

**Theory and Practice  
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Second Language Acquisition**

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## Preface

We resolved to start publishing *Theory and Practice of Second Language Acquisition* thinking that despite the fact that Poland had a strong position in second language acquisition research and that quite a large number of monographic publications in this area came out every year—often published abroad with *Multilingual Matters* or Springer, among others—yet there was no academic research-oriented journal devoted to the theory and practice of SLA which would be widely available to Polish academia. Following the publication of the first issue, however, it became clear that its scope would attract submissions not only from Polish scholars but also international academics. Thus far, TAPSLA has featured articles by such renowned contributors as David Singleton, Tammy Gregersen, Jean-Marc Dewaele—and many other scholars representing innovative trends in SLA research worldwide. The journal has become the venue of thought exchange for academics at home and abroad, focusing on often un-researched issues and fairly new developments in SLA studies. The Editorial Board consists of both Polish scholars and foreign experts in the area, and represents the wide range of research interests of its members. All updated information on the journal is available on the Institute of English (University of Silesia in Katowice) webpage at [www.ija.us.edu.pl](http://www.ija.us.edu.pl) (via a special link) and the journal webpage at <http://www.journal.us.edu.pl/index.php/TAPSLA>.

The present issue consists of articles in various areas of second/third language acquisition, but has a strong focus on foreign language instruction and materials used for this purpose in a variety of contexts and for different age groups. The issue starts with a presentation of a fairly new context of foreign language teaching—a professional environment—in the text by Dorota Lipińska “The Influence of Age and L2 on Third Language Acquisition in a Corporate Environment.” It focuses mainly on two important variables, of age and the influence of a formerly acquired foreign language on the current learning practices of adult learners who are professionally active. Katarzyna Bańka in the article

“An Analysis of the Higher Education Systems of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language in Poland and China” presents a comparison of educational practices in teaching Chinese as a foreign language (ChFL) in China and in a non-native context of Poland. The author puts forward some ideas to improve ChFL instruction. Elżbieta Gajek looks at more innovative language sources in her article “ICT as Material Culture in CALL,” which treats information and communication technologies (ICT) as representing digital culture artifacts, a significant part of material culture. The author demonstrates their role in teaching foreign languages and aims to find relations between language teachers’ access to digital devices, their perceptions of the usefulness of ICT in foreign language learning and teaching, and the actual use of digital materials in their own language teaching, and beyond the classroom for non-professional uses. The next text introduces the theme of authentic foreign language teaching materials as Salama Embark in “Some Libya EFL University Students’ Attitudes towards Using Authentic Materials for Reading Classes” investigates the attitudes of Libyan English foreign language (EFL) university students towards authentic materials used in FL instruction. The author believes that authentic materials not only present an invaluable source as language input, but first and foremost constitute a strong motivator for learners in their endeavour to become fluent FL users. An interesting and infrequently researched issue of teachers’ foreign language attrition is presented in the text by Teresa Maria Włosowicz “English Language Attrition in Teachers: Questions of Language Proficiency, Language Maintenance, and Language Attitudes.” The author discusses the occurrence of foreign language attrition in non-native English language teachers and presents the results of an empirical study of its manifestation at the level of advanced vocabulary and structures. It also comments on the participants’ attitudes to linguistic correctness and their autonomous strategies of language maintenance. Finally, Maria Stec’s article “Multimodality of Cultural Content in ELT Materials for Young Learners” deals with English non-authentic didactic materials but this time from the perspective of their value as cultural artifacts that can be used successfully in early language education. She identifies the most important aspects related to teaching elements of English culture as represented in English coursebooks for young learners.

We hope that this journal to some extent fills a gap in the Polish journal publishing market and that it will be of interest to researchers working in the field of second language acquisition. We would like to invite Polish and foreign academics to share their scholarly research with us by submitting their work to the *Theory and Practice of Second Language Acquisition* journal published by the prestigious Polish academic publisher, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego (University of Silesia Press).

*Danuta Gabryś-Barker*  
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## **The Influence of Age and L2 on Third Language Acquisition in a Corporate Environment**

### **Abstract**

The role of age factor in SLA has been systematically studied by numerous psycholinguists for many years (Ellis, 1994), starting from the Critical Period Hypothesis (first proposed by Penfield and Roberts, 1959, and then popularized by Lenneberg, 1967) and continuing until today. However, sometimes learners' age is not the only potential difficulty. The situation becomes even more complicated in the case of L3 acquisition when not only all factors influencing SLA are active, but also numerous other processes affect TLA.

The aim of this study was to analyze the influence of the age factor and learners' L2 on TLA in a corporate environment. A group of subjects from an international company situated in the south of Poland agreed to participate in the study. They were native speakers of Polish learning L3-German in their company, but varying in terms of L2 (English and Russian), as well as in terms of age. The participants were between 28 and 62 years old. The results of regularly administered tests focusing on various language skills, obtained by the learners were compared. The subjects also completed questionnaires concerning difficulties they encountered while learning German. Both information sources delivered intriguing results contributing to the area of TLA and age-related research.

*Keywords:* age, third language acquisition, in-company teaching, foreign language learning

### **The Age Factor in SLA**

The age factor in Second Language Acquisition is one of the most widely discussed elements affecting this process and it has been systematically studied by numerous psycholinguists for many decades (e.g., Jackiewicz, 2009). It is widely known that the tendency to acquire novelties changes during the

lifetime (Ellis, 1994). A natural question which arises when one considers the age factor is the matter of a possible critical period for SLA (e.g., Singleton & Leśniewska, 2012). For instance, for many years it has been demonstrated that “earlier is better” for learning a second language (Flege & MacKay, 2011).

These kinds of opinions are inextricably connected to the Critical Period Hypothesis which in fact has been the subject of a long-standing debate (in both general linguistics and language acquisition studies) over the extent to which the ability to acquire language is actually biologically linked to age. This hypothesis claims that there is an ideal period of time to acquire language in a linguistically rich environment and that after this time ‘window’ further language acquisition becomes much more difficult. The hypothesis was first proposed by Penfield and Roberts (1959) and then popularized by Lenneberg (1967) who stated that there are maturational constraints on the time a first language can be acquired. The language acquisition relies on neuroplasticity. If language acquisition does not occur by puberty, some aspects of language can still be learnt but full mastery is impossible to be achieved. Although the theory constituted the starting point for extensive research in studies on L1 acquisition (see, e.g., Singleton & Ryan, 2004), it has often been extended to a critical period for the second language acquisition, however this application is much more controversial. The most popular interpretations of the Critical Period Hypothesis in SLA are the following. Firstly, after a certain maturational point, second language learners are no more able to achieve the native-like proficiency in their target language. Moreover, they need to undertake more tremendous effort in order to achieve good results in language learning. What is most pessimistic, is the sharp decline in second language learning potential observed after the age of puberty (Singleton & Leśniewska, 2012). Certainly, it has been often observed that L2 older learners rather rarely achieve the native-like fluency which younger learners display more frequently, despite commonly progressing faster than children in the initial stages. It may be that it is better to start learning a new language at a young age; however, there are also numerous exceptions of individuals who mastered L2 in adulthood (Singleton, 1995).

Nevertheless, it cannot be forgotten that children lack the linguistic experience, strategies, and knowledge which adults possess and which can be useful in learning a new language. An individual who began learning English at the age of two, after 20 years achieves a similar level of competence like somebody who started learning the same language intensively at the age of sixteen after six years. Thus, it is very difficult to decide whether children are able to achieve the same level in a new language faster than teenagers or young adults (Arabski, 1997; Jackiewicz, 2009).

Moreover, there is a constant question when exactly this critical period finishes. For instance, Aram et al. (1997, p. 85) noticed that “the end of the critical period for language in humans has proven [...] difficult to find, with



estimates ranging from 1 year of age to adolescence.” In literature one can find various proposals concerning this matter. While Piske et al. (2001) suggest it is 12 years of age, others place it at 15 years of age (e.g., Zbrocki, 1966) or even 6 (e.g., Sikorski, 2002).

Another topic for dispute is what language skills may be affected by the critical period (see Singleton, 2005). Most researchers focus on L2 pronunciation and agree that language learners who start to be exposed to a target language after the age puberty will not ever “pass themselves off as native speakers phonologically” (Scovel, 1988, p. 185). The same view is presented by, for example, Long (1990) or Wysocka (2007). Nonetheless, there are also opposite opinions and studies (e.g., Tarone, 1978) describing adult language learners who managed to achieve perfect pronunciation in their target language. Also Porzuczek and Rojczyk (2010) noticed that the results obtained from the latest acoustic studies suggest that human capability of learning L2 sound systems and their components is not diminished or lost after the age of puberty and that older language learners are capable of acquiring foreign vowels and consonants at a good level. Other skills that are thought to be under the influence of the critical period are L2 morphology and syntax (e.g., Long, 2007).

However, there is no clear explanation whether the critical period really affects those skills. There were numerous studies on language learners who achieved very high levels of L2 proficiency in spite of starting learning their target language at older age (e.g., Birdsong, 1992; Singleton & Lengyel, 1995; Bongaerts et al., 2000; Bongaerts, 2003; Muñoz & Singleton, 2007; Kinsella, 2009; Flege & MacKay, 2011). Hytenstam and Abrahamsson (2000) notice that there are no described instances of such learners who would behave in every detail like native speakers of a particular language, but still there are no early L2 learners who would either. What most researchers seem to agree on, is the opinion that later language learning requires more effort and conscious learning (e.g., Lenneberg, 1967; Breathnach, 1993; Bongaerts, 1999). Nevertheless, it may be connected not with the critical period for language acquisition, but with the process of increasing importance of conscious learning in all domains, linked to one’s cognitive development (e.g., Feldman, 2009).

What appears to be the most reasonable approach to the age factor in SLA, is a new tendency to change the scope of interest a little. Instead of focusing on only neurobiological maturational factors, more and more researchers are starting to examine a complex combination of social, environmental, and affective factors reflecting multidimensionality of SLA (Singleton & Muñoz, 2011; Singleton & Leśniewska, 2012).

## Language Transfer

Transfer of linguistic properties from one's mother tongue into the target language is said to be one of the most obvious and at the same time pervasive features of the process of second language acquisition (Towell & Hawkins, 1994; Arabski, 1997; Arabski, 2006). The discussion on this topic began with the work of American linguists, Robert Lado and Charles Fries, in the 1940s and 1950s. Although the work of Lado and Fries was obviously a kind of catalyst for subsequent research, one can argue that serious thinking about cross-linguistic influences could be dated even to the nineteenth century historical linguistics (Odlin, 1989; Gass & Selinker, 2008). Since the beginning of the twentieth century there has been a great acceptance of the idea that native language and its characteristics could seriously influence the process of SLA (Odlin, 1989; Bley-Vroman, 1990; Bohn, 1998). For many years transfer was perceived as the major source of several difficulties for L2 learners (Richards & Sampson, 1974; Broselow, 1984). At the very beginning of the research in this subject potential difficulties were expected to happen only in those areas of two languages where they were most visibly different (Arabski, 1997). At the same time, the structural distance between languages was thought to be an important factor either facilitating or hindering second language acquisition (Crystal, 1998). SLA was supposed to be dealing with and overcoming those differences. Yet, later research showed that the differences and similarities between two languages are usually not comparable to difficulties in acquiring one of them as the second language and that transfer itself is a very complex and deep phenomenon (Arabski, 1997; Crystal, 1998).

Moreover, it turned out that there are different kinds of transfer and that it may be either positive or negative. In the case of visible similarities between the mother tongue and the target language one could speak about a phenomenon of positive transfer (Ellis, 1994; Arabski, 2006). From the behaviorist perspective positive transfer is helpful in acquiring second language habits (Littlewood, 1994). Yet, the differences and contrasting elements between languages usually tend to contribute to negative transfer (Ellis, 1994; Arabski, 2006). Negative transfer of L1 habits hinders a learner's acquisition of a target language (Littlewood, 1994). It was observed that not only structures, vocabulary, and grammar rules are transferred in SLA, but also other habits from L1 may undergo this process (Corder, 1967).

Another unarguable issue is the fact that transfer changes as learners' interlanguages develop (Arabski, 1997). According to Towell and Hawkins (1994) the acquisition of second languages and the development of one's interlanguage is typically staged. At beginner and elementary levels, students tend to be very sensitive to the influence of their mother tongue. When their interlanguage

changes, develops, and becomes more similar to L2, the influence of L1 is usually less visible. On the other hand, the situation is more complex, because, although advanced L2 learners are obviously less sensitive to L1 influence in everyday conversations and simple sentences, they also use more complicated language structures and forms which again can be significantly affected by their mother tongue thus showing again examples of transfer (Arabski, 1997; Towell & Hawkins, 1994). Generally speaking, language transfer is used to simplify L2 structures and their use, not to complicate them (Arabski, 2006).

What is also essential is the fact that the mother tongue and the target language need to be genetically connected to each other to allow the occurrence of transfer between them (Arabski, 1997). Interference is likely to appear when there is a crucial similarity measure between the first and the second language (Ellis, 1994). Depending on how close the languages are and what kind of similar characteristics they share, the transfer will occur in different situations and different structures (Arabski, 1997; Towell & Hawkins, 1994). Although it seems that transfer may affect all linguistic levels, such as phonetics, phonology, syntax, morphology, lexicon and discourse (Towell & Hawkins, 1994), it should be added that not every structure from L1 may be transferred to L2. Here the notion of transferability is a very significant factor. It is said that only those structures which are psycho-linguistically neutral can be transferred. It is very interesting that L2 students do not tend to transfer, for example, idioms (Arabski, 1997; Kellerman, 1977). Still, structures from L1 which sound naturally in L2 are very frequently transferred. It was also proven that transfer may be observed much more often in informal situations, in which a speaker does not focus on the form, but on conveying the sense of the message itself (Arabski, 1997, 2006). One cannot also forget that language transfer does not occur only between L1 and L2. In the case of L3 acquisition, the situation becomes even more complicated and possibilities of interlanguage transfer multiply (Arabski, 2006).

### **Third Language Acquisition**

First of all, it has to be said that for many years acquisition of third or any additional language was simply classified as a part of SLA (e.g., Cenoz, 2000; Jessner, 2006). However for the last twenty years Third Language Acquisition (TLA) has been described as a separate process, clearly different from SLA (Chłopek, 2011), and this difference will be important for the purpose of this article. When one compares SLA and TLA it is easy to notice that there are copious differences between these processes. However, the main and probably

the most crucial one, is the number of languages (or interlanguages) previously acquired by language learners. It is so important as those languages are likely to interact with one another. Another factor which cannot be ignored is the order of language acquisition in TLA. The explanation is simple: while during SLA the number of such configurations is quite narrow—either two languages may be acquired synchronously or L2 after L1, TLA allows for more complex combinations (e.g., three languages one after another, L1 + L2 first and then L3, L1 first and then L2 + L3 or even all three languages at the same time). The third very influential factor is one's fluency in each of the acquired languages. Having looked at all those factors altogether, one may notice that third language acquisition is a more complex and more dynamic phenomenon than SLA (Chłopek, 2011).

Transfer in TLA may also be more complicated and complex than in SLA. It is easily noticeable when one remembers that SLA allows for L1→L2 transfer or L2 intralingual interference (and of course, L2→L1 but this option is not as common as the two previous variants), while in TLA, because all acquired languages may influence each other in any possible configuration, the number of combinations is much higher. For instance, for three languages the transfer possibilities could be following: L1→L2, L1→L3, L2→L3, L2→L1, L3→L2 or L3→L1 (Chłopek, 2011; Ionin et al., 2011). Moreover, although it does not occur so frequently, also various language combinations may be a source of language transfer (e.g. L1 + L2→L3, L1 + L3→L2 or even L2 + L3→L1) (Chłopek, 2011). What is also interesting, some studies showed that various languages create various interlingual effects and, for instance, it is a frequent case that L2 affects L3 in ways that L1 never does (Odlin, 2005).

Therefore, both L1 and L2 may affect L3. The frequent question is which of those languages is a more frequent source of transfer. Although rather considerable research has been conducted in this matter, the results are not uniform. Depending on a research project, combinations of analyzed languages and examined language aspects or skills, some researchers proved that in the case of L3 acquisition, L2 may serve as a predominant source of transfer (e.g., Hammarberg, 2001; Treichler et al., 2009) but other studies showed that it could be one's mother tongue (e.g., Chumbow, 1981) as well. Nevertheless, a simple order of acquisition cannot be regarded as an exclusive explanation in TLA studies. A typological distance (based on classifying languages according to their structural characteristics) between the analyzed languages is thought to be even more significant than the order in which the languages were learnt (Letica & Mardešić, 2007; Lammiman, 2010; Chłopek, 2011). For example, De Angelis and Selinker (2001) discovered in their study that typological similarity between non-native languages is likely to provoke non-native transfer in non-native production. This has been proven by other scholars. For instance, Lipińska's (2014a) study on lexical transfer in L3 production showed that typologically

closer L2-English affected L3-German to a more significant extent than L1-Polish did. Similar situation occurred in Lipińska's (2014b) study on foreign vowel production where again L2-English affected L3-German to such a great degree that the analyzed L2 and L3 vowel categories merged completely.

