statistic value to its degrees of freedom was close to 2.

A detailed discussion of latent regression and SAUL can be found in Verhelst and Verstralen (2002, pp. 3-50). In essence, latent regression is “a univariate regression analysis, where the dependent variable (or the criterion as it is sometimes called) is not observed” (p. 4). The analysis requires the assumptions that the samples were randomly selected from the population, and that the residuals are normally distributed with mean zero and variance σ^2 . The structural analysis aims to answer the question whether the mean scores are the same in the population.

If the observed score of candidate i is Y_i , the regression equation is

$$Y_i = \mu + \beta_1 X_{1i} + \varepsilon_i$$

where μ is a constant set to zero for comparison, β_1 is a regression coefficient that shows the difference between the mean of the population in question and the reference population, X_{1i} is the variable of interest, in this case test administration dummy coded such that its value is either 0 or 1, and ε_i is the error component.

In the analysis, the structural model is linked to a measurement model (OPLM) because ability rather than the observed score is of interest. Thus, the left-hand side of the equation is modified to

$$\left. \begin{array}{c} Y_{i1} \\ Y_{i2} \\ \vdots \\ Y_{ik} \end{array} \right\} \leftarrow \theta_i = \mu + \beta_1 X_{1i} + \varepsilon_i$$

where the arrow represents the measurement model, and θ_i stands for ability of candidate i .

As the real person and item parameters are unknown, the analysis relies on the estimated candidate ability levels, item difficulty values, and the imputed discrimination indices. A model with a nominal background variable such as test administration contains $n-1$ regressors, since the reference category will be labeled as 0. The statistic to compare the estimated regression coefficients is given by

$$t = \frac{\hat{\beta}_1 - 0}{SE(\hat{\beta}_1)} = \frac{\hat{\beta}_1}{SE(\hat{\beta}_1)}$$

If t is larger than 1.96 in absolute value in a two-tailed test, the null hypothesis will be rejected at $p < .05$. Effect size is defined by the ratio of the estimated coefficient to its associated standard deviation (Cohen, 1988).

Results and discussion

In the Grammar and Vocabulary Paper, 600 items were calibrated jointly using conditional maximum likelihood estimation. The standard was set at $\theta = .11$. The administrations differed considerably in difficulty at the cut score ranging from 67.76% to 45.03% of (unweighted) total test scores. Latent regression revealed significant differences between mean ability levels in the population ($p < .05$) (Figure 1).