While explaining why some languages are transferred and other ones are not, numerous variables are taken into consideration, such as proficiency and fluency in both L2 and L3 (e.g., Bardel & Lindqvist, 2007; De Angelis, 2007; Lindqvist, 2010), frequency of use, a degree of formality or age of onset (e.g., De Angelis, 2007; Falk & Bardel, 2010). Nevertheless, one factor has recently taken the lead. Researchers have proven in many studies that L2 can exert a stronger effect on L3 than L1 (e.g., Bardel & Falk, 2007; Bohnacker, 2006; Falk & Bardel, 2011; Leung, 2005; Rothman & Cabrelli Amaro, 2010) which required an explanation. It has been discovered that it may be caused by a so-called L2 status factor. This factor has been thought to determine the transfer source (L1 or L2) in studies on L3 vocabulary and pronunciation (e.g., Cenoz, 2001; De Angelis, 2007; Llama et al., 2007). But what exactly is it? It can be interpreted as "a desire to suppress L1 as being 'non-foreign' and to rely rather on an orientation towards a prior L2 as a strategy to approach the L3" (Hammarberg, 2001, pp. 36–37). De Angelis (2005) clarified that non-native languages are classified as "foreign language" category in learners' minds, and it creates a cognitive association between them. L1 does not sound "foreign," so it is usually eliminated from this association. This kind of classification is called an "association of foreignness" (De Angelis, 2005, p. 11). It may favor non-native transfer, hence L2 is given a privileged status. Such a situation was observed even earlier by other scholars, for instance by Meisel (1983), who named it a "foreign language effect" (see also Ecke & Hall, 2000, where the phenomenon has a German name "Fremdspracheneffekt").

## **Learning Foreign Languages in a Corporate Environment**

The last factor which may significantly influence the results in the case of the current study and which thus has to be mentioned is the company environment in which language learning may take place. Unfortunately research on a corporate learning and teaching is really scarce. Chong (2013) wrote an article, and Lipińska (in press) conducted a study on an in-company teaching foreign languages from a teacher's perspective. Although a learner's perspective would be more useful in our case, some general conclusions may be drawn also concerning language learners.

First of all, both Chong and Lipińska noticed that in-company language learners attend L2 classes irregularly and it is very difficult to meet the same group of learners at two consecutive classes. Some of the course participants come to classes very rarely. Secondly, it frequently happens that they do not do their homework. It is especially problematic as in most cases in-company language classes are held once a week and without learners' own work it is difficult to expect any significant progress. What is more, a lot of course participants who attend in-company classes are not very motivated since they do not pay for their language classes and their progress is not externally assessed.

Another interesting article which contributes to the topic was written by Newton and Kusmierczyk (2011). The authors noticed that in-company courses often fail to meet the managers' and participants' expectations as they do not deliver the required opportunities for language socialization, include inappropriate, not adjusted materials and classes are frequently focused on decontextualized language study and fail to address language needs directly relevant to the workplace.

All these factors considered, one can expect that, at least in some cases, in-company language learning/teaching may not be as effective as language learning/teaching in other environments (e.g., language schools where course participants pay for courses on their own and come of their own free will).

## **Current Study**

The current study is a part of more extensive research on in-company language learning and teaching. The research consists of multiple stages, each of them focused on a different aspect of the subject—ranging from various factors affecting the process to teachers' and learners' opinions on the matter.

### **Rationale and Study Design**

The aim of this study was to analyze the influence of two factors (first of all, learners' age and, secondly, their previously learnt L2) on TLA in a corporate environment. According to a popular belief, older language learners could be expected to achieve worse results than their younger groupmates. However, at the same time, a typologically closer L2 might exert a stronger transfer on L3 than an L2 from a different branch of a language family. What is more, learning a foreign language in a company environment may be less effective than in other environments and general results obtained by in-company lan-

guage learners can be expected to be considerably low. Therefore, the following questions arise:

*Do younger learners achieve better results?*

*Does L2-English affect acquisition of L3-German to a larger extent than L2-Russian?*

*Can in-company learners achieve as good results as those learners who attend courses in language schools?*

### **Study Participants**

A group of subjects from an international company situated in the south of Poland agreed to participate in the study. They were native speakers of Polish learning L3-German in their company, but varying in terms of an L2 (either English or Russian). The study participants consisted of thirty-two people, six women and twenty-six men. They were between 28 and 62 years old. They attended German courses at A2+ and B1 levels according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2011). What is important is the fact that all subjects started learning German in their company from scratch, having no prior experience in learning this language. All of them were from the same region of Poland (Silesia and Zagłębie, southern Poland) and thus shared a similar language background.

### **Methodology**

The results of the end-of-year tests in various language skills (grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, listening comprehension, and speaking), obtained by the learners at the end of 2015, were compared. Mean results and standard deviations were calculated. For the purpose of the analysis, the subjects were divided twice into contrasting groups. Firstly, they were divided into two groups according to their age. The first group of study participants comprised learners who were <50 years old (18 people). The other group of subjects consisted of learners who were  $\geq 50$  years old (14 people). Secondly, the subjects were divided into two groups once again, this time according to their L2 which they had learnt prior to the company course in German. In this case the first group, with L2-English consisted of 15 subjects, while the other group, with Russian as an L2, comprised 17 study participants. Significant was the fact that all of them claimed not to have any knowledge of the other L2 in question. The subjects also completed questionnaires and wrote retrospective comments concerning difficulties they encountered while learning German.



## Study Results

The following section presents the results of the current study. They are divided into three sections describing the effect of the age factor on TLA, the influence of subjects' L2s on their L3-German and the study participants' opinions concerning learning a third language.

### The Age Factor

Table 1 presents the test results obtained by the study participants. For the purpose of this part of the analysis, they were divided into two groups of learners, according to their age. The first group consisted of younger learners who were less than 50 years of age. The other group comprised older learners who were 50 years old or more.

Table 1

*The end-of-year test results obtained by the subjects, divided according to their age*

Language skill	Group <50 (n = 18)				Group ≥50 (n = 14)			
	The worst result	The best result	The mean result	Standard deviation	The worst result	The best result	The mean result	Standard deviation
	%				%			
Grammar	20	100	72	17.44	40	100	80	16.95
Vocabulary	15	100	79	19.62	55	100	82	14.20
Reading comprehension	55	90	79	9.00	75	100	84	8.36
Listening comprehension	45	95	80	13.77	70	95	79	7.03
Speaking	30	95	83	14.14	60	95	81	9.92

As one can see, the results obtained by both younger and older subjects were quite similar. The differences in mean results in the case of all language skills were insignificant and reached the values between 1% and 8%. In three cases (grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension) the older learners even outperformed the younger ones, achieving slightly better results. The most noticeable difference was observed for grammar, where more than 50 learners achieved mean result at the level of 80%, while their younger groupmates were 8% worse, having the result at the level of 72%. However, the younger subjects were slightly better at listening and speaking.



Of course, these are mean values, and one ought to look at individual scores as well. It can be noticed that the differences between the best and the worst results were much bigger in the younger group. The results achieved by the older learners were more consistent.

In order not to rely on bare numbers, a two-way ANOVA was performed. It aimed at examining the effects of the age and L2 factors on acquisition of L3-German by the subjects. Table 2 presents the results for the age factor.

Table 2

*The results of a two-way ANOVA for the age factor*

Language skill		Sums of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean squares	F-ratio	p-values
Grammar	Between	504.000	1	504.000	1.698	0.202
	Within	8,905.544	30	296.851		
	Total	9,409.544	31			
Vocabulary	Between	70.875	1	70.875	0.232	0.634
	Within	9,165.375	30	305.512		
	Total	9,236.250	31			
Reading comprehension	Between	196.875	1	196.875	2.584	0.118
	Within	2,285.565	30	76.185		
	Total	2,482.440	31			
Listening comprehension	Between	7.875	1	7.875	0.061	0.806
	Within	3,865.891	30	128.863		
	Total	3,873.766	31			
Speaking	Between	31.500	1	31.500	0.202	0.656
	Within	4,678.256	30	155.942		
	Total	4,709.756	31			

As one can see in Table 2, the results of ANOVA confirmed what had already been noticed in Table 1. Since all *p*-values were much greater than 0.05 (and we assume this number to establish the point of statistical significance), it can be undoubtedly stated that the differences between the two age groups were statistically insignificant.

### The L2-Effect

The next part of the analysis presents the test results divided according to the subjects' L2s. It aims at analyzing whether there is any significant influence of an L2 on learning German as an L3. It is especially valuable, since one of the analyzed L2s (English) is typologically close to L3-German, and hence may be expected to be more influential than the other L2 (Russian) which is typologically more distant.

Table 3

*The end-of-year test results obtained by the two groups of subjects, divided according to their L2s*

Language skill	Group L2-English (n = 15)				Group L2-Russian (n = 17)			
	The worst result	The best result	The mean result	Standard deviation	The worst result	The best result	The mean result	Standard deviation
	%				%			
Grammar	20	100	70	18.19	40	100	80	15.49
Vocabulary	15	100	77	20.76	55	100	83	13.37
Reading comprehension	55	90	78	9.39	75	100	84	8.05
Listening comprehension	45	95	80	15.00	70	95	79	6.66
Speaking	30	95	82	15.33	60	95	83	9.34

As Table 3 illustrates, again there is no significant difference between the mean results obtained by the subjects with English as an L2 and the subjects with L2-Russian. The differences range from 1% to 10%. However, in the case of grammar, vocabulary, speaking, and reading comprehension, the group of learners with L2-Russian achieved higher scores than the group with L2-English. The greatest difference was noticed for grammar (10%). It may suggest the existence of negative transfer between subjects' L2 and L3 in the case of the two typologically close languages (English and German).

Once again, in order not to rely on bare numbers, also this part of the analysis was subject to a two-way ANOVA. Table 4 presents the results for the L2-factor.

Table 4  
*The results of a two-way ANOVA for the L2 factor*

Language skill		Sums of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean squares	F-ratio	p-values
Grammar	Between	796.875	1	796.875	2.822	0.103
	Within	8,471.307	30	282.377		
	Total	9,268.182	31			
Vocabulary	Between	286.875	1	286.875	0.968	0.333
	Within	8,893.797	30	296.460		
	Total	9,180.672	31			
Reading comprehension	Between	286.875	1	286.875	3.789	0.061
	Within	2,271.249	30	75.708		
	Total	2,558.124	31			
Listening comprehension	Between	7.969	1	7.969	0.062	0.805
	Within	3,859.690	30	128.656		
	Total	3,867.658	31			
Speaking	Between	645.469	1	645.469	4.132	0.051
	Within	4,685.894	30	156.196		
	Total	5,331.363	31			

As can be seen in Table 4, the results of ANOVA again confirmed what had already been concluded from Table 3. As almost all *p*-values were much greater than 0.05, it can be unquestionably said that the differences between the two L2s were statistically insignificant. The only skill which was characterized by a much lower *p*-value was speaking, where it equaled 0.051 and was very close to statistical significance.

However, the numbers and statistics cannot show everything and only an in-depth analysis of the mistakes the study participants made can shed more light on the subject. Especially the vocabulary, speaking, and grammar parts reveal the real reason for the results analyzed above. In the case of vocabulary exercises, the learners with L2-English were characterized by numerous instances of the usage of false friends (deceptive cognates) such as *bekommen* ('be given') instead of *werden* ('become'), hybrids (coinages) such as *all lange Tage* instead of *tagelang*, and calques like *Feuermann* instead of *Feuerwehrmann*, all deriving from the subjects' L2. In the case of grammar, the subjects transferred

rules from their L2 and frequently used hybrids/blends (they especially mixed items while creating verbs—e.g., the stem was English, but German inflectional endings were added—*goest, eaten* etc.). In the case of speaking, the subjects used code-switching (sometimes only particular words were uttered in an L2, and sometimes—full phrases or sentences) and deceptive cognates. At the same time, the subjects whose L2 was Russian never transferred its properties to L3-German. There were no instances of false friends, calques, hybrids or code-switching. Those learners were more likely to abandon the message, use the semantic extension within an L3 or use the description instead of using an actual word.

### The Subjects' Comments

The study participants were also encouraged to write any comments they wanted, concerning learning German in their company. The selected comments are presented below. They were divided into three categories, depending on the subjects who had written them, in order to facilitate the analysis. All the comments below were written in Polish by the subjects and then translated by the author of the paper.

The subjects with L2-English:

- (1) *I'm always trying to use English. It's so annoying.*
- (2) *All the words I can think of are in English.*
- (3) *When I speak, I immediately want to switch to English.*
- (3) *English is easier.*
- (4) *It's difficult because I speak English much more fluently. (+ 5 similar comments)*
- (5) *German is too difficult.*

The <50-year-old subjects:

- (6) *I don't have time for learning a new language.*
- (7) *Work, home, young children = no time for learning German. (+ 3 similar comments)*
- (8) *I don't need to speak German – it's enough that my managers do.*
- (9) *90 minutes weekly is not enough.*
- (10) *I am happy that I have a language course for free.*

The ≥50-year-old subjects:

- (11) *I thought I was too old to learn a new language but it turned out that I am not.*
- (12) *I really appreciate it that I can learn something new.*
- (13) *I am glad that I can participate in German classes as I have to speak with my German counterparts.*
- (14) *Finally, I have time to learn something useful. I also study at home, I listen to CDs in my car etc.*
- (15) *I was scared to have classes with my younger colleagues, but everything is fine.*
- (16) *Grammar is the most difficult thing – especially declension.*
- (17) *I think German grammar is pretty complicated.* (+ 3 similar comments)

As one can realize having analyzed the comments above, the subjects with L2-English are fully aware of the L2-interference which disturbs them and hinders successful communication and language learning. Some of them also prefer English to German. Generally speaking, younger learners frequently claim not to have enough time they could spend on learning German. They are preoccupied by their work, keeping moving up the career ladder, family matters, etc. Moreover, in the company where the subjects are employed, the ability to speak German is necessary mainly for the communication between the managers and supervisors. Since most of the younger subjects do not hold such positions, some of them do not see any need to speak German. There are also subjects who, on the other hand, are willing to learn an L3, but notice an insufficient number of classes which is the reason for their slow progress. The older study participants seem to be more motivated to learn German—both for the professional purposes and for their own satisfaction of doing something pleasant and useful. They may also have more time for learning as, for example, they do not have young children who need a lot of attention. Some of them had been afraid of learning together with their younger colleagues, but during the language course they realized that the age does not have to be a problem.

## Summary

In conclusion, it can be said that age is not a crucial factor in TLA, and older learners may be as successful as the younger ones. In the current study no significant statistical difference was found for the age factor, in the case of all the analyzed language skills. Both the  $\geq 50$ -year-old and the younger subjects achieved similar results. A slightly more visible influence was exerted by the study participants' L2. The study results suggested that a typologically close

L2-English served as a source of negative language transfer in learning German as an L3, but L2-Russian did not affect the process of TLA in this way. Both the analysis of the mistakes the subjects made and the comments concerning learning a third language, provided by the study participants, showed the complexity of TLA. While statistical analyses did not show any significant influence of the two aforementioned factors on subjects' process of learning German, the analysis of their mistakes revealed more details. Although the results obtained during the tests were similar in terms of numbers, the subjects made different kinds of mistakes. While in the case of learners with L2-English L2-transfer was the main source of difficulties, the subjects whose L2 was Russian, were more likely to abandon a message or task or try to find help within their L3. One of the possible explanations for this discrepancy between the groups was the fact that those subjects who had learnt English as an L2, had probably been motivated to learn that language and thus were likely to develop foreign language learning and communication strategies. On the other hand, since Russian was imposed on all Polish pupils under communism, most learners lacked any motivation to learn it and because of that they may not have acquired the appropriate language learning experience which could be later transferred to L3 learning. Another explanation might be connected to Müller-Lancé's (2003) division of multilingual learners into *monolinguids* (i.e., multilinguals behaving like monolinguals), *bilinguids* (multilinguals characterized by strong cross-linguistic connections between two languages only) and *multilinguids* (multilinguals characterized by strong cross-linguistic connections between the mental representations of all languages). While the L2-Russian group may have been monolinguids, the L2-English group were rather bilinguals.

Another matter worth looking at in more detail is the study of participants' age. Even though both younger and older learners' results were similar, the reasons why the two groups are successful (or unsuccessful) may be different. Younger learners may have better physiological learning capacities; however, they have more duties connected not only to their job and their efforts to get promoted, but also family responsibilities including young children. Older learners, on the other hand, can be thought to learn more slowly due to the physiological or psychological factors, but at the same time they have more time they can devote to learning since their professional situation is more stable and their familial and parental duties have already decreased. Of importance is also the fact that the results obtained by the in-company learners involved in the study were very similar to those achieved by the groups taught by the researcher in two language schools in the same region of Poland. It suggests that learning/teaching a language in a company environment does not necessarily have to be less effective than in other environments. All those factors considered, it can be undoubtedly stated that learning a language is a really complex phenomenon and cannot be very easily and quickly explained. It is especially true for learning a third or another language.

Naturally, it was just a preliminary study and it would be advisable to analyze other groups of languages, as well as to involve larger groups of study participants from various areas of the country.

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### **Der Einfluss vom Alter und von der zweiten Sprache auf Erwerb der dritten Sprache im Körperschaftsmilieu**

#### Zusammenfassung

Die Rolle des Alters als eines den Erwerb von der zweiten Sprache (SLA – eng.: Second Language Acquisition) bewirkenden Faktors war schon seit vielen Jahren von mehreren Psycholinguisten (z.B.: Ellis, 1994) systematisch untersucht, angefangen von der Hypothese der Kritischen Periode (welche zuerst von Penfield und Roberts im Jahre 1959 entwickelt und dann von Lenneberg verbreitet wurde) bis zum heutigen Tage. Es kommt aber auch vor, dass der Alter der Lernenden selbst nicht das einzige Problem und kein Hauptfaktor im Spracherwerbsprozess ist. Der Prozess mag nämlich beim Erwerben der dritten Sprache (TLA – eng.: Third Language Acquisition) viel komplizierter sein, weil man in dem Fall nicht nur mit den die SLA bewirkenden, sondern auch mit vielen anderen für TLA typischen Prozessen zu tun hat.

Der Zweck der vorliegenden Untersuchung war die Analyse des Einflusses vom Alter der Lernenden und der Einwirkung der früher erworbenen Sprache auf das Erwerben der dritten Sprache in einem Körperschaftsmilieu. An der Untersuchung nahmen die bei einer großen internationalen Firma mit Sitz im Südpolen angestellten Freiwilligen teil. Alle waren polnische Muttersprachler im 28–62 Lebensjahr und lernten Deutsch als dritte Sprache, sie unterscheiden sich jedoch voneinander in der zweiten Sprache (Englisch oder Russisch) und im Alter. Man wollte feststellen, inwieweit oben genannte Faktoren die TLA beeinflussen können, und zu dem Zwecke wurden die von den Probanden in den verschiedene sprachliche Fähigkeiten prüfenden Tests erzielten Ergebnisse miteinander verglichen und die Kommentare der Probanden zu den während des Lernprozesses getroffenen Schwierigkeiten analysiert. Die Probanden waren jedes Mal in zwei Gruppen geteilt – hinsichtlich des Alters oder der zweiten Sprache. Die gezeitigten Ergebnisse lassen folgendes feststellen: obwohl das Alter keine große Rolle beim Erwerben der dritten Sprache spielt, ist der Einfluss von der früher erworbenen zweiten Sprache merklich.





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## **An Analysis of Higher Education Systems of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language in Poland and China**

### **Abstract**

Nowadays, changing trends in terms of interest in language learning are easy to witness. In Poland, more and more higher education institutions, not only public, but also private, are introducing various types of majors concerning oriental languages, such as Chinese translation programs. The aim of this paper is to compare the Chinese learning process in China at the Shanghai Normal University and in Poland at the University of Silesia in Katowice. The article introduces a comparative outline of both types of learning processes, based on the author's four-year experience in teaching and studying in both of the countries in question. Furthermore, the paper examines and compares the results of teaching Chinese both at the University of Silesia in Katowice and at the Shanghai Normal University. In the end, the author provides suggestions on how to improve the Chinese learning system in non-Chinese-speaking countries.

*Keywords:* teaching Chinese, characters, hanzi, pinyin, language acquisition

### **Introduction**

The focus of this article is a comparative analysis of the Chinese learning process in China and in Poland. Firstly, the introduction to Chinese language and the learning process in general are illustrated in order to raise the readers awareness of the complex tasks students/teachers had to deal with when learning/teaching this language. Secondly, the subject of the research will be examined, namely, 1st-year students of English-Chinese translation program studying in Poland, and a group of multinational students studying Chinese in

China. What is more, the Chinese teachers of Polish and Chinese origin are examined. After that, the article investigates the language environments, teaching materials, methods, and strategies employed during classes. The following chapter is devoted to the explanation of the historical background of Chinese and the change in the importance of Chinese on the international area.

It is believed that the conclusions of this research will introduce a new perspective to the Chinese language learning and help to improve Chinese language learning systems in non-native Chinese countries. There have been various attempts of researching the field of Chinese language acquisition, however, this field still remains fairly new in Poland, thus the author believes this research will be pioneering in this area. The secondary goal is to highlight the importance of language learning and to enhance people's awareness about the complexity of the oriental languages learning process, such as Chinese.

## **Historical background**

Due to globalization the number of multilingual people all over the world is growing rapidly. Soon multilingualism will be treated as a global norm (Chłopek, 2011, p. 35). Reasons for learning languages are numerous; however, trends in teaching and learning languages change mainly depending on the geopolitical situation worldwide. In the 1950s no one in the Middle and Eastern Europe would think that English might become the world's most popular language used as a medium of communication across cultures and continents, not only during business meetings but also in everyday conversation. It can be observed that such change has a great impact on educational institutions, such as universities. In 1973, the University of Silesia in Katowice opened its Institute of English in Sosnowiec. Students from various places in Poland came to this department to learn languages. They could choose various majors, such as, for instance: culture of English-speaking countries, history of English language, teaching English, and finally, translation program (Barciak, 2008, p. 225). It was a significant step forward for Upper Silesia, a region in the Southern part of Poland. In the course of time, more and more languages became popular, thus, in due time, new language majors were established at the Institute of English, for instance, English-German translation program.

Although at that time English was still the language of mass communication worldwide, Chinese started becoming increasingly popular. Its popularity was due to the so-called 改革开放, that is, The Open Door Policy in 1978. China opened its borders to foreigners, investors, businessmen, students, and other people willing to cooperate. And although China was quite relentless

at the beginning, we can now see that from the economic perspective, it has made a huge impact on the entire world. What is more, it was also a major step ahead for the Chinese language education (Shang-Jin Wei, 1995, p. 74). This situation reached its peak in 2006, when the Institute of English (with Professor Janusz Arabski, who was in charge of the proceedings) opened its first group of English-Chinese translation program. By that time, we could witness changing trends in Poland, as far as the interest in language learning was concerned. There were numerous institutions taken over by Chinese investors, many business establishments were developed, where the Chinese invested their money. Among others, as a fine example can serve the Silesia Chinese Center in Jaworzno, which was established in 2010. It provided a welcome opportunity for young people seeking well-paid jobs, for instance, as translators in multinational companies.

The new English-Chinese major became a success. In 2006, it was the only one such major in Poland. There were Chinese language studies at other universities and Confucius Institutes across Poland, however, none of them was even remotely similar to the major created by the Institute of English. Over the years, English-Chinese translation program “has grown from one group up to five groups, and the number of students willing to apply during the next recruitment in 2013 [was] still growing” (Hity Studiów na Śląsku, 2012). The research showed that the Chinese translation program was the most wanted major at the University of Silesia in 2012 and, as it later turned out, also in 2013 (Bańka, 2013, p. 134).

## Theoretical Background

In this article, the author based her findings on four years of experience she has gained at the universities in question, being both a student and a teacher. She believes that this experience enabled her to understand students and teachers from the practical point of view. The most significant Chinese teaching guidelines used for the purpose of this article were the following: (1) Module syllabus: Chinese language course 1—Chinese: module 1 (Appendix 1) prepared for the University of Silesia 1st-year Chinese student beginners of English-Chinese translation program by the teaches, lecturers, and coordinators of particular modules, and (2) Multinational Chinese Language Teaching Program (Yu Chun Chi, 2010) published by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press for a Chinese organization popularizing Chinese worldwide, called Hanban (汉办).

Course books analyzed for the purpose of this article were published by Beijing Language and Culture University Press in 2007, and are called *Hanyu*

*Jiaocheng*. It is a second edition of a series of course books devoted to English-speaking Chinese students on various Chinese levels of education. The reason why those course books are used for the purpose of this research is due to the fact that they constitute a set of course books devoted to all the Chinese module components, such as: listening, reading, writing, comprehension, speaking, and translation. However, for the purpose of this article, the author focused on investigating the course book *Hanyu Jiaocheng* vol. 1 and vol. 2 (汉语教程第一册上 and 汉语教程第一册下).

### Issues and Challenges

The following research adopted a case study approach. Observation was applied as the main data collection instrument, during which the author focused on analyzing the teachers, students in both of the universities. The Chinese course was integrated, the teacher taught listening, speaking, reading, and writing to one group, without division on individual classes. In China, there was only one type of class, integrated skills class which was also referred to as the comprehension class. The author has visited Shanghai Normal University in China, where she took part in Chinese class performed by Chinese teachers. Additionally, the author took part in various international discussions and conferences about Chinese teaching systems both in China, Shanghai, and in Poland, which helped her to collect necessary data for further research. Apart from the observation method, a comparative analysis of Chinese teaching systems in Poland and China was investigated by using the collected data.

Chinese, 汉语, a language of the population of Hans—indigenous Chinese—is not only about the characters. Each of them has got its own phonological equivalents called *pinyin*. It was introduced for the first time in the People's Republic of China in 1958, and later on in 1982 pinyin was claimed by an international standard phonetic version (ISO) of Chinese pronunciation (Wu Zhongwei, 2010, p. 10). Chinese is a tonal language, it has four major tones, each tone may change the meaning of a particular word, for example, 八—bā—means: 'eight,' 拔—bá—means: 'to pull up,' 把—bǎ—means: 'to hold in one's hand,' and 爸—bà—means: father (Yue, A. O., 2003). Each word is a syllable, or a set of syllables combined together creating another word, for example, 火—huǒ—means: 'fire' and 车—chē—means: 'a vehicle,' those two words combined together give us: 火车—huǒ chē—namely: 'a train.' As can be seen, students encounter numerous difficulties in their learning.



## The Student's Profile

The first group of subjects consisted of 20 Polish beginner students studying in Poland. All of them being a 1st-year English-Chinese translation major students. The second group, consisted of 15 students of the Shanghai Normal University in China. The students were of various origin, however, all of them were native speakers of Indo-European languages. In both situations, students did not have any previous experience with Chinese. They came to the university to study Chinese without any specific knowledge about the language, culture, history, etc. Their main motivation encouraging them to learn Chinese (over 90% of students in both language environments) were career opportunities. The first group's L1 was Polish, L2 English, and L3 Chinese, similarly, the second group's L1 was their mother tongue (different for each students, e.g., German, Spanish, French, Russian, Italian, etc.), L2 was usually English, and L3 was Chinese.

## The Teacher's Profile

The Chinese teacher at the Shanghai Normal University was a 40-year-old female from Shanghai, well qualified (obtained BA and MA in Chinese language teaching to foreigners) with great grammar preparation and all the necessary skills to teach Chinese. Unfortunately, her level of communication in English was quite poor, thus there were technical problems in terms of communication with the beginner students, which is a very important problem that needs to be addressed and solved. However, such situation encouraged everyone to use Chinese in class, which facilitated the learning process.

Another issue that needs to be addressed is the fact that, although there are 56 ethnic groups in China, over 100 dialects (Kaźmierczak, 2003), students across the world are usually willing to learn Standard Mandarin Chinese; however, unfortunately, the teacher at Shanghai Normal University had pronunciation difficulties with sounds such as: "ji," "qi," "xi," and "zi," "ci," "si," pronouncing respectively "ji" as "zi," "qi" as "ci," "xi" all identically as: "si" and "zi," "ci," "si." Thus, it led to numerous misunderstandings.

The Chinese teacher of Polish origin who participated in the research was a 26 years-old female teaching at the University of Silesia in Katowice, who graduated the same English-Chinese translation program that the research participants. She has participated in numerous Chinese teaching conferences in Poland and abroad, she is now pursuing her PhD in Chinese language acquisi-

tion and has participated in one-year scholarship in China (Nanjing University) where she studied Chinese for one year. Then she participated in three Hanban methodological scholarships for teachers, gaining knowledge about most efficient Chinese teaching and learning techniques. Despite her young age, she has already been teaching Chinese for four years in various academic institutions. Although Chinese teachers of Polish origin will never be as good as Chinese native speakers, their advantage over Chinese teachers is that they are fluent in Polish, hence they can explain certain issues, situations, and rules to Polish students in their native language, not only in terms of grammar, but also in terms of phonetics, phonology, and syntax, which allows for better understanding and comparing the rules governing the two languages. Mandarin Chinese gained its momentum relatively recently, as the 2008 Beijing Olympics attracted overseas students to study Chinese, hence there is still a scarce group of well-prepared teachers across Poland.

### Teaching Strategies: Advantages and Disadvantages

Table 1 presents a list of topics concerning general information about the two groups of students participating in the research, and the advantages and disadvantages that facilitated or interrupted their learning process. Both systems have their advantages and disadvantages. The aim of this research is not to verify which system is more efficient, but to find means to improve and optimize Polish learning system of Chinese. Although I have enlisted a vast list of differences, I will focus on the most significant, in my opinion, issues that need to be pointed out.

Table 1

*Chinese learning process in China and in Poland – a comparative analysis*

Chinese learning at the University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland	Chinese learning at the Shanghai Normal University, China
GENERAL	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 180 hours a semester;</li> <li>– Chinese and English study;</li> <li>– 20–35 students in a group;</li> <li>– one language family students;</li> <li>– poor language environment;</li> <li>– listening exercises only in class: teachers the only medium providing listening and speaking exercises;</li> <li>– scarce amount of outside sources;</li> <li>– scarce amount of native speakers;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 360 hours a semester;</li> <li>– Chinese study;</li> <li>– 15–25 students in a group;</li> <li>– Multinational group – multilingual group;</li> <li>– Strong language environment;</li> <li>– Strong listening exercise: possibility of listening to various native speakers (dialects, language manners);</li> <li>– Numerous outside sources;</li> <li>– Numerous native speakers;</li> </ul>

Table 1 continued

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- lack of culture related notion outside the classroom;</li> <li>- only indoors activities;</li> <li>- no outdoors activities;</li> <li>- teacher-centered.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- rich culture related notion in the surrounding area;</li> <li>- indoors activities;</li> <li>- outdoors activities;</li> <li>- learner-centered.</li> </ul>
Class materials	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- poor accessibility of the course books;</li> <li>- still scarce amount of audiovisual sources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- great accessibility of the course books;</li> <li>- numerous audiovisual sources.</li> </ul>
Class language	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Polish, English and Chinese.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- only Chinese.</li> </ul>
Course book	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Hanyu Jiaocheng</i> Vol. 1 – one semester.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Hanyu Jiaocheng</i> Vol. 1 – half of the first semester;</li> <li>- <i>Hanyu Jiaocheng</i> Vol. 2 – the other half.</li> </ul>
Listening to the recordings	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- at home, usually no time during class.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- at home and during class.</li> </ul>
Reading dialogues	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- out loud during class;</li> <li>- at home – poor.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- out loud during class;</li> <li>- at home – mandatory.</li> </ul>
Learning vocabulary	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- reading out loud;</li> <li>- learning by means of collocations;</li> <li>- learning stroke order;</li> <li>- constant writing practice;</li> <li>- creating stories with characters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- reading vocabulary out loud;</li> <li>- learning stroke order;</li> <li>- learning by heart;</li> <li>- constant writing practice.</li> </ul>
Learning grammar points	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- well prepared grammar points followed by numerous examples;</li> <li>- compared to Polish – student's mother tongue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- well prepared grammar points followed by numerous examples.</li> </ul>
Memorizing characters	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- stroke order;</li> <li>- reading texts;</li> <li>- association memorization;</li> <li>- creating stories with characters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- stroke order;</li> <li>- reading texts;</li> <li>- non-intuitive memorizing.</li> </ul>
Examination	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- homework – usually every class;</li> <li>- dictations – each week on each module;</li> <li>- end of semester exam;</li> <li>- grammar tests;</li> <li>- final exam.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- homework – every class;</li> <li>- dictations – each week on each module;</li> <li>- end of semester exam;</li> <li>- grammar tests;</li> <li>- final exam.</li> </ul>

Table 1 continued

Classroom activities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- speaking, reading, writing, listening;</li> <li>- watching movies;</li> <li>- power point presentations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- speaking, reading, writing, listening;</li> <li>- singing songs;</li> <li>- performing dialogues: acting in front of a classroom;</li> <li>- watching movies;</li> <li>- power point presentations;</li> <li>- other audiovisual sources.</li> </ul>
MEANS OF LEARNING	
Repetition	
obligatory	mandatory, before and after the class
Review lessons	
obligatory	mandatory
Preview the following lesson material	
obligatory	mandatory
Memorizing/learning by heart	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- method used from time to time;</li> <li>- concentration on fixed phrases and culture oriented elements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- constantly used method.</li> </ul>
Communication directed	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- communication oriented;</li> <li>- dialogue like exercises.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- more course book shaped conversation;</li> <li>- lack of individual thinking.</li> </ul>

In Table 1 we can observe that the amount of Chinese classes in China amounts to 360 hours a semester, whereas in Poland it is only half of that time, and therefore, the pace of learning is slower and less effective. Students have Chinese lessons only three times a week, the rest of the time is devoted to English lessons (since it is an English-Chinese translation major), whereas in China students learn Chinese everyday for a reasonable amount of time. In China, the course book *Hanyu Jiaocheng* Vols. 1 and 2 are nearly finished in one-year course, whereas in Poland it usually takes one semester or more to finish the book, which oftentimes is due to some holidays and other occasions (holidays, festivals, organization of Chinese Day).

Another issue about learning Chinese in Poland is that there is a poor Chinese language environment outside the classroom. Students have very little outside sources and Chinese speakers that would facilitate learning Chinese. What is more, if they try to use the Internet sources, usually the material is too advanced to comprehend, especially for level A1 and A2 students. At the beginning, the only medium between the students and Chinese is the teacher. A1 and A2 students' Chinese level is too poor to use the Internet to read ar-

ticles, newspapers, or surf through Chinese websites. Their abilities of getting scholarships are still limited, however, it changes rapidly. In 2006, only one person at the University of Silesia in Katowice was awarded a scholarship to go to China. Fortunately, now about five to six students receive scholarships annually and this number is still growing.

Apart from teaching speaking, reading, writing, and listening, there are also other elements to be taught, such as culture-oriented and history-oriented pieces of information. In Poland, the disadvantage is that such activities cannot take place outdoors, in museums, tea houses, or Chinese restaurants, because there are no outside sources enabling us, teachers, to make the lessons more suitable for the students, and even if there were, there is not enough time for that. Audiovisual and other materials make the class more interesting, however, they are only few such sources facilitating the learning process found in Poland. What is more, in Poland there are only five places teachers can obtain course books and other teaching materials (apart from the Internet), namely, five Confucius Institutes which are spread across Poland. However, the Confucius Institutes usually do not provide more than just the first parts of each particular course book available in the Polish language. Oftentimes, there is a problem with continuing teaching the following semesters due to the lack of further parts of the books.