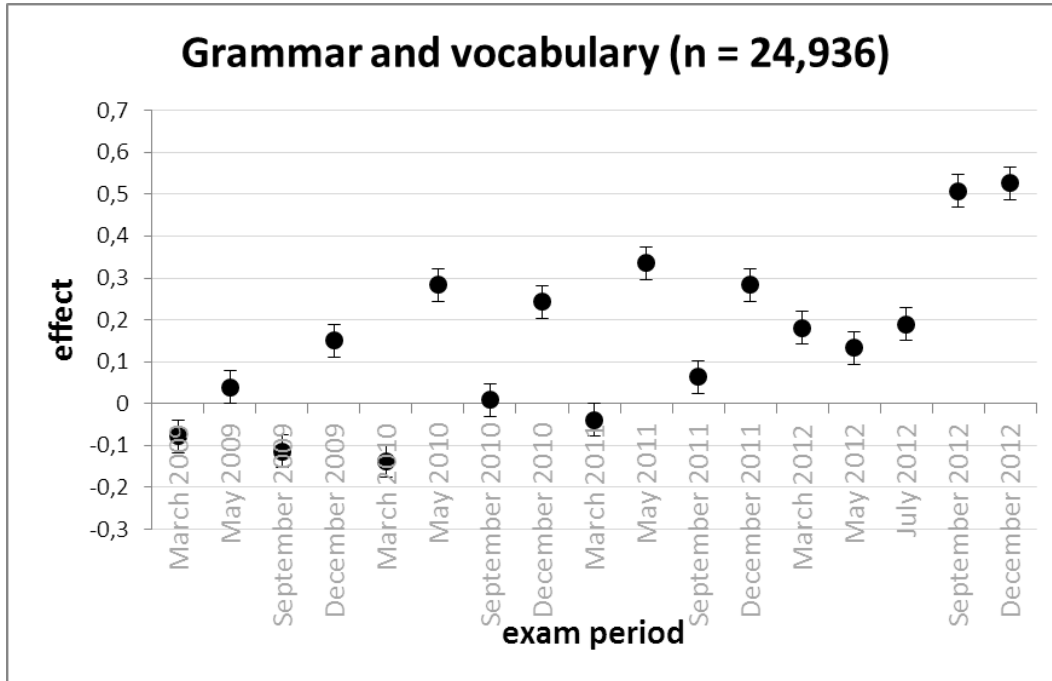


Figure 1. Estimated mean abilities in grammar and vocabulary by administration

In Figure 1, the label effect signifies the estimated gradient of the fitted regression line, i.e. the difference between the estimated mean ability of the population in question and the reference population. As the locations of the estimated parameters suggest, there were significant differences with an overall trend of increase. There were six distinct ability groups, which from highest to lowest are (a) September 2012 and December 2012; (b) May 2010, May 2011, December 2010, and December 2011; (c) March 2012, May 2012, July 2012, and December 2009; (d) May 2009 and September 2011; (e) March 2011 and September 2010; and (f) March 2009, March 2010, and September 2009.

In the Listening Paper, 396 items were concurrently calibrated. The standard was set at $\theta = .04$. For a pass, candidates had to correctly respond to 75.64% of the easi-

est test, but 46.30% of the most difficult set of questions. The estimated population means showed significant differences (Figure 2).

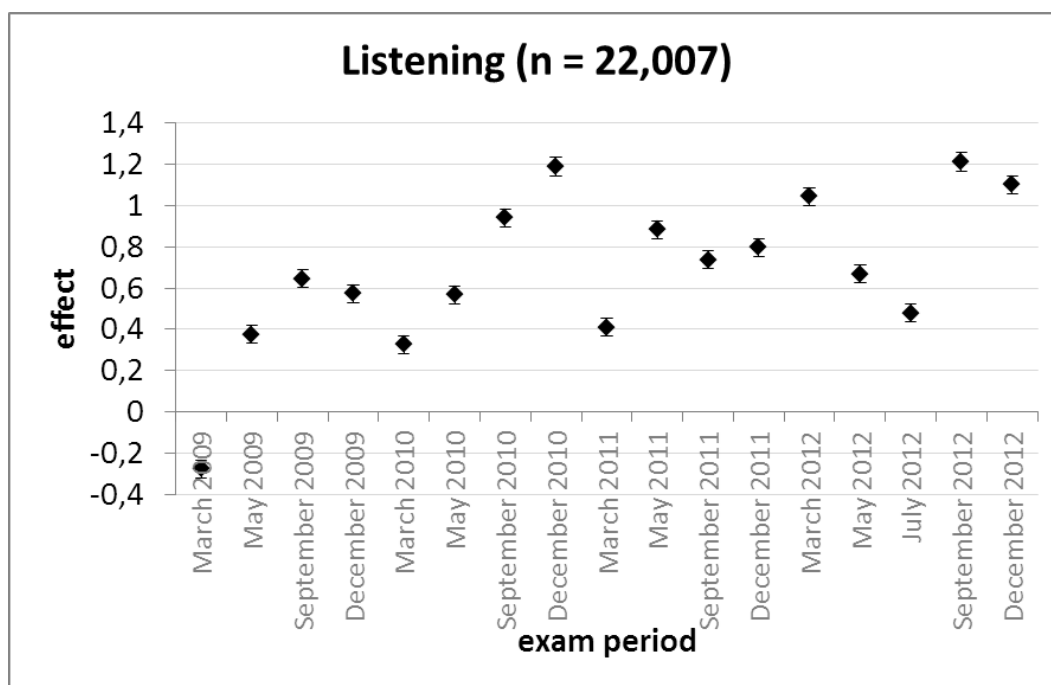


Figure 2. Estimated mean abilities in listening by administration

Figure 2 reveals a less pronounced but still visible trend of increase in estimated mean ability values. March 2009 was clearly the weakest group, whereas September 2012 was the best. The exam periods formed six groups of varying mean ability: (a) March 2012, September 2012, December 2012, and December 2010; (b) May 2011 and September 2010; (c) September 2011 and December 2011; (d) May 2010, May 2012, September 2009, and December 2009; (e) March 2010, March 2011, May 2009, and July 2012; and (f) March 2009.

In the Reading Paper, 354 items were calibrated together. The standard was set at $\theta = .07$. As with the other parts of the exam, different administrations were differentially challenging. A successful candidate had to embrace 49.63% of the hardest set, but 72.13% of the easiest test. The estimated ability levels also showed significant differences (Figure 3).