It is important to notice that although Chinese learning method is learner-oriented and most of the time the class language is only Chinese, which creates a great language experience, the teachers require that students learn dialogues by heart, memorizing characters and writing each word a hundred times. Those kinds of activities do not facilitate how to remember better, they do not teach logical thinking, nor how to improve language skills or senses. In China, 95% of students study only for the tests, for the results, with no conversation practice that would improve communication skills. Polish learning system is based on communication in order to communicate across cultures and continents.

The other issue is that Chinese teachers are usually very easy going so as to have good relations with their students. Thus, students learning in China feel very comfortable, and the teacher usually has no power over them, thus it often happens that they disobey and freely talk in class. What is more, due to lack of strict teachers, the students are getting more and more lazy and often use the fact that they are foreigners to skip class and travel around China. They also tend to talk in English with their teachers or persuade them to avoid tests, and the teachers usually comply. But there are also strict Chinese teachers following the class curriculum, however, there are very few of such teachers. In Poland, however, the teachers are too strict. The syllabuses for each Chinese component are very precise, thus the lecturers have to follow the rules and organize class time the way which would enable us to cover the entire material, even though some classes are cancelled due to the previously mentioned factors.

At the Shanghai Normal University the teachers usually focus on learner-oriented teaching method (over 80% of class time) and due to the fact that the teacher spoke basic English, she was also forced to use the direct teaching method, speaking only in Chinese in class. It is a great listening exercise, however, the students of basic level of Chinese used only English in class, thus there was a problem in communication, especially in terms of introducing grammar. Thus, the teacher often provided some additional help in form of flashcards, power point presentations, or handouts prepared beforehand with English explanations of the class curriculum. Due to the small amount of students, the teacher had time to ask each student questions, and required reading dialogues from them, etc. There was enough time in class to ask each student to perform a certain class activity.

At the University of Silesia in Katowice, the number of students studying Chinese is bigger, thus it was difficult for the teacher to ask each student. The teacher usually divided exercises so that each student could actively participate in class and read at least one short phrase or a word, practicing their pronunciation individually. The teaching method used in class most of the time was teacher-oriented learning. Due to the bigger number of students in the group it was easier for the lecturer to teach students the notion provided by a particular lesson in the course book from the imperative position. The students had to listen to the lecturer, after she provided the topic of particular class, she asked students to read out the notion, for example, from the blackboard or the course book out loud. Due to the lack of time, the students read the material altogether.

What is a great advantage of Chinese learning system in China over the Polish one is the mandatory revision of previously learned texts at home, which helps students memorize the characters introduced during a lesson better, and provides the preview of the vocabulary to be discussed during the subsequent class. In this way students prepare for classes, and therefore they know what to expect, they are familiar with the vocabulary and learn grammar more easily during class, thus the pace of language learning is faster. That is why, it takes them less time to understand the material covered in classes.

During the research the author has often organized open class discussion, investigating the satisfaction level amongst students in both institutions. It turned out that students studying at Shanghai Normal University (over 75% of them) would prefer their teachers to be more strict and demanding. However, the other 25% said that they do not mind the teachers' easy-going character in class, because it is the students who need to put more effort after class in improving their command of Chinese. Furthermore, they claim that having great language environment and plenty of opportunities to practice Chinese outside classroom is what they should focus on in order to have a live contact with the language and refine their Chinese language skills.

At the University of Silesia in Katowice, over 40% of the students participating in the survey claimed that the teachers are too demanding in class due to the syllabuses regulations, however, they understand that there is no other source of Chinese language learning outside classroom environment, thus they comply with the teaching system. The rest of the students (60%) expressed their satisfaction and received very good grades and scholarships to go to China.

## Implications

The above section provides a set of advantages and disadvantages of learning Chinese both in China at the Shanghai Normal University and in Poland at the University of Silesia in Katowice. I do not wish to verify which system is more efficient. What is important is to summarize all the above-mentioned pieces of information and find a solution to improve the process of learning Chinese in Poland.

Table 2 illustrates the most important problems and advantages occurring in the process of learning Chinese in Poland at the University of Silesia in Katowice.

Table 2

*The conclusions of Chinese learning process at the University of Silesia in Katowice*

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- communication-oriented learning;</li> <li>- Polish teachers helping to understand Chinese via Polish;</li> <li>- teaching grammar points comparing to students' mother tongue;</li> <li>- creative thinking learning methods;</li> <li>- learning by means of collocations;</li> <li>- learning by means of association.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- poor language environment;</li> <li>- lack of well prepared books for Polish students studying Chinese;</li> <li>- lack of audiovisual materials and cultural oriented data;</li> <li>- no outdoor activities with language learning;</li> <li>- poor verification of Chinese teachers send by the Embassy;</li> <li>- small number of class hours;</li> <li>- narrow opportunities of receiving a scholarship;</li> <li>- teacher-oriented learning;</li> <li>- no prevision of a following lesson;</li> <li>- too many students in the language groups.</li> </ul>

As we can see, there are still numerous issues to be addressed. In my belief, since there are very few Chinese native speakers in Poland, teachers should give their students more possibilities to study among Chinese people and to enable

them to go abroad on scholarships. Next, although it is very time-consuming, the teachers should feel obliged to prepare additional materials apart from the ones the course books provide. While there is one topic analyzed at one time/ during a lesson, the teacher should introduce a list of complementary vocabulary and phrases that can be used around the given subject. This kind of contextual/situational teaching enables students to find themselves in more day-to-day situations.

Most course books are prepared for English native speakers. Hanban (汉班) have issued course books of various levels translated into Polish and devoted not only to kids and youth, but also to adults. However, there are only the first volumes, without subsequent books, so after one semester the teachers will have no source to go on with the material from. What is more, those books are translated into Polish with numerous mistakes. They are not prepared for teaching Chinese to Polish students, thus sometimes it is difficult to comprehend the material from the texts or grammar explanations. Teachers usually decide to use English versions of Chinese course books for American students. This makes learning Chinese more complicated, because students learn Chinese (which is their L3) through English (L2) while they still think in their mother tongue (Polish–L1). In consequence, teachers need to spend a considerable amount of time preparing individual handouts, flash cards, audiovisual materials, and culture-oriented data, because such teaching resources are hardly accessible in Poland.

Apart from the fact that students at the University of Silesia in Katowice have only half the time to study Chinese when compared to the students studying at the Shanghai Normal University, another constraint is that the Chinese language groups are too big. In my opinion, the number of students in a group should not exceed 14–15 students. Due to the increasing interest in learning Chinese, the number of students willing to study this language is increasing. However, the number of qualified teachers is still insufficient. Thus, the groups sometimes amount to 35–40 students. University officials should either employ more Chinese teachers or accept fewer students. That is partially the reason why the class is usually teacher-oriented, since there is simply not enough time to let all the students speak. And the teacher has to keep up the pace of learning in order to meet up the curriculum.

All in all, despite the differences between the Chinese learning program in Poland and in China, and different teaching methods, both of them bring good results and the best students become very successful at work. Polish learning system of Chinese at the University of Silesia in Katowice is still under construction, thus I believe, despite there is still much work ahead, we will succeed in creating an impeccable Chinese learning system.



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Katarzyna Bańska

### Die Untersuchung von Lehrsystemen der chinesischen Sprache als einer Fremdsprache in Polen und in China

#### Zusammenfassung

Heutzutage beobachtet man die sich verändernden Trends im Fremdsprachenunterricht. Immer mehr Lehranstalten in Polen, sowohl öffentliche als auch private, bieten verschiedene Programme mit solchen orientalischen Sprachen, wie Chinesisch an und schaffen beispielsweise Übersetzungsprogramme mit chinesischer Sprache.

Der Zweck des vorliegenden Beitrags ist eine Vergleichsanalyse des Lehrsystems und des Lernprozesses von der chinesischen Sprache in Polen an der Schlesischen Universität und in China an Shanghai Normal University. In dem ersten Teil werden die Lehrsysteme und die Lernprozesse vom Chinesischen an den beiden Hochschulen miteinander verglichen. Die für den Beitrag durchgeführten Forschungen basierten auf mehrjähriger Erfahrung der Verfasserin im Lehren und Lernen des Chinesischen in den beiden hier zu untersuchten Institutionen. Zum Schluss zeichnet sie Ideen nach, welche zur besseren Ausbildung im Bereich der chinesischen Sprache in den Ländern beitragen könnten, in denen Chinesisch keine Muttersprache ist.

## Appendix

**Module syllabus: Chinese language course 1 – Chinese: module 1****1. General information**

Module co-ordinator	
Academic year	2013/2014
Semester(s)	1.
Mode of studies	full-time
Final module grade	Class work completion ("zaliczenie"): The weighted average grade of individual module components. The grade for each of the five components is the weighted average of the grades for classroom attendance (20%), mid-semester tests (written and oral tests as well as dictations) (20%) and the final test (50%)
Additional information	The module consists of five components: Conversation, Listening, Reading, Comprehension, and Writing. A positive assessment of each of the five components is required to obtain a positive grade for classwork completion.

**2. Course description**

Name	
<b>Classes</b>	
Teaching staff	
Group(s)	1S1, 1S2
Content outline	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conversation (30 hours): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– sounds of Chinese: practice in recognition and pronunciation;</li> <li>– tones of Chinese: practice in recognition and pronunciation;</li> <li>– basic grammar of the Chinese language;</li> <li>– basic everyday phrases in the Chinese language;</li> <li>– development of basic level speaking skills;</li> <li>– consolidation and practice of vocabulary through communicative spoken activities;</li> <li>– consolidation and practice of grammatical structures through communicative spoken activities.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Listening (30 hours): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– presentation of the Pinyin romanization;</li> <li>– tones of Chinese: description, recognition, notation, tonal "sandhi" rules;</li> <li>– dictation of words and tones;</li> <li>– development of basic level listening skills;</li> <li>– consolidation of the textbook-based vocabulary.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Reading (30 hours): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– practice in recognition and pronunciation of Chinese characters;</li> <li>– learning to read Chinese characters;</li> <li>– development of basic level reading comprehension skills;</li> <li>– textbook-based vocabulary building.</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Comprehension (60 hours): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– textbook-based presentation and practice of words and phrases;</li> <li>– textbook-based presentation and practice of grammatical structures.</li> </ul> </li> <li>5. Writing (30 hours): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– rules for writing Chinese characters;</li> <li>– characters radicals adequate for the recognition of approximately 1000 words;</li> <li>– development of basic literacy in Chinese characters.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

Teaching methods	As in the Module description
Contact hours	180 hours
Student workload	100 hours
Student's self study description	– doing homework; – preparing for the tests; – preparing for the dictations.
Class organization	According to the class schedule: Conversation: 15 × 2 hours Listening: 15 × 2 hours Reading 15 × 2 hours Comprehension: 30 × 2 hours Writing: 15 × 2 hours
Required course materials	<b>Conversation:</b> Ma Jianfei. 2007. <i>Hanyu Kouyu Sucheng: Rumen Pian (Shang) (Short Term Spoken Chinese: Threshold, vol. 1)</i> . 《汉语口语速成: 入门篇》(上). Beijing Language and Culture University Press. <b>Listening:</b> Hu Bo, Yang Xuemei. 2009. <i>Hanyu Tingli Jiaocheng (Chinese Listening Course) (Book 1 Revised)</i> . 《汉语听力教程》(修订本, 第一册). Beijing Language and Culture University Press. /Lekcje 1 – 15/ <b>Reading:</b> Peng Zhiping. 2004. <i>Hanyu Yuedu Jiaocheng (Chinese Reading Course) (Level 1, Book 1)</i> . 《一年级汉语阅读教程(第一册)》. Beijing Language and Culture University Press. <b>Comprehension:</b> Yang Jizhou. 2006. <i>Hanyu Jiaocheng (Chinese Course) (Book 1, Part 1 Revised)</i> . 《汉语教程》(修订本, 第一册, 上). Beijing Language and Culture University Press. <b>Writing:</b> Textbooks used in other Chinese module components
Supplementary materials	Additional basic level textbooks and materials, expanding students' knowledge of vocabulary, containing texts and/or dialogues as well as grammar instructions in Chinese.
Class Web page www	
Supplementary data	

### 3. Assessment methods

Name	
<b>Class attendance</b>	
Examiner(s)	
Group(s)	1S1, 1S2
Areas of assessment	Class attendance
Assessment criteria	A student who does not have unjustified absences receives a very good grade. For each absence half a grade is subtracted from the total grade for attendance.
Grading policies	Attendance is checked during each class.

Additional information	
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Name	
<b>Active participation in classes</b>	
Examiner(s)	
Group(s)	1S1, 1S2
Areas of assessment	A student is expected to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- do the assigned homework;</li> <li>- be prepared for class;</li> <li>- correctly perform appointed tasks;</li> <li>- correctly answer the teacher's questions;</li> <li>- be active during classes exhibiting knowledge and skills s/he has acquired while attempting to raise the level of his or her linguistic competence through self-study activities.</li> </ul>
Assessment criteria	A student receives a positive grade if s/he meets the standards in the required areas of assessment.
Grading policies	Continuous assessment during classes based on the teacher's interaction with the students and the ongoing monitoring of students' progress.
Additional information	

Name	
<b>Written and oral tests</b>	
Examiner(s)	
Group(s)	1S1, 1S2
Areas of assessment	Basic level language competence in the four skills (listening, speaking, writing and reading). Mastery of pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary taught during classes. Ability to write down and read out Chinese characters taught during classes. Ability to use Chinese language dictionaries.
Assessment criteria	In order to pass the tests the student needs to obtain at least 65% of the maximum score.
Grading policies	During almost each class a short test is administered on the basis of currently studied material. During the last class of the semester a longer test is administered testing the knowledge and skills acquired during the entire semester.
Additional information	

Name	
<b>Dictations</b>	
Examiner(s)	
Group(s)	1S1, 1S2
Areas of assessment	Ability to write down Chinese characters taught during classes (c. 200 basic level characters) at the pace of 15-18 characters per minute. Ability to recognize and indicate the tones of Chinese.

Assessment criteria	In order to pass a dictation the student needs to obtain at least 65% of the maximum score.
Grading policies	During almost each class a short dictation takes place based on the currently studied material.
Additional information	



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## ICT as Material Culture in CALL

### Abstract

Human and technology interactions are bilateral. A man makes use of the technology available anytime, but the technology enhances human potential and creates opportunities for further development in this area. This mutual influence is illustrated on the example of the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Language Learning and Teaching (LL&T). Both historical perspectives on Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and the contemporary practices depict interrelations between material artifacts and their use for learning purposes in the multilingual reality of the Internet. The results of research on teachers of foreign languages show that material culture gives grounds for social and pedagogical practices, yet, human perceptions, opinions, and actions constitute the actual use of it.

*Keywords:* Computer-Assisted Language Learning, material culture, language teachers, ICT

### Introduction

Information and Communication Technologies shape many areas of social life and culture. Almost all world languages can be represented on the Internet. UNICODE standard ensures encoding and handling written texts in most of the world's languages. It contains over 110,000 characters used in writing systems of various languages covering 100 scripts. But still some languages are not present on the net, which is a side effect of digital divide. To prevent it people need to have access to quality content at international, regional, and local level in their native languages. However, depending on the demographic data ten languages are used more often than others. Table 1 shows the number of Internet users by language.

Table 1  
*Ten top languages used in the Web on 31st December 2013*

Languages	Internet users % of world total	Internet users by language	World population for this language
English	28.6	800,625,314	1,370,977,116
Chinese	23.2	649,375,491	1,392,320,407
Spanish	7.9	222,406,379	439,320,916
Arabic	4.8	135,610,819	367,465,766
Portuguese	4.3	121,779,703	260,874,775
Japanese	3.9	109,626,672	127,103,388
Russian	3.1	87,476,747	142,470,272
German	2.9	81,139,942	94,652,582
French	2.8	78,891,813	377,424,669
Malay	2.7	75,459,025	284,105,671
TOP 10 LANGUAGES	84.3	2,362,391,905	4,856,715,562
Rest of the languages	15.7	440,087,029	2,325,143,057
WORLD TOTAL	100.0	2,802,478,934	7,181,858,619

Source: <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats7.htm>

The proportion of Internet users does not reflect the amount of resources in the languages listed above. There are some methodological constraints in assessing the amount of resources in a language. The number of websites is constantly growing.<sup>1</sup> Search engines report the total of domains they are indexing; however, there are webpages that have not been indexed, multilingual websites, moreover, some non-native speakers write blogs or social networking posts in foreign languages they know. What is more, easy access to texts in various languages enhances multilingualism as learners of a language can easily find study materials on the Internet. In this way, ICT influence LL&T. But the increasing number of users of languages other than English illustrates the decreasing role of English as the main language of the net. The UNESCO report “Twelve Years of Measuring Linguistic Diversity in the Internet: Balance and Perspectives,” written by Daniel Pimienta, Daniel Prado, and Álvaro Blanco, showed that English was not the dominant language on the Web in 2009. The use of English dropped from 80% in 1996 to 45% in 2008 (Pimienta, 2009).

<sup>1</sup> According to Internet Live Stats the number of webpages was 1,197,146,189 on May 25, 2017, at 4 p.m. and three minutes later it was 1,197,146,732. Source: <http://www.internetlivestats.com/total-number-of-websites/>.



However, when the users solve problems with script at the level of a keyboard, CALL techniques are the same for any language. The history of Computer-Assisted Language Learning shows how language teachers and software developers have made attempts to adopt existing technology to the needs of language learners. Although ICT has not been invented and developed for language learning, operational functionalities of the software and hardware gradually change LL&T practice enhancing language acquisition, language skills training, and intercultural communication in the multilingual world.

### **Material Artifacts in Human Perception**

The perception of reality is the traditional domain of philosophical studies. Heidegger (1927) in his early work emphasizes the role of the objects as tools. Later Heidegger (1949) raises the importance of the influence of objects on the human. New technology has to be adopted by the individuals and the society. Moore (1991/1999) identifies technology adoption lifecycles in five segments: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards. Innovators are the pioneers, early adopters are visionaries who love working with technology, early majority are people who would use the technology to solve their problems on condition that they see it is successful for others they know, late majority are similar to early majority but less confident with the technology, laggards will wait until the moment they have no other choice. Nowadays, the telephone seems to be fully adopted by laggards. In the case of language teachers the readiness to use ICT depends on the level of their own individual and institutional experience. Bax (2003, p. 24) presents the stages of normalization, which can also be perceived as interactions between a human and machines in social and educational contexts.

1. *Early adopters*. A few teachers and schools adopt the technology out of curiosity.
2. *Ignorance/scepticism*. However, most people are sceptical or ignorant of its existence.
3. *Try once*. People try out but reject it because of early problems. They can't see its value – it doesn't appear to add anything of 'relative advantage.'
4. *Try again*. Someone tells them it really works. They try again. They see it does in fact have relative advantage.
5. *Fear/awe*. More people start to use it, but still there is (a) fear, alternating with (b) exaggerated expectations.
6. *Normalization*. Gradually, it is seen as something normal.

Although the telephone as a material artifact has been finally adopted, ICT is still far from normalization. What is more, according to Eurobarometer 340 (2010) only 17% of Polish people want to employ new scientific innovations and achievements in their life. Thus, the social context for implementing ICT-based material culture is not favorable.

## **Information and Communication Technologies as Artifacts**

Material culture related to ICT includes hardware and specialized digital devices. However, as none of the devices could operate without software, it also has to be included as part of material culture.

### **Hardware and Peripherals**

The main part of a personal standalone computer is a central station with a separate screen, mouse, joystick, keyboard, printer, scanner. Small memory storage devices always belong to the hardware as each type needs special reading devices. At the beginning, programs were stored on flexible 5.25 inch diskettes which were replaced by 3.5 inch disks and then by pendrives also called USB sticks. Terabytes external storage devices are also connected to the computer via USB. The movable storage in laptops and notebooks is integrated into one piece of equipment. Nowadays, hardware has become so small to be installed in a device whose primary affordance is a phone or a tablet. However, the use of mobile phones, tablets, laptops, and standalone computers differs, depending on the needs of users.

To build a computer network, other material hardware and software are used, such as routers, optical fibers, net protocols, etc. However, the end users do not need to be aware of the detailed structure of internal nets unless they serve their purpose.

### **Software**

Computer programs, which make hardware operational and provide users with interfaces, can also be treated as artifacts. Hardware and software are designed to be easily operated by the users. Thus, user-friendliness and functionality of ICT are the main concerns of interface designers. The common area of interests shared by language teachers and learners, and software

engineers—designers of interfaces has led to the practical concept of participatory design (PD). The end users are involved as full participants in the design and evaluation of hardware, software, and computer-based activities (Muller, 1992). This collaborative and iterative process focuses on quality improvements (Bloomberg & Henderson, 1990). According to Colpaert (2004), students occupy different roles such as being a software user, language learner, communicator, and contributor to the design process. Thus, participatory approaches emphasize mutuality and reciprocity in shaping material artifacts to enhance and facilitate learning. In their case study, Cárdenas-Claros and Gruba (2010) specify the role of students in developing help options in computer-based listening activities.

### **Digital Products**

A separate category of ICT material artifacts is created by digital devices dedicated to specific functions only, for example, educational toys, e-book readers, digital cameras, robots, game players. However, the tendency to integrate various functions leads to mobile devices such as mobile phones, smartphones, and tablets which offer comfortable access to some resources and encourage various types of users' activities. The users become less and less aware of the in-built hardware and software.

### **Digital Culture Artifacts**

This category consists of software which is more and more normalized. Hardware and software are perceived just as means of storage and access. Their social and cultural role surpasses their image as a technology artifact, for example: portals, websites, video, and audio editing programs, games, mobile applications, Web 2.0 services such as social media, blogs, wikis, etc.

## **Social and Cultural Role of Digital Artifacts**

Tim Bernes-Lee perceives the Internet more as social creation and medium of social communication rather than as technological device. The medium shapes its users through the language, the interface, and strategies of usage. Tim Bernes-Lee said: "It was really hard explaining the Web before people just got used to it because they didn't even have words like click, and jump, and page." Whatever the design of digital interface is, humans need to adopt their

operational strategies as well as their cognitive strategies to be able to use the tools for their purposes. Thus, computer users constantly develop computational thinking which enables them to solve problems with the use of computers effectively. A human needs to be able to define a problem in a way which can be dealt and managed with ICT. This requires a certain level of understanding as to what can be done with ICT and how. It also requires reasonable estimation of ICT limits. Dede (1995, para 4) notices the influence of medium-related objects on their users. "The telephone creates conversationalists; the book develops imaginers who can conjure a rich mental image from sparse symbols on a printed page. Much of television programming induces passive observers. Today's "couch potatoes," vicariously living in the fantasy world of television, could become tomorrow's "couch funguses," immersed as protagonists in 3D soap operas while the real world deteriorates." ICT creates gamers, blog exhibitionists, forum debaters, haters, etc. or learners of whatever they want, for example, languages.

### **Historical Perspective on Technology Change Influences on CALL**

Computers were not developed for teaching and learning languages. Their first aim was rooted in mathematics to facilitate calculations. Similarly, the origin of script was also grounded in mathematics and trade. Thus, the educational use of digital devices in LL&T is an extra affordance. ICT is primarily aimed at business and military developments, its educational use is secondary, so almost all new digital artifacts need to be adopted to educational purposes.

The history of CALL provides insights into the processes of adopting existing material artifacts to the needs of language learners and teachers. It shows how individuals, institutions, and even educational systems adopt material culture. But first approaches to the use of computers in LT and LL surprisingly appeared, when computers operated on thousands of bulbs were only under control of IT specialists, the machines did not have any user-friendly features. Carton cards were used to input a code of the computer program into the computer. Strips of pinched paper carried the output of computer operations. It is hardly to imagine that the first idea of the use of computers for language learning appeared in the 1950s, when the mainframe computers looked like very big wardrobes, with no screens, no keyboards, no mouse devices, and no Windows. The use of video discs to provide learners with audio and video materials was not user-friendly. Taylor (1980) introduced the idea of a computer in LL as a tutor, tutee, and tool. In the role of a tutor, through computer-assisted

instruction the computer teaches the child, as a tool, the computer amplifies ability to address academic tasks, and as a tutee, it helps students learn by programming (tutoring) the computer. Later the role of a toy was added to emphasize learning while playing.

The next step in ICT material development was introduced with PC's (Personal Computers) in the 1980s. Windows provided space for graphics and interactivity. Language learning interactive software with texts, video, and audio materials was stored on CDs and used on standalone computers. However, the CDs were replaced in the 1990s by Internet resources.

Gradual progress in building either wire or wireless Internet connection has added communication functionalities, which opens interests in intercultural communication between learners of languages and starts all Web 2.0 based learning activities. ICT has become a means of either teacher-initiated and supervised or independent communication between learners. eTwinning program launched in 2004 allows for organized institutional cooperation between schools in different countries in which ICT is a means of communication. *Cultura Exchanges Site*, at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, provides framework for tandem academic intercultural cooperation for language learners. Other Internet initiatives, such as *LiveMocha*, gather independent learners who support each other in language learning. International project partners become resources of cultural knowledge. What is more, intercultural competence can be trained in practice via digital artifacts. Parallel to the development of the net, audio, and video have been more and more accessible and user-friendly.

The next step introduced mobility of the hardware when laptops connected to the Internet with an LCD screen, an in-built keyboard, and a touchpad instead of a mouse were launched. Then, the computer hardware reached the size of a telephone or a tablet and the era of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning has started.

Interactive whiteboards (IB) have become the most popular display devices used in education, which also allow for interaction with software or other users. As material artifacts IB operate linked to a computer and a beamer. Internet connection is a must to exploit them to their full potential. Cutrim Schmid and Whyte (2014) explore both the theoretical underpinnings of the use of this artifact and practical implementation of it in LL&T and in teacher training showing the educational potential of the interactive whiteboard. This example illustrates how the material culture (in fact one piece of it) fosters development in pedagogy and methodology of teaching languages.

Clickers were remote control devices for voting. In the classroom they are used for checking students answers in closed questions and giving short answers. Their main pedagogical role is to engage students into class activities and transform students learning (Beatty, 2004).

## **Technologies of the Future**

The latest technology as material artifacts opens new areas of language learning pedagogy. For example robots can be used as teacher assistants in class or learner assistants for senior learners (Wen-chi et al., 2015). The use of mobile devices opens various dimensions of learning mobility: (1) mobility in physical space; (2) mobility of technology; (3) mobility in conceptual space; (4) mobility in social space; and (5) learning dispersed over time; with context being the “overarching term to cover interrelated aspects of mobility” (such as mobility in space, time, technology, social mobility, dispersed learning (Kukulska-Hulme et al., 2011, p. 159).

Finally, three artifacts with the potential in LL&T are worth mentioning as technologies of the future. (1) Google glasses provide text translation of what the person next to you is saying. (2) QR codes as means of giving instructions to students and directing them to materials may facilitate classroom learning and teaching. (3) Digital textbooks are being adopted by educational systems in many countries. All of them may also introduce changes in methodology and teaching strategies in CALL.

## **The Need for Learner Preparation for CALL**

The need for teacher training for CALL has been well established and researched since the very beginning of the use of computers in LL&T and increased with the advent of online LL (Berge, 1995; Harasim, 1990). Any change in material culture has encouraged interest in teacher training. The research includes, for example, teacher training for online learning environments (Ernest et al., 2013; Guichon, 2009; Hampel & Stickler, 2005; Wang et al., 2010), design and evaluation of the best ways of training online language teachers (Comas-Quinn 2011; Ernest et al., 2012; Stickler et al., 2010), the use of multimodal audio-graphic online environments has received specific attention (Hampel & Stickler, 2012). For years teachers have relied implicitly on Prensky’s idea (2001) of “digital natives” which assumes that learners of young age are computer literate and possess all competences and skills to be able to learn effectively with and through technology that is available for them. Investigation of online communication between language learners leads to more focus on learner training for the use of technology in LL. But learners can use ICT in the classroom encouraged by their teachers or independently in informal settings. Even digital natives are not able to use online tools proficiently and to their best advantage for the purpose of learning (Jeffrey et al., 2011; Thorne, 2003). They need training focused on both selection of digital artifacts effective in their learning context and ICT-based learning strategies. Some research

has pointed out the negative impact of technology on student learning (Conole, 2008; Ushioda, 2005). Technologies “can only be effective if they are in the hands of students who know what to do with them” (Figura & Jarvis, 2007, p. 457) and that effective use of technologies requires learners to possess certain skills, strategies, and attitudes (Hubbard, 2004). The research presented above illustrates how the technology as material culture requires further developments in training strategies not only for teachers but also for learners, how it shapes its users: learners, teachers, and researchers while they enter the multilingual digital world.

### **Feminist Angle**

Half of the language learners are women. Three fourths or more teachers of languages are women, depending on the country, for example, in Poland 90% of language teachers are women. Thus, feminist perspective on ICT as material artifacts gives an additional insight into the topic. As ICT is perceived as a male domain in Europe and America, females tend to diminish their computer competence and refrain from developing ICT skills (Gajek, p. 2012). Women need stable, easy, and user-friendly digital tools. An example of such artifact is email, skype, and the majority of social media. The need for stability enhances the trend towards normalization defined by Bax (2003). Once learned how to operate it, the tool becomes invisible, it is used for work, communication, cooperation, and cultural or artistic purposes. Interface updates are nightmares for female ICT users.

### **Methodology**

The aim of the research was to find interrelation between teachers of languages access to digital devices, their opinions and perceptions on the usefulness of ICT in language learning and teaching and actual use of digital materials in their teaching practice and for private purposes. The total number of 671 teachers of languages participated in the study from March to April 2013. The respondents answered questions distributed through the Foundation for the Development of the Polish Educational System newsletter.

### **Results**

The results indicate the importance of the feminist angle as 90.3% of the respondents were women and 9.7% were men. Eighty point nine percent were



aged between 25 and 45. Seventy-three point three percent were teachers of English, 20.1% were teachers of German, 7.5% were teachers of Russian, and 4.8% were teachers of French. Seven point two percent were qualified as teachers of two languages. As the survey was distributed online, all respondents had access to hardware and software required. Seventy-one point eight percent had an access to a standalone computer, 86.3% to a laptop, and 52.5% to both of them, 21.0% to a notebook, and 58.3% to an interactive whiteboard.

The teachers use ICT for: writing texts (95.38%), for emails (98.36%), for contacts through social media (66.02%), making films (36.81%), and taking photos (80.18%). They also use digital media for reading and listening in the language they teach 86.74%. Thus, they are active and experienced computer users of digital resources.

The teachers have a positive attitude towards the use of digital resources and tools in class. Eighty-nine point eight percent of the respondents agree with the statement that “languages should be taught in communication with other learners abroad—also via ICT.” What is more, 96.6% agree that “communication with foreign partners motivates learners to learning languages.” Ninety-two point fifty-four percent of them encourage learners to read and listen to digital texts in the language they learn, while 87.3% agree that digital films and audio materials are necessary for learning foreign languages. Seventy-six percent disagree with the statement that while teaching reading and listening the teachers should not use digital devices, whereas 89.37% disagree that the use of computers in language class is a waste of time. Seventy-nine point seven percent of the respondents are not afraid that pupils damage digital equipment during their lessons. As many as 81.34% also disagree that students are not competent enough to use computers for language learning.

In terms of the teachers’ competences 63.28% declare to know how to use an interactive whiteboard, 62.54% are able to show learners how to use mobile devices for language learning while 60.6% know how to use them in class.

However, they do not often use digital resources in class. At least every week 39.8% use dictionaries, 33.4% let pupils do tasks on an interactive whiteboard, while 25.2% use digital games. What is more, games are used mainly at primary level. Only 39.5% of the respondents actively participated in international projects either eTwinning or Comenius, which nowadays are components of Erasmus+.

In the open question teachers who do not use computers in class complain about the limited access to hardware, either to computers or to an interactive whiteboard, 36.7% do not have access to the school computer lab because of the IT lessons which take place there. Some voices emphasize the role of teacher’s motivation to the use of ICT in LL&T.



## Discussion

The analysis and results show that digital materiality is the key factor in introducing and effective using of ICT in LL&T. What is more, even if the language teachers are competent users of ICT and their professional and private attitude towards technology is positive, the actual use of ICT is not as intensive as the factors might indicate. There must be other reasons for increasing the impact of ICT on LL&T. Digital materials give the ground on which social and pedagogical practices are built. Buckland (2000) indicates the role of school's policy with clear managerial and organizational regulations reflecting national curriculum, local human resources—their preferences and responsibilities, systems and procedures including channels of communication, assessment of learners and teachers as well as staff development opportunities.

## Conclusions

The use of material artifacts and their successful integration into a classroom depends on many kinds of social practices built on the materiality, for example, the design of activities based on pedagogical priorities (Richards, 2005). To avoid using technology for the sake of technology, instructors have to implement it on the basis of sound pedagogy and theoretical perspectives (Karabulut et al., 2012) and provide learners with information about the technology which enhances language learning in informal settings outside the classroom.

On the one hand, the analysis presents the need for conceptual and critical methodology reflection at every stage of development of technology. On the other hand, it shows the need for human flexibility in the technology adoption for pedagogical purposes in the multilingual world. In the case of less widely spoken languages the creation of digital resources in both international and local languages is equally important. ICT's material artifacts used in the language classroom encourage rethinking LL&T practice within a holistic ecological approach (Hoven & Palalas, 2011). Further development of effective learning procedures can only take place through the hands-on approach and experience shared among all stakeholders, that is, learners, teachers, educational managers and leaders, software engineers and educational researchers considering all voices from various contexts.

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Elżbieta Gajek

**Kommunikative und Informationstechnologien (TIK) als materielle Kultur  
im computergestützten Sprachunterricht (NJWK)**

Zusammenfassung

Die Wechselbeziehung zwischen Menschen und Technik ist zweibahnig. Der Mensch macht sich die Technik zunutze, aber auch die Technik verbessert die Leistungsfähigkeit des Menschen und schafft Bedingungen für Weiterentwicklung des Technikeinsatzes. Diese bilaterale Abhängigkeit wird hier am Beispiel von Anwendung der Kommunikativen und Informationstechnologien (TIK) im Fremdsprachenlehren und -lernen expliziert. Sowohl der historisch betrachtete computergestützte Fremdsprachenunterricht als auch heutige didaktische Methoden veranschaulichen die Wechselbeziehung zwischen materiellen Objekten und deren Ausnutzung beim Lernen im mehrsprachigen Internetmilieu. Die Lehrer können immer sachkundiger, TIK im Lehr- und Lernprozess anwenden. Die Schüler dagegen brauchen die Strategien des erfolgreichen Unterrichts mittels der digitalen Lehrmittel kennenlernen. Die von den Fremdsprachenlehrern durchgeführten Forschungen zeigen, dass obwohl materielle Kultur die Grundlage der sozialen und pädagogischen Handlungen bildet, sind Ansichten, Meinungen und konkrete Maßnahmen derjenige Faktor, der für die Anwendung der materiellen Kultur beim erfolgreichen Fremdsprachenunterricht entscheidend ist.