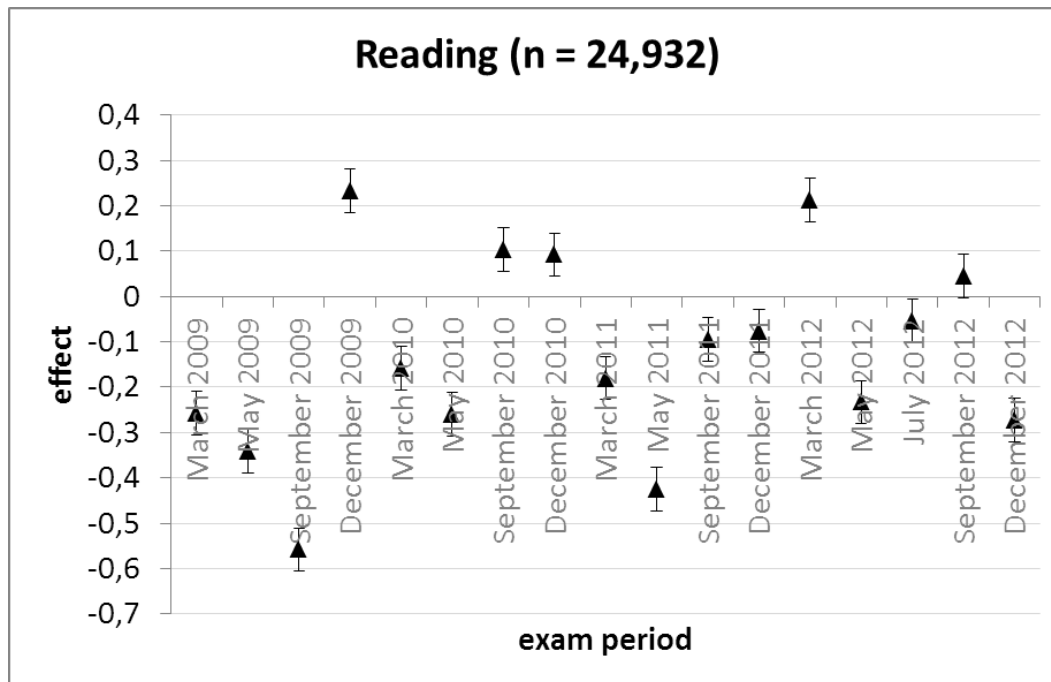


Figure 3. Estimated mean abilities in reading by administration

As Figure 3 shows, the exam periods were not of the same mean level of ability. Unlike Grammar and Vocabulary or Listening, Reading did not show an increasing pattern with time. Seven distinct ability groups were formed: (a) March 2012 and December 2009; (b) September 2010 and December 2010; (c) July 2012 and September 2012; (d) March 2010, March 2011, September 2011, and December 2011; (e) March 2009, May 2010, May 2012, and December 2012; (f) May 2009 and May 2011; and (g) September 2009.

As the majority of test takers in Euro examinations are students between 16 and 24 years of age, academic seasonality was suggested as an answer for periodic changes in mean ability levels. Arguably, the candidates, most of whom are secondary school or university students, come better prepared after nine months of study in May than following a relaxing but idle vacation in September, or in the middle of the Christmas holiday season in December. However, the design as implemented in the three analyses was inadequate to address this issue because administration was taken as the basis of comparison. In order to be able to study seasonality in mean test taker abilities, I recoded the data arranging the March, May, September, and December sessions into four groups. July 2012 was excluded because of its small sample size. The knowledge and skill areas were analyzed separately. In each case, the first group, March, was set to be the reference month with a mean value of 0. Therefore, negative values do not indicate absence of ability, but comparatively less of the trait in question.

In the fourth analysis, I estimated mean grammar and vocabulary knowledge in the four months. The sample included all the test responses that were linked together through common items between March 2007 and December 2012. The results are displayed in Figure 4.