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## **Some Libyan EFL University Students' Attitudes towards Using Authentic Materials for Reading Classes**

### **Abstract**

This study investigates the attitudes of 100 Libyan English foreign language (EFL) university students towards using authentic reading materials. The quantitative data of this study were collected through a close-ended questionnaire. The majority of the students believed that exposing foreign language (FL) learners to authentic materials has a positive impact on developing their reading skills and on enhancing their awareness about target language culture. However, they emphasized the importance of introducing these materials in small portions and the need for promoting teachers' and students' motivation and interest in these materials. Despite the challenges and the difficulties that may impede the process of introducing authentic study material in the FL classroom, it represents a valuable and useful resource for teachers in motivating students and developing their language proficiency.

*Keywords:* EFL, ELT, authentic materials, FL classroom

### **Background of the Study**

Learning language for communication implies its purpose, that is, the ability to use L2 successfully in the outside world. Therefore, it is worth considering whether it is textbooks or authentic materials that better realize it.

The language learning materials used in the context of foreign language classrooms represents a fundamental tool for language learning development. The type of materials used can also have an obvious effect on enhancing learners' motivation, stimulating their interest and increasing their active participation in learning activities. For this reason, the materials should be carefully

selected to respond to learners' needs and interests. Therefore, foreign language pedagogy is increasingly focusing on the functional use of language and most of language programs are now designed on functional basis. Thus, the use of authentic materials becomes a standard practice nowadays. Accordingly, the task of instructors in language classrooms is to look for materials that closely reflect the language students will encounter outside the classroom. Although the artificial grammar practice, drills, exercises, and reading and listening texts found in common textbooks are necessary, students still need to be exposed to the same typical language used by native speakers. In this regard, Harmer (2001) believes that only authentic materials will 'genuinely' improve listening and reading skills.

Language learners' attitudes have been reported as an influential factor for developing language learning (Gardner, 1960; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Harmer, 2001; Otte, 2006; Soliman, 2013). Gardner and Lambert believed that mastering a second language is not only influenced by the mental competence or language skills but also on learners' attitudes and beliefs towards the target language. Positive attitudes can also improve the process of language learning by influencing the learners' behaviors and beliefs towards the language and can help in exploring their tendency to acquire that language. Devitt et al. (1988) referred to the widespread belief of linking the favorable attitude and the high level of motivation with second language learning success. Therefore, authentic materials with real-world language and contact with culture of the target language can make learning enjoyable and motivating. This suggests that understanding foreign language learners' attitudes towards the use of authentic materials is an essential step for a successful application of this practice in classrooms.

## **ELT in Libya**

English language enjoys high status in Libya. In the Libyan educational system, it is a compulsory subject and students start learning it since grade five (age 10). The aim of teaching English is said to be developing students' communication skills. The English textbooks currently applied in elementary and secondary schools are decided by the Ministry of Education. They have been designed and published by the Garnet Publication in the UK in 1999. The content of these textbooks focuses on communication skills and is learner-centered as well as it includes a variety of authentic language materials, especially for reading classes (Phillips et al., 2002).

At the university level, English language continues to be a compulsory subject for all study disciplines. Although Libyan universities are centrally managed by the Ministry of Higher Education, these universities enjoy some autonomy in making decisions for setting their own plans and programmes. Teaching staff members also enjoy some degree of autonomy in designing their courses. For example, they are free to select or design the materials they teach. However, they have to follow a predetermined set of criteria and academic grading for assessing students. Faculties of Arts and Education have English departments with four-year study programs. Reading is taught as a subject in these departments and the instructors use a variety of authentic and non-authentic materials. A research was carried out by E. M. Soliman (2013) to investigate the attitudes and beliefs of Benghazi (Gareuness) university EFL teachers regarding the use of authentic reading materials. These teachers were found to be positive about using these materials and emphasized the need for applying authentic texts along with coursebooks as a tool for developing students' communicative competence.

## **Review of Literature**

This section focuses on the debate in the literature on using authentic reading materials in foreign language classrooms.

### **The Definition of Authentic Materials**

There seems to be a lack of consensus about the definition of authenticity in the field of language education. Widdowson (1983, p. 30) believes that "authenticity is a term which creates confusion because of a basic ambiguity." Harmer (2001) described authentic texts as "materials which are designed for native speakers; they are real texts; designed not for language students, but for the speakers of the language." Peacock (1997) defined authentic materials as materials that have been produced to fulfil some social purpose in the language community. Nunan (1999, p. 126) referred to authentic materials as "spoken or written language data that have been designed by native speakers for some real purpose of their own rather than using language produced and designed for the classroom." Gilmore (2007, p. 98) reported that this concept has been used to refer to the function of a task, the materials being used or the people taking part in the learning process, task or communicative act.

Examples of authentic materials are video clips, recordings of authentic interactions, songs, posters, TV commercials, extracts from television, radio and newspapers, tourist information brochures, signs, maps and charts, photographs and pictures, timetables and schedules (Peacock, 1997; Nunan, 1999). Sherman (2003) offers detailed explanation for how authentic videos can be used in the language classroom.

The successful use of these types of authentic materials depends on teachers' and learners' understanding of their role in the realization of authenticity. These roles were described by Van Lier (1996, p. 128) in the following manner: authenticity cannot be achieved through introducing authentic materials and tasks into classroom, rather, by considering it as a goal that teachers and students have to work towards, consciously and constantly. In other words, authenticity is the result of acts of authentication by students and their teacher.

### **Advantages of Authentic Materials**

Using authentic language materials for language learning in the foreign language classroom has many advantages. According to Hyland (2003, p. 94) authenticity in a foreign language classroom will increase learner motivation and thus improve the learning results. In addition, Melvin and Stout (1987, p. 55) state that learners who work with authentic materials have an interest in the language because they know what it can enable them in the future. This can lower the degree of anxiety when learners face new situations in the target language (Moya, 2000). Nunan (1999, p. 27) suggested bringing the content and the subject matter to students' life and enabling them to make important connections between the classroom and the outside world. Authentic materials are considered by Peacock (1997, p. 45) as a bridge between the classroom and the real world. Exposing learners to real language which is rich in context and culture is another advantage of using authentic materials (Martinez, 2002, p. 67) and triggers the process of natural language acquisition (Hwang, 2005, p. 3). This opportunity cannot be provided through artificial texts in course-books as they are normally modified to meet the learner's current level (Tylor, 1994). Authentic materials provide language learners with models of target-like language use which can promote their ability for using the language in real life situations (Hyland, 2003, p. 94). Moreover, authentic books, articles, and newspapers contain a wide variety of text types and language styles which cannot be easily found in conventional teaching materials. This can encourage reading for pleasure especially if students are involved in selecting the authentic materials. Offering teachers the freedom to select samples of authentic materials to teach from can support a more creative approach to teaching (Peacock, 1997; Nunan, 1999; Gilmore, 2007).



### **Disadvantages of Authentic Materials**

Using authentic materials in foreign contexts is not always a safe adventure. Therefore, careful consideration should be given to any possible challenges or drawbacks before introducing them into these contexts. For example, language used in the authentic texts can be too difficult for learners at lower levels. This may decrease their motivation and lead to poor learning. It is obvious that authenticating language lessons is a hard work for both teachers and students. Moreover, teachers may not be eager to use authentic materials as finding suitable selections and developing effective learning activities to meet the pedagogic purposes can be time-consuming. Creating the authentic tasks and activities for using the authentic materials in classrooms is more problematic (Van Lier, 1996, p. 126). Therefore, some teachers tend to ask students to apply specific tasks such as learning by heart with the authentic materials. Language learners' and teachers' different understandings of the term "authentic" is another issue for consideration. It is very likely that two language learners see the same task as either authentic or inauthentic. This can create confusion inside the language classroom around the materials and the tasks. Van Lier (1996, p. 128) points out that the teacher's own desire to make the learning more authentic might stimulate authenticity in the students as well. The vocabulary included in authentic texts may not be relevant to learners' immediate needs, which may decrease their interest in learning them (Hainess, 1995, p. 63) and the grammatical structures included in authentic texts can be too difficult and too demanding for the students (Peacock, 1997, p. 148). Moreover, the use of authentic recordings may involve the risk of exposing learners to different accents which can cause some confusion about pronunciation.

### **The Methodology**

This study aimed to explore the attitudes of a hundred Libyan EFL university students' attitudes about using authentic materials in their reading classes. It was an attempt to answer the following research question: What are the attitudes of Libyan EFL university students about using authentic materials in their reading classes?

An attitudinal questionnaire was designed for collecting data for this purpose (see appendix). The questionnaire consists of 12 statements describing the advantages and disadvantages of using authentic materials for developing language learning. These statements were drawn from the literature (see 1, 3, and 4) and were written in a simple language. The participants were asked to

tick the option which matches their attitude from a scale including: strongly disagree, disagree, uncertain, agree, and strongly agree.

The sample of this study consists of a hundred Libyan EFL university students randomly selected from two English departments in two colleges of education in two universities (Tripoli University & Zawia University). They were mostly female (91%) with a similar social and cultural background. The data of this study were collected in April 2014. By this time, the researcher was lecturing in these two colleges and this helped in the process of contacting the participants. The hundred questionnaires were distributed by the researcher who offered some explanations to the participants and all the copies were returned complete.

## Results

The results of this study are presented in Table 1. The figures represent the frequency in the participants' responses to each statement in the questionnaire. The responses to each item, that is, strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), uncertain (U), agree (A), and strongly agree (SA), were calculated and presented in numbers. As the aim of the study is to find out the nature of the participants' responses (positive/negative), no variables were involved in this statistical analysis.

The responses (DA) and (D) were combined together and will be later referred to as negative attitudes whereas the responses (SA) and (A) were combined together referring to positive attitudes. The response (U) indicates the participant's uncertainty about the statement.

Table 1  
*Students' Responses to the Statements of the Questionnaire*

No.	Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA
1.	Using authentic material develops learners' awareness of cultural aspects of the target language	0	0	2	32	66
2.	Using authentic materials enhances learners' motivation	34	27	8	18	13
3.	Using authentic materials increases the number of active vocabulary of the target language	4	5	12	37	42
4.	Using authentic materials is useful for developing aural language skills	0	2	18	48	32
5.	Using authentic materials develops listening comprehension skills	21	33	11	16	19

*Table 1 continued*

6. Using authentic materials develops reading skills	14	38	7	31	10
7. Using authentic materials develops writing proficiency	56	19	3	9	13
8. The grammatical structures of authentic materials are complex for learners to cope with	4	12	22	28	34
9. Using authentic materials develops learners' communication skills	9	22	17	22	30
10. Authentic materials benefit students with advanced levels more than students with low levels	0	4	11	62	23
11. Authentic materials are useful for developing target language pronunciation	23	19	8	22	28
12. It is easy to find suitable authentic materials for different pedagogical purposes	24	56	8	6	6

Table 1 shows that the participants' attitudes towards the statements of the questionnaire vary considerably from one statement to another. The majority of the participants (98) were positive about the importance of using authentic materials for developing language learners' understanding of the aspects of target language culture. As many as 61 of the respondents were not positive about enhancing learners' motivation as a result of being exposed to authentic materials, whereas 31 were positive and eight students were not certain. The attitudes of 79 students were positive about using authentic materials for developing learners' active vocabulary of the target language. Nine participants did not agree on this statement and 12 of them were not certain. Eighty students believed that learners' aural skills can be developed through exposure to authentic materials, while eight of them were not certain about this notion and only two disagreed about it. Fifty-four students did not agree that using authentic materials develops learners' listening comprehension abilities, whereas 35 of them agreed. Only eight students were not sure about this notion. Fifty-two students did not think that using authentic materials develops reading skills, whereas 41 of them thought that they do. Seven of the participants were not certain about this idea. Seventy-five students believed that using authentic materials has no a significant impact on developing writing proficiency, whereas 22 of them believed it has. Only two students were undecided. Regarding the complexity of the grammatical structures used in authentic materials, 62 students agreed on this statement, whereas 16 of them think they are not difficult for learners to cope with. Surprisingly 22 students were not certain about their attitude towards this issue. The students hold different attitudes about the impact of using authentic materials on developing communication skills, as 52 of them agreed with this statement, whereas 31 others did not. Seventeen students were not sure about this issue. The majority of the students (85) believe that advanced

students can benefit more from authentic materials than those with low level command of English. Only four students did not agree with this idea and 11 of them were uncertain about it. Fifty students believe that target language pronunciation can be developed through exposure to authentic materials, whereas 42 did not believe so. Only eight students were undecided. As many as 80% of the students believe in the difficulty in finding suitable authentic materials for different pedagogical purposes, whereas 12 of them think it is easy to find proper materials for achieving different purposes. Only eight students were not sure about this issue.

## Discussion

This study focuses on exploring the attitudes of 100 Libyan university students towards using authentic materials. Investigating learners' attitudes is a significant factor in developing language learning (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). The results indicated that the participants hold positive and negative attitudes according to their estimation of the advantages and disadvantages of using authentic materials for developing FL learning.

The confusion about the term "authenticity" makes it difficult to identify the attitudes of language learners about using authentic materials in FL classrooms. For example, is it only enough to expose learners to authentic texts to achieve authenticity or is it also important to present these materials in authentic tasks? Guariento and Morley (2001, p. 349) suggested that the learning tasks should also be authentic. Hyland (2003, p. 94) argues that it might be difficult to fulfill the original communicative purpose as materials are still used in a classroom environment. Nevertheless, the appropriate use of authentic materials is useful even within an inauthentic situation. This confusion makes the participants uncertain about many aspects of authentic materials and their usefulness for developing students' language proficiency. Their attitudes were positive for some advantages of using authentic materials, negative and uncertain about some others.

Using authentic materials develops language learner's awareness about cultural aspects of the target language. Sherman (2003, p. 12) explains that "authentic material is so important for language learning" that he considers it as "a window into culture." The language and style used in these materials offer the opportunity to understand how the language is used by its native speakers in terms of style, pronunciation, structures, and expressions. Therefore, language learners' understanding of target language culture should be enhanced through exposing them to authentic texts and materials. This exposure can promote

learners' awareness about using the target language in its real contexts which cannot be provided through simplified texts. It can also increase learners' active vocabulary of the target language and develop their listening language skills (Miller, 2005). Reading skills and listening comprehension abilities can be also improved by means of authentic materials (Maxiam, 2002; Otte, 2006).

The participants were not positive about the idea of introducing authentic materials for lower levels foreign language learners. They might think about the complexity of the structures and vocabulary used in these materials which make it hard for learners to cope with. They might also think about the native speaker's accent used for recorded materials which might not be easily understood by beginners. It may be more useful if lower levels learners are exposed to simplified materials with non-native teacher provided that he/she has a high level of language proficiency. Guariento and Morley (2001) recommended using authentic materials at the upper-intermediate level. However, Maxiam (2002) reported that their sample members were able to benefit from authentic texts irregardless of their level. Exposing lower level learners to authentic materials may result in decreasing their motivation due to the difficulty they may encounter in dealing with these study resources.

The majority of the students did not think that using authentic materials can result in developing their writing proficiency. However, such an exposure will have a positive impact on developing their writing skills and understanding of the different writing styles and registers. Morton (1999, p. 182) claimed that "students need to learn the register (through exposure to authentic reading texts) that is appropriate for their own essays. For this, there is no substitute for authentic academic texts which can develop students' ability to master basic rhetorical devices." Carter and Nunan (2001) emphasized the importance of authentic materials for raising learners' awareness of grammatical, lexical and, most importantly, stylistic features. Only by applying authentic materials, FL learners can learn more about how the target language is used for different genres and functions.

Although there is a widespread belief in the literature about the positive impact of using authentic materials on enhancing learners' motivation to learning (Krashen, 1982; Sherman, 2003; Gilmore, 2007), the majority of the participants were not positive about this issue. This could be attributed to their accountability for the difficulty they may encounter in dealing with study resources. Their failure to understand complex structures and expressions used in authentic texts may increase their anxiety and decrease their motivation and interest in these materials. It can be also attributed to their thinking of the target language culture as strange and biased. Unless teachers succeed in enhancing learners' motivation towards the target language, introducing authentic materials into foreign language classrooms may not be a successful practice.

## Conclusion

Using authentic materials has a positive impact on developing language learning. It develops language learners' awareness of the cultural aspects of the target language. It enhances learners' motivation and develops their reading and comprehension skills. Unlike simplified language materials, authentic materials offer the opportunity for understanding how the target language is used by its native speakers in real life situations. This can prepare language learners for coping with similar situations and can reduce their anxiety for using the language in these situations communicatively.

As learners may develop negative attitudes towards the culture of the target language because they consider it strange, it is important to increase their awareness that learning this culture does not mean accepting it. It is also important to introduce authentic materials in small portions in order to account for the difficulty students may encounter in coping with them.

The participants of this study were generally positive about using authentic materials for language learning. Therefore, and despite the challenges and difficulties may be associated with using them in Libyan university English classes, it is recommended to be introduced into these classes as it can have a positive impact on developing students' language proficiency. It represents a valuable resource for language teachers in providing useful input for their students.

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Salama Embark Saleh

**Die Einstellung der libyschen Studenten  
zur Benutzung des authentischen Materials im Unterricht  
in Erfassung des geschriebenen Textes**

Zusammenfassung

Die vorliegende Studie konzentriert sich auf die Einstellung der libyschen Studenten der englischen Philologie zur Anwendung des authentischen Materials im Unterricht. Quantitative Daten wurden mittels eines Mehrfachauswahlfragebogens gewonnen. Die meisten Befragten sind der Meinung, dass sich die Arbeit am authentischen Material auf die Entwicklung der Lesensfähigkeit in der Fremdsprache bei den diese Fremdsprache Lernenden positiv auswirkt und dass sie zur Erweiterung deren Kenntnisse in der Zielsprachekultur beiträgt. Diese Studenten betonten auch, es sei von Bedeutung, dass dieses Material in kleinen Mengen eingeführt und die Motivation und das Interesse am authentischen Material sowohl bei den Studierenden als auch bei den Lehrern verstärkt werden sollten.

Trotz aller Herausforderungen und Probleme, welche die Einführung des authentischen Materials im Fremdsprachenunterricht erschweren könnten, ist es ein wertvolles und nützliches Werkzeug für Lehrer, die ihre Studenten noch mehr motivieren und deren sprachliche Gewandtheit vervollkommen möchten.



## Appendix

**Students' Responses to the Statements of the Questionnaire**

No.	Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA
1.	Using authentic material develops learners' awareness of cultural aspects of the target language					
2.	Using authentic materials enhances learners' motivation					
3.	Using authentic materials increases the number of active vocabulary of the target language					
4.	Using authentic materials is useful for developing aural language skills					
5.	Using authentic materials develops listening comprehension skills					
6.	Using authentic materials develops reading skills					
7.	Using authentic materials develops writing proficiency					
8.	The grammatical structures of authentic materials are complex for learners to cope with					
9.	Using authentic materials develops learners' communication skills					
10.	Authentic materials benefit students with advanced levels more than students with low levels					
11.	Authentic materials are useful for developing target language pronunciation					
12.	It is easy to find suitable authentic materials for different pedagogical purposes					





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## **English Language Attrition in Teachers: Questions of Language Proficiency, Language Maintenance, and Language Attitudes**

### **Abstract**

The present study aims to investigate the attrition of English in English language teachers whose native language is Polish. It focuses on the attrition of more advanced vocabulary and structures which are taught in English Philology departments at universities, but which may not be necessary for teachers who teach at the lower levels of education and, as a consequence, they may be especially prone to attrition. At the same time, the study includes a questionnaire aiming to reveal the participants' attitudes towards linguistic correctness and their strategies of language maintenance. As the results show, some attrition can indeed be observed, yet it must also be remarked that the teachers do try to maintain their proficiency levels in English by using the language in various ways, such as reading books and articles in English, watching films in English, talking to native speakers, etc.

*Keywords:* language attrition, advanced users of English as L2, English language teachers, language maintenance

### **Introduction**

The purpose of the study has been an investigation of language attrition in Polish teachers of English, their attitudes towards linguistic correctness, and their strategies of language maintenance. On the one hand, it can be assumed that English language teachers' levels of proficiency in English are relatively high. In principle, their levels should be C2 or at least C1, as these are the levels graduates from English Philology departments are expected to have while leaving university (C2 if they have a master's degree, while a graduate

with a bachelor's degree may have C1). On the other hand, however, language attrition is a natural process that takes place in bi- and multilingual systems when speakers are faced with the task of managing two or more languages (Herdina & Jessner, 2013, p. 753). Certainly, the most spectacular examples of attrition can be observed in emigrants who either have no contact with their native language any more, or who are exposed to a deteriorated version of their native language (for example, simplified, full of borrowings from the dominant language of the country, etc., Sharwood-Smith, 1989), but any bilingual speaker who stops using one of his or her languages, or certain words and structures in the language, is prone to attrition. In fact, like emigrants, teachers are also exposed to erroneous input, which, in their case, contains learners' errors. As a result, foreign language teachers who stop maintaining their levels of L2 proficiency are likely to undergo attrition, especially of structures which they do not use on a daily basis, for example, because they are not included in the school curriculum.

Still, instead of contenting themselves with maintaining a level of knowledge sufficient for teaching, for example, at primary school, teachers should apply various strategies of language maintenance and, as will be shown later in this article, many of them actually do. At the same time, teachers' active involvement in language maintenance can be assumed to be related to attitudes towards the target language and its norms. In other words, a positive attitude towards language accuracy may result in language maintenance, which counteracts attrition, whereas an indifferent attitude might lead to the abandonment of the language maintenance effort and to increased attrition of the teachers' competence in English.

In fact, as will be discussed in more detail below, research (e.g., Cherciov, 2013; Riemer, 2005) shows that a positive attitude itself is not a sufficient predictor of language maintenance, unless it is accompanied by a real language maintenance effort. Therefore, apart from the participants' attitudes towards the English language in general and linguistic correctness in particular, their ways of maintaining their proficiency levels will be taken into account.

Last but not least, it must be remembered that the attrition of English observed in the present study should be considered in probabilistic rather than absolute terms. Even though English Philology graduates can be assumed to have studied certain words and structures, it is difficult to establish which ones they actually processed deeply enough and internalized, and which ones they memorized only temporarily, to pass a practical English exam, but which they have not used since. However, forgetting such items would also constitute attrition, even if the participants did not even remember learning them. Certainly, qualitative methods, such as interviews and questionnaires, might be helpful to some extent, but the examples, albeit fairly typical, might still differ from the examples they encountered during their studies. The situation

is even more complex in the case of vocabulary, which is so vast that, while at the basic (A1–A2) levels it can be supposed that the names of food items, clothes, etc. are taught everywhere, at the advanced (C1–C2) levels there may be considerable diversity, depending on the texts read and discussed during the studies. However, as certain topics, such as work, travel, social problems, etc. are part of most advanced English curricula, it could be safely assumed that the participants were familiar with such expressions as ‘a golden handshake,’ ‘asylum seekers’ or ‘a white-collar worker.’ Therefore, if the participants turned out not to retrieve them from memory, it was more likely that they had forgotten them than they had never encountered them. Moreover, as more than one word is usually possible in a context (Dubin & Olshtain, 1993), the use of non-target words was accepted here as correct as long as those words met the semantic and collocational constraints of the context, except for idiomatic expressions, which do not allow any variation. Even so, failure to recognize an idiom and the use of a non-target word (e.g., ‘a golden watch’ instead of ‘a golden handshake’) could still be classified as ‘partly correct,’ provided that the response made sense.

To sum up, while the participants’ failure to produce words and structures which should be known to an English language teacher with a C1 or C2 level of proficiency can generally be assumed to constitute evidence of language attrition, the results should be treated with caution, as, theoretically, a particular person might not have encountered a given word or structure. Still, the words and structures used here are taught during English Philology studies, so they are more likely to have been forgotten than not to have been encountered at all. Even if they were practiced very briefly and not internalized properly, this is also a case of attrition, as “inexperienced items” (Preston, 1982, in Sharwood-Smith, 1989) constitute one of the “high attrition” sites (cf. Section on Language Attrition below).

## Language Attrition

In general, language attrition can be defined as “[t]he non-pathological decrease in a language that had previously been acquired by an individual” (Köpke & Schmid, 2004, p. 5, in Cherciov, 2013, p. 717). In other words, unlike, for example, aphasia, language attrition is not caused by an illness or a brain lesion, but rather by the gradual deactivation of a language that has not been used for some time. In fact, as Andersen (1982, p. 86) has remarked,

Language attrition is a special case of variation in the acquisition and use of a language or languages and can best be studied, described, documented, explained and understood within a framework that includes all other phenomena of language acquisition and use.

It can thus be regarded as a form of language development, even though its result is a decrease rather than an increase in language competence. In fact, Sharwood-Smith (1989, p. 188) describes attrition as a *competence change* which diverges from the norm instead of converging towards it. As in the case of acquisition, such a change can involve both external input and internal restructuring. As Andersen (1982, p. 87) puts it,

[r]estriction in language use accompanied by a break with a previously established linguistic tradition (or norm) leads to reduction in linguistic form and the creation of gaps in the individual's linguistic repertoire in that language.

In immigrant communities, L1 attrition can be viewed as acquisition in which speakers acquire an altered version of their L1 from 'more advanced' attriters, which can be structurally simplified, but also 'enriched' with lexical borrowings from the L2, which either replace L1 elements or denote phenomena specific to the L2 culture (Sharwood-Smith, 1986; 1989). Of course, in the case of language teachers, this break with a previously established tradition or norm is not as visible as in the case of emigrants, but losing contact with correct English taught at university and exposure to learners' errors can be supposed to have a similar effect.

Moreover, what undergoes attrition may be language competence or control (Sharwood-Smith, 1989, p. 190). In other words, the underlying competence may remain intact, but the speaker may lose the ability to control his or her production of that language, for example, because access to some rules has become inhibited. In a similar vein, Schmid, Köpke, and de Bot (2013) describe attrition as a dynamic and non-linear process, which affects different components of language proficiency, for example, fluency, accuracy, and complexity.

According to Dynamic Systems Theory (Herdina & Jessner, 2013, p. 753), language attrition results from the cognitive load placed on the speaker who faces the task of managing two or more language systems. As Herdina and Jessner (2013, p. 752) remark, the gradual process of language attrition takes place as the (dynamic) language system "undergoes a process of transformation to meet the altered communicative needs of the individual." Undoubtedly, a change in the speaker's needs, such as moving to a social context in which a certain language is no longer needed, can contribute to language attrition. However, apart from language needs, researchers have suggested several fac-

tors which can influence the process of language attrition. Predictions about the rate of language attrition concern, on the one hand, personal background factors (specifically, the age of onset and the length of residence) and, on the other hand, input and exposure, including the use of the target language. Last but not least, language maintenance depends to some extent on personal attitudes (Schmid, Köpke, & de Bot, 2013, p. 676). However, as Schmid, Köpke, and de Bot (2013, p. 676) remark, the role of each factor can be very difficult to investigate. Over long time periods, attrition does not progress linearly (de Bot & Clyne, 1994; Schmid & Dusseldorp, 2010, in Schmid, Köpke, & de Bot, 2013, p. 676).

Still, the development of language systems is non-linear by definition, as it proceeds in phases of acceleration and retardation (Herdina & Jessner, 2002, pp. 89–91). Herdina and Jessner (2002, p. 91) define gradual language loss as “an inversion of language growth,” which constitutes a process of adapting to the speaker’s communicative needs. However, language attrition is much more difficult to investigate than language acquisition or aphasia and has thus largely been ignored by research. As Herdina and Jessner (2002, p. 96) observe, first, language attrition is much less spectacular than abrupt complete language loss, second, speakers try to counterbalance attrition by means of compensatory strategies, and, third, at least at the early stages, language attrition “expresses itself in the form of an increased scatter of performance” (Herdina & Jessner, 2002, p. 96). In fact, measuring language attrition poses a serious challenge to linguistic research. First, as Herdina and Jessner (2002, p. 96) have remarked, there is no explicit performance measure which might capture the scatter of performance at the early stages of attrition. Second, designing tasks to measure attrition is very difficult: if the participants focus on one aspect of the language (for example, lexical access or grammatical rules), they are likely to perform better and the task will not detect attrition effects reliably (Schmid, Köpke, & de Bot, 2013, p. 678). They therefore conclude that the best way to investigate attrition is to test the participants’ speaking skills, because “[n]atural speech requires the rapid online integration and processing of information from many different levels” (Schmid, Köpke, & de Bot, 2013, p. 679). As a result, a number of trade-off effects between complexity, accuracy, and fluency can be observed, for example, focusing on the structure may lead to a loss of fluency or to errors in other structures (a loss of accuracy), while the avoidance of certain structures may result in decreased complexity. Still, recording speech requires direct contact between the investigator and the participant. Consequently, as the present study consisted of a test of English language competence and a questionnaire, which could also be distributed by email, it was decided to limit it to the written tasks for practical reasons. The participants could therefore do the test and fill in the questionnaire in their free time, and return them to the researcher afterwards. Even though this study design did not tap, for example,

the decrease in fluency, it can be supposed that some decrease in complexity and accuracy could still be observed in relation to the requirements posed on English Philology students at Polish universities.

Of the hypotheses concerning the order of L2 attrition, the most frequently cited one is the regression hypothesis ('first in, last out'), often in combination with the critical threshold hypothesis ('best learnt, last forgotten') (Bardovi-Harlig & Stringer, 2010, pp. 15–16). As Moorcroft and Gardner (1987, p. 339) conclude, the structures most prone to attrition are recently learnt ones, which suggests "that a thoroughly learned structure is relatively immune to language loss." However, another factor which contributes to the attrition of structures is their markedness. In reference to L1 attrition, Seliger and Vago (1991, p. 13) hypothesize that if either L1 or L2 contains an unmarked rule, then the unmarked rule will be retained and the marked one will disappear. However, if both languages contain marked structures, the L1 structure (or, in the present study, the L2 structure) will not be attrited. In a similar vein, Preston (1982, in Sharwood-Smith, 1989, p. 101) includes marked items in his list of high attrition sites or areas which are particularly prone to attrition. Other high attrition sites include, for example, items learnt last, low-frequency items, inexperienced items (i.e., those which the speaker does not use or is not exposed to any more) low information-load and low functional-load items, synonymous items (of a pair of synonyms, one disappears), and irregularities.

In relation to the present study, the above hypotheses can be applied especially to the attrition of complex but infrequent grammatical structures which are on the English Philology syllabus, but which are not used in everyday English, or which are not included in the school curriculum, such as, for example, more complex uses of reported speech, or inversion after 'no sooner,' 'only,' 'rarely,' etc. On the one hand, they may have been learnt last and, consequently, practiced the least. At the same time, as such structures are largely specific to English, they may be regarded as marked. It can therefore be supposed that attrition in English language teachers results in the loss of less frequent grammatical structures as well as advanced vocabulary.

It can thus be seen that language attrition can involve the gradual loss of different language skills, not only of accuracy, but also of fluency and complexity, which can be assumed to be particularly visible in teachers whose contact with English is limited mainly to teaching. If a teacher uses only simple structures and basic vocabulary which are included, for example, in the primary school curriculum, he or she may forget certain less frequent structures or lose control of their use, for example, be unable to retrieve them quickly enough. As a consequence of language attrition, language skills have to be constantly maintained, which requires making an effort included by Herdina and Jessner (2002, p. 130) in the following formula:



$$\text{GLE} \cong \text{LAE} + \text{LME}$$

GLE – General Language Effort

LAE – Language Acquisition Effort

LME – Language Maintenance Effort

In other words, it must be remembered that acquiring a language is not enough, as the language skills already acquired need to be maintained by regular practice. Undoubtedly, this requires a positive attitude both to the language as such and to linguistic correctness. An attitude has been defined by Ajzen (1988, p. 4, in Baker, 1995, p. 11) as “a disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution, or event,” and, it can be added, also to a language. According to Baker (1995, p. 11), attitudes can be measured and, consequently, “the specification of objects, persons, institutions or events is important and valuable in constructing measurement scales.” In the present study, attitudes towards linguistic correctness are measured by means of a five-point Likert scale, ranging from one (completely disagree) to five (fully agree). As Baker (1995, p. 12) explains, an attitude consists of a cognitive component, an affective one and readiness for action. However, attitudes may not always be clearly defined, as irrational prejudices and fears may be in conflict with formally stated beliefs (Baker, 1995, p. 12). As a result, attitude measurement may only be based on overtly stated attitudes and ignore hidden beliefs.

Similarly, readiness for action does not yet mean that action will actually be taken. Indeed, as Cherciov (2013) has shown, a positive attitude is not enough to counterbalance language attrition if it is not accompanied by an effort to maintain one’s language skills. In her study of language attrition in Romanian L1 speakers living in Canada “a positive *attitude* was instrumental only if it was conducive to an active effort to maintain the L1” (Cherciov, 2013, p. 730, her emphasis). Similarly, Riemer (2005) investigated the role of motivation in the maintenance of L2 French by German L1 speakers. In particular, she focused on the influence of motivation at the end of the L2 acquisition phase (“Erwerbsphase”) on the maintenance of French language speaking and reading comprehension skills in the “incubation phase” (“Inkubationsphase”), that is, at the time when they no longer studied French actively, but when their L2 competence was still subject to some cognitive maturation and restructuring, called “residual learning” (Riemer, 2005, pp. 218–219). As her results show, although its impact was weak, motivation indeed influenced L2 maintenance, yet, as in Cherciov’s (2013) study, its role could be ascribed to seeking contact with French in the incubation phase (Riemer, 2005, p. 230), for example, in the form of reading French books and periodicals, listening to French music, or exchanging emails in that language (Riemer, 2005, pp. 228–230). However, unlike reading and writing, listening to music does not correlate with the maintenance of L2

skills (Riemer, 2005, p. 229), which indicated that counterbalancing attrition requires more active language use. It can thus be assumed that, in the context of the present study, even though English language teachers do use English in their work, the maintenance of more advanced structures would also require their active use, or least their processing while reading.

Finally, as Szupica-Pyrzanowska (2016, p. 117) has observed, learners are particularly prone to attrition because of limited contact with the target language, therefore teachers are faced with the challenge of helping them to maintain their language skills. It might be argued that teachers are not actually learners any more, but just as L1 can undergo attrition in an L2 environment, so can even an advanced L2 if it is not used frequently enough, or if its use is restricted to a limited number of words and structures. Therefore, apart from providing learners with opportunities to use English actively, teachers should, arguably, also seek opportunities to use English in order to prevent its attrition.

## The Present Study

### Participants

The study was carried out with 39 teachers of English (L1—Polish) teaching in different kinds of schools, from primary school to university, as well as language schools and private tutoring. More precisely, they taught at: primary schools (15), secondary schools (15), middle schools (14), kindergartens (6), technical colleges (5), vocational schools (5), English Philology departments (6), university or college departments other than English Philology (3), language schools (7), and companies (4). They also gave private classes to children who had difficulty learning English (20), to gifted children (13), to children who were neither particularly gifted nor had learning difficulties but wanted to learn more English than the school curriculum provided (19), and to adults (16). Obviously, the sum exceeds thirty-nine, but the majority of them worked in more than one place.