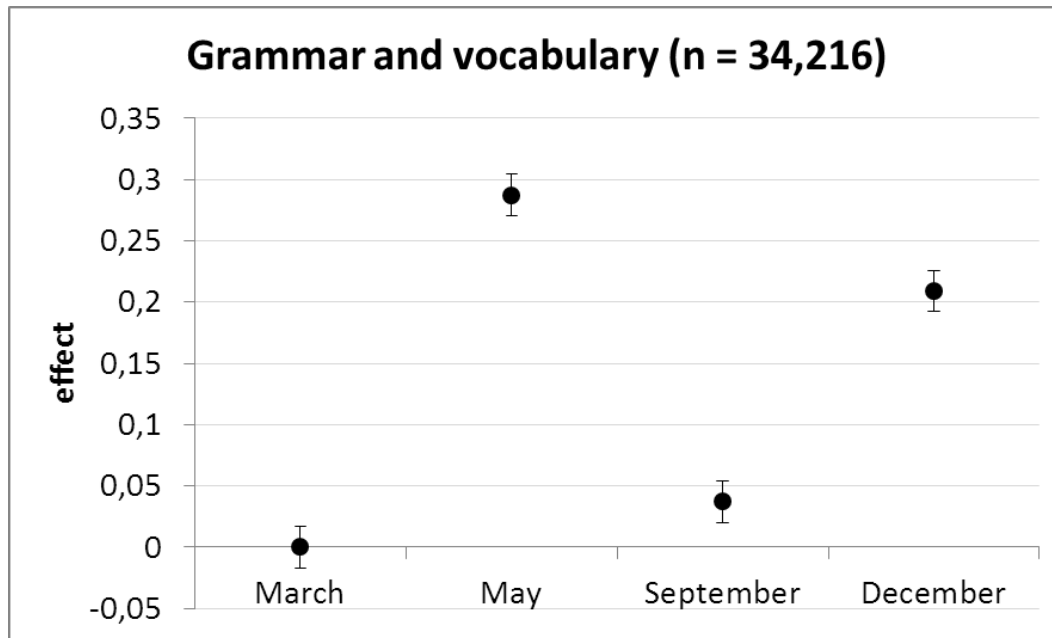


Figure 4. Estimated grammar and vocabulary knowledge in examination months

Figure 4 shows the estimated grammar and vocabulary knowledge in the populations of the examination months. The regression analysis found significant differences at $p < .05$ between each pair of months with effect sizes ranging from $d = .291$ to $d = .038$. The standardized difference between March and September was the smallest but still significant ($z = 2.18$, $p < .05$). The May population was clearly the most able, followed by December, then September, and March was the weakest.

The Listening sample included the same administration times as Grammar and vocabulary, but not necessarily the same candidature. The latent regression analysis found significant differences (Figure 5).

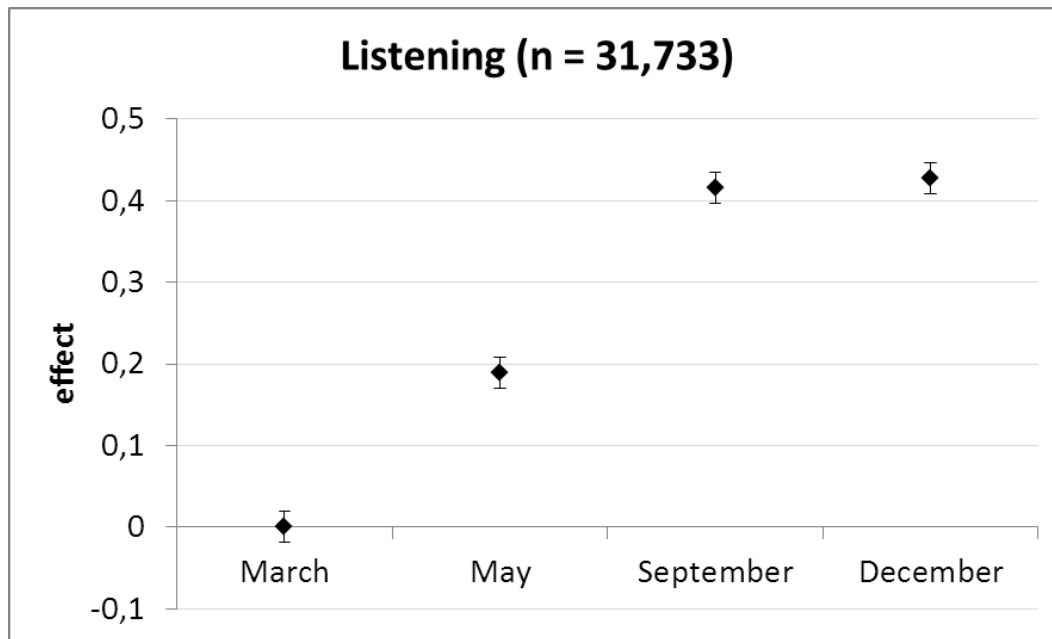


Figure 5. Estimated listening abilities in examination months.

As Figure 5 shows, the weakest population was once again March. The best population, December, was not significantly different from September ($z=.53$). May took third place between March and September. Effect sizes were between $d=.401$ and $.140$.

In Reading, the analysis contained data since September 2006 in a total of 24 administrations. The estimated abilities are in Figure 6. While March was set to be zero, May and September are associated with negative values in Figure 6. Candidates in December were the best readers. All the pairwise comparisons were significant at $p < .05$. Effect sizes varied between $d = .389$ and $d = .063$.