Most of them (31) had a master's degree in English Philology, three held a doctor's degree in English Philology (linguistics or applied linguistics), three held a bachelor's degree in English Philology, and two held master's degrees in other disciplines and had English language teaching qualifications (CPE, post-graduate studies).

Thirty-four of them were female and five were male. They had completed their studies between one and thirty-three years before participating in the study (mean: 10.26 years, SD = 8.0935).

Last but not least, they were asked how often they had contact with English apart from teaching, which meant the opportunity to use English in contexts requiring more words and structures than were on the school syllabus, for example, talking to native speakers or reading books and watching films in the original. Fourteen of the participants stated they had contact with English every day, eleven—a few times a week, and five—once a week. Less frequent contact with English was rare: the answer ‘once in a few weeks’ was chosen by two participants, ‘once a year’ by two, ‘once in a few months’ by three, while one person chose ‘other’ and one did not provide any answer at all.

## Method

The instrument used in the study was a written survey consisting of two parts, an English language test with an overview of advanced vocabulary and grammar (C1–C2), followed by a questionnaire concerning the participants’ language biographies, problems of language attrition encountered by them in everyday life as well as in the test, attitudes towards linguistic correctness and strategies of counterbalancing attrition, or reasons for not doing so (see Appendix at the end of the article). However, the items were quite typical and even the sentences were similar to items which the participants might have encountered at university or in a CPE textbook. Even though the test was quite unpopular with the participants and some potential participants even refused to co-operate when they saw it, it was necessary to make them aware of the attrition processes already taking place, as self-evaluation is not always reliable. As was already mentioned above, the participants could return the tests and the questionnaires to the researcher by email, but they were explicitly instructed to rely on their knowledge and not to use any dictionaries or grammar books.

The test consisted of six tasks examining various areas of English language proficiency: (1) reported speech (5 sentences), (2) conditionals (5 sentences), (3) article use (5 sentences), (4) error correction (5 sentences containing different kinds of grammatical errors, one error per sentence), (5) key-word transformations (10 sentences) and (6) vocabulary, including idioms (filling gaps in 10 sentences).

Unfortunately, given the limited availability of the participants, both in terms of finding teachers willing to participate (as has already been mentioned above, several teachers refused, most probably for fear that revealing their language attrition might jeopardize their reputations as teachers, even though the survey was anonymous) and of the time they could devote, it was impossible to carry out a more extensive study, combining the written test with an oral

interview. However, in future research, it would be advisable to investigate the attrition of teachers' oral skills in English.

The research questions were as follows:

1. What areas can language attrition be observed in? Does the correctness of the responses depend on the area examined by a particular task?
2. What do English language teachers do to counterbalance attrition?
3. What are the participants' attitudes towards linguistic correctness in English, especially from their point of view as teachers?

## Results

For the purpose of the analysis, the participants' responses were divided into the following four groups:

1. Correct: usually there was one correct answer, but some variation was allowed, as long as the other response was also correct, for example, because it was a word that also fitted in the context. In fact, gap-filling always involves some variation. As Dubin and Olshtain (1993) have demonstrated, even native speakers' responses in gap-filling tasks vary considerably, which is due to the fact that different words can be used in the same context, from synonyms and other semantically related words (e.g., hyperonyms) to words chosen on the basis of different interpretations of the same incomplete sentence.
2. Partly correct: a partly correct answer could be either a non-target answer, especially in the case of vocabulary (e.g., 'a golden medal' instead of 'a golden handshake'), a non-target grammatical structure which might be theoretically possible in a certain context (though a little awkward in the target context, e.g., 'The novel was written by *a* British writer Philippa Gregory...') or the omission of a part of the target sentence (e.g., using the backshift of tenses in reported speech, but not changing the deixis, e.g., from 'last year' to 'the previous year'). Punctuation mistakes (e.g., no comma between the clauses in a sentence starting with an if-clause) counted as 'partly correct' if the rest of the sentence was correct.
3. Incorrect: the sentence contains a more or less serious error, or the word (in the vocabulary task) does not fit in the context.
4. Avoidance, which meant giving no answer at all, or providing only an insufficient part of the answer, for example, one word instead of a whole grammatical structure.

In general, even though there was no fixed key to the grammar and vocabulary tasks, given the possibilities of variation mentioned above, the participants' responses were evaluated on the basis of the rules of the usage of reported speech, conditionals, articles, and, in the key-word transformations

and the vocabulary task, of the semantic and syntactic properties of the words and expressions.

Overall, as the results show, the participants provided more correct responses than incorrect ones.

Table 1

*Percentages of correct, partly correct and incorrect answers as well as of avoidance, provided by the participants in the different components of the test*

Degree of correctness	Reported speech	Conditionals	Articles	Error correction	Key words	Vocabulary
			%			
Correct	54.36	57.44	48.20	67.69	67.69	66.15
Partly correct	20.00	23.08	15.38	2.56	11.54	14.10
Incorrect	25.64	12.82	36.41	29.74	15.13	11.28
Avoidance		6.67			5.64	8.46

The results were compared by means of a chi-square test in order to determine whether the correctness of the responses depended on the area under investigation. The difference proved to be statistically significant at  $p < 0.001$ ,  $df = 15$ :

$$\chi_{\text{obs}}^2 = 157.64054, \chi_{\text{crit}}^2 = 37.697, \chi_{\text{obs}}^2 > \chi_{\text{crit}}^2$$

This shows that the difficulty of the tasks and, consequently, the correctness of the results, depended on the type of structures covered by each task. The easiest part was the vocabulary, also because more than one option was often acceptable (in fact, in gap-filling tasks, it is much easier to meet semantic than syntactic or collocational constraints, Włosowicz, 2016a), while articles seem to have been the most difficult. Indeed, article use is often context-dependent and cannot easily be limited to such rules as, for example, those which govern the use of conditionals (cf. Sajavaara, 1986). In fact, some of the participants seem to have forgotten some rules of article use (e.g., the use of the definite article to refer to groups of people, e.g., ‘the unemployed’, or idiomatic expressions such as ‘I pronounce you man and wife’), possibly because they had acquired them relatively late (as the regression hypothesis would suggest) and had not practiced them long enough. Another source of difficulty in article use is the fact that articles do not exist in Polish (demonstrative pronouns, such as ‘ten,’ ‘ta’ or ‘to’ (‘this one’ in the masculine, feminine, and neuter), which are sometimes translated into English by the definite article, are not articles) and, consequently, the correct usage of English articles poses Polish L1 learners,

even advanced ones, considerable difficulty (Włosowicz, 2012; Zielonka, 2009). It can thus be supposed that, like marked structures, article use is particularly prone to attrition; in fact, less frequent rules of article use, such as the ones mentioned above, can actually be regarded as marked.

However, reported speech also seems to have been quite difficult for the participants, because they either failed to use the backshift of tenses (e.g., 'Agnes said that the following month Caroline and Gordon will have been married for ten years'), or they tended to overuse it ('Alice told Sylvia that if she had been her, she would have taken the job they were offering her'). In fact, some idiosyncratic errors were also observed, for example: 'Alice told Sylvia that if she was her, she would take the job she was offering to', 'Alice told Sylvia that if she was her she will take the job,' or: 'Alice told Sylvia that if she was her, she would took job they were offering to her.' What might also be relatively disquieting is the proportion of errors in the error correction task (29.74%), which suggests that some teachers already have problems distinguishing correct structures from incorrect ones. At the same time, they do not seem to notice it, as the mean value of the responses to the statement 'I have more and more difficulty distinguishing erroneous structures and usages from correct ones' is only 2.15 (SD = 1.01). Finally, the lack of avoidance in reported speech, article use and error correction is due to the fact that the participants at least tried to do every sentence, while in vocabulary, key-word transformations, and conditionals, they sometimes left the whole word or sentence gap blank.

In general, typical examples (e.g., a conditional sentence starting with 'if' or 'provided') were easier than less typical ones (e.g., 'Should the parcel be delayed/not arrive on time, please, call our customer service,' and 'Were John more responsible, he wouldn't have lost his job.'). This shows that the less typical ones are more marked and are thus more prone to attrition. Indeed, in Polish conditional sentences almost always contain a function word which signals the presence of a conditional ('jeżeli,' 'jeśli,' 'gdyby,' etc.), while, as the examples show, English allows conditional sentences without 'if,' where the conditional is signaled by an auxiliary. Some examples of the participants' errors with attempts to explain their possible causes are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

*Examples of errors made by the participants and the problems associated with them*

Component	Participants' errors	Problems detected
Reported speech	Margaret suggested to go for a walk.	The verb 'to suggest' requires a gerund (Margaret suggested going...)
Reported speech	Alice told Sylvia if she had been her, she would have taken the job they were offering her.	'If I were you' refers to the present, so no change to the third conditional is necessary.

Table 2 continued

Conditionals	Should not the parcel arrive on time, call our customer service.	Word order; target: Should the parcel not arrive on time...
Conditionals	If Olivia obtained a French language certificate, she could work for a French company now.	Failure to use a mixed conditional; target: If Olivia had obtained a French language certificate, she could work for a French company now.
Conditionals	Agnes said that, by the next month, Caroline and Gordon will have been married for ten years.	Incorrect deixis (target: the following month), no backshift of tenses.
Articles	Queen Elizabeth made a speech about condition of unemployed.	Adjectives used as nouns referring to groups of people require 'the'; the 'of' phrase here should start with 'the' (the condition of the unemployed).
Articles	At the end of the wedding ceremony, a priest said: 'I now pronounce you a man and a wife'.	Contextually determined definiteness (the priest who married the couple); a fixed phrase (I pronounce you man and wife).
Articles	The Queen Elizabeth made the speech about condition of the unemployed.	Some titles do not require the definite article; 'a speech' was not specific in the context; the 'of' phrase should start with 'the'.
Articles	At the end of wedding ceremony, priest said: 'I now pronounce you man and wife.'	Attrition of the (possibly imperfectly acquired) rule of using the definite article before nouns and noun phrases.
Error correction	If I wasn't interested in psycholinguistics, I wouldn't go to Professor Frost's lecture yesterday.	Failure to use a mixed conditional (I wouldn't have gone); assuming the form 'if I were' to be incorrect.
Error correction	Mark wanted to see Himalayas, so he flew to the Nepal. (According to the participant, this sentence is correct.)	Possible attrition of the rules of article use (target: the Himalayas, Nepal).
Key-word transformations	Little known were the news for Jane that her sister was going to break.	Failure to recognise the structure 'little did Jane know...'
Key-word transformations	In the 19th century, teenage girls weren't let by parents to go out on their own.	'Let' changes to 'be allowed to' in the passive voice; the Saxon genitive instead of the plural may be a mistake.
Vocabulary	As evidence of his role in the assassination of the Prime Minister came to light, the accused was sentenced guilty.	Failure to retrieve the collocation 'to plead guilty'.
Vocabulary	There is no idea in buying a violin if you are not going to play it.	Overgeneralization of the expression 'to have no idea'; forgetting the expression 'there is no point in...'

The participants were also asked to evaluate the difficulty of the tasks on a 5-point Likert scale (1—very easy, 5—very difficult).



Table 3

*The mean values and standard deviations of the levels of difficulty self-reported by the participants*

Value	Reported speech	Conditionals	Articles	Error correction	Key-word transformations	Vocabulary
Mean	1.920	1.840	2.350	2.235	2.320	2.387
SD	1.074	1.053	1.120	1.0439	0.902	0.942

The mean level of difficulty for reported speech was 1.92 (SD = 1.074), for conditionals: 1.84 (SD = 1.053), for articles: 2.35 (SD = 1.12), for error correction: 2.235 (SD = 1.0439), for key-word transformations 2.32 (SD = 0.902), and for vocabulary: 2.378 (SD = 0.942). On the one hand, this suggests that the participants are quite confident of their English language skills and do not find advanced tasks very difficult. On the other hand, these self-evaluation results only partly overlap with the actual correctness of the responses: certainly, articles were regarded as difficult and the participants' performance reflects it, but while reported speech was evaluated as fairly easy, quite a lot of errors were observed and, conversely, though the vocabulary task was regarded as quite difficult, the answers were generally correct. It is possible that, while in the case of grammar it was easier to retrieve the rules, the vocabulary task required more effort (comprehension, lexical item retrieval, etc.).

Predictably enough, lack of time to maintain their knowledge of English contributes to the participants' language attrition (mean: 3.47, SD = 1.31), as they are quite busy teaching (mean: 3.079, SD = 1.32). However, they are fairly strongly motivated to maintain their English (mean: 3.868, SD = 1.09) and profit from every opportunity to use English (mean: 4, SD = 1.15). In fact, they do not think their English is good enough and does not require any improvement.

Table 4

*Reasons for possible language attrition and the participants' motivation to improve their English*

Value	Too little time	Too busy teaching	Strong motivation	Profiting from every opportunity...	Rarely outside the classroom	Enough for the school curriculum	Good enough, no need to improve	Too much admin. work
Mean	3.470	3.079	3.868	4.000	2.703	1.605	1.737	3.130
SD	1.310	1.320	1.090	1.150	1.310	0.974	1.030	1.398



As for the participants' attitudes towards linguistic correctness, they were generally positive and the participants believe linguistic correctness to be important. Even though they often have to simplify the English they use so that the pupils or students can understand it (mean: 3.97, SD = 1.11), this does not mean that they do not care about correctness. In fact, most of the participants admit that, when they notice they have made a mistake in English, they correct it immediately in order not to mislead their pupils or students (mean: 4.289, SD = 0.802). If they are not sure, they also promise to look up the word or structure (mean: 4.289, SD = 1.037) and avoid giving evasive answers, for example, that such a word does not exist in English (mean: 1.26, SD = 0.69). While preparing their classes, they generally look up their answers in the key (mean: 3.237, SD = 1.42), but few of them limit themselves to consulting the key without doing the exercises (mean: 2.59, SD = 1.33).

Moreover, even though teaching can be really time-consuming and teachers do not have much time to maintain and improve their English, it also motivates them to improve their English constantly (mean: 3.97, SD = 1.2). Still, they are sometimes unsure about the correctness of what they have just said or written in English (mean: 3.316, SD = 1.04), they notice that they have become less fluent in English (3.289, SD = 1.49) and that they have forgotten quite a lot of vocabulary and grammar structures since they finished their studies (mean: 3.15, SD = 1.39). They also admit that they have become relatively more tolerant of learners' errors (mean: 3.25, SD = 1.08) and they tend to regard fluency as more important than accuracy (mean: 3.34, SD = 0.9087).

While a lack of time to maintain one's English may be assumed to be a cause of attrition in any advanced English language users, be they teachers or, for example, company employees, the latter two items require closer attention. On the one hand, these tendencies are not very pronounced, as the means indicate that, although the participants admit that they have become more tolerant of learners' errors and that they attribute more importance to fluency, they do not strongly agree with such statements. This suggests that their attitudes towards linguistic correctness remain positive and that, as teachers, they feel obliged to keep up certain standards. On the other hand, as the now prevalent communicative approach postulates focusing on reaching communicative goals, teachers have to apply such principles to their teaching. However, despite the unquestionable importance of communication skills, the application of the communicative approach is sometimes misguided, leading to excessive tolerance of errors, as long as basic communicative goals are achieved (Rychło, 2008; Włosowicz, 2012). Therefore, teachers should strike a balance between developing learners' communication skills and accuracy, in order not to become too tolerant of errors, which might discourage them from maintaining their English language skills and thus lead to attrition.

Table 5

*The participants' attitudes towards language correctness and their perception of their own English*

Attitudes and observations	Mean	SD
More tolerant of learners' errors	3.2500	1.0800
More difficulty in distinguishing errors from correct forms	2.1500	1.0100
Greater importance of fluency over accuracy	3.3400	0.9087
Having forgotten a lot from their studies	3.1500	1.3900
Correcting oneself immediately	4.2890	0.8020
Unsure about correctness	3.3160	1.0400
Being less fluent	3.2980	1.4900
Simplification for pupils	3.9700	1.1100
Teaching as a source of motivation to improve one's English	3.9700	1.2000
Checking the compatibility of answers with the key	3.2370	1.4200
Using the key only	2.590	1.3300
Finding learners' questions too difficult	2.3590	1.0600
Promising to look things up	4.2980	1.0370
Giving learners evasive answers	1.2600	0.6900
Frustration with learners' lack of motivation	2.3160	1.3170
English limited to the school curriculum	2.5380	1.2980

As for the participants' strategies of counterbalancing attrition, the following strategies are used by the numbers of participants indicated in brackets:

- reading in English (books, online articles, newspapers, magazines, etc. (31);
- watching films in English (35);
- reading newspapers and magazines in English (16);
- reading articles on the Internet (31);
- doing exercises from textbooks for advanced (e.g., CPE-level) learners (12);
- speaking English while travelling abroad (29);
- speaking English with foreigners, who are native (13) or non-native (18) speakers of English;
- speaking English with Polish friends, especially English philologists (5);
- corresponding with native speakers (11) or other foreigners (9) in English;
- chatting online in English with native (12) and non-native speakers (11);
- other ways of using English, such as translation and listening to the BBC radio (6).

Only one person claimed to use no English language maintenance strategies.

In summary, the participants themselves admit in the questionnaire that they have little time to maintain and improve their English (they are busy teaching, they have a lot of administrative work to do, etc.), and that the test had made them aware of how much they had forgotten