A general finding from all three analyses is that despite the carefully designed blueprint and regular item writer training, the tests were still substantially different in difficulty. Falsely assuming that they are strictly parallel forms and carrying out identity equation would incur serious bias in reported scores and undermine the validity of the results.

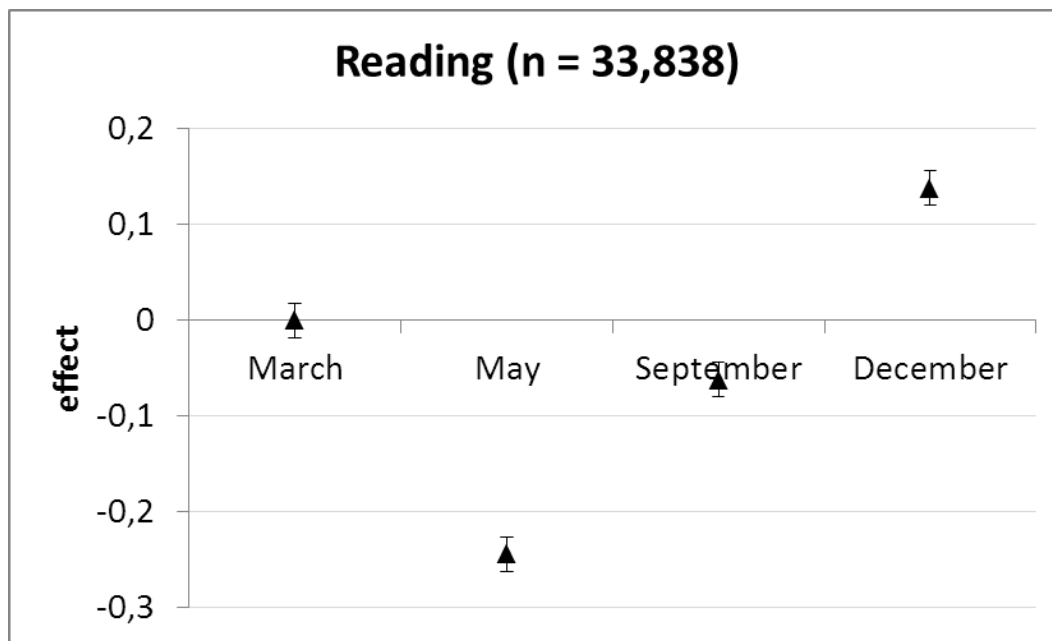


Figure 6. Estimated reading abilities in examination months

An important result from the latent variable structural analysis is that while some administrations were similar in ability to others, it was the significant differences between them that characterized candidate groups more. Further, the absence of an overall pattern was typical of candidate abilities when the three parts of the examination were compared. Some administrations were fairly homogenous in terms of level of attainment in the three abilities. September 2012 presented excellent listeners with strong grammar and broad lexicon, who were also good readers. In May 2012, test takers were sampled from a population with average ability. Candidates in May 2009 were equally weak in all three areas. By contrast, other administration times showed considerable variance along the latent dimensions. The May 2011 population was characterized by high levels of grammar and vocabulary, average listening, and very weak reading skills.

In the same way, differences prevailed in the second round of analyses, when the data were rearranged so that a within-year periodicity could be detected. As a rule, candidates in December tended to arrive better prepared than the other groups. No such general tendency was found regarding March, May, or September. As for specific components, May yielded the best ability estimate for grammar and vocabulary, September and December produced the best listening results, and December gave the highest ability in reading, too.

Although a quantitative analysis is not suited to provide reasons for such differences, a possible explanation could be that candidates came prepared in December. Alternatively, time management and careful consideration of when it is most advan-

tageous to take the exam might underlie this tendency. The December candidature might be more focused on the goal of gaining their university degrees or the extra points for university admission, and plan to respect the set deadlines.

Conclusions

Both rounds of analyses provided evidence that candidates were from populations with different mean abilities rather than samples from the same population. There are two fundamental consequences deriving from this finding. First, the distributional assumption of marginal maximum likelihood estimation cannot be maintained; therefore, without some extra information about candidate ability, it is impossible to report test results. Linking through common items is not only preferable to introducing additional assumptions in otherwise non-linked designs, but a necessary requirement for any valid score interpretation. Second, the predictive value of results from previous administrations or beliefs about academic progress is strictly limited.

This study is limited in scope, for only those parts of Euro Examinations were investigated in which reported scores are calculated through the application of the OPLM model. Three parts were not discussed: Mediation, because of its small samples; Speaking and Writing, where rater-mediated assessment is in practice. Further research is needed to explore if such differences in test taker mean abilities exist in the subjectively scored parts of the examination, as well.

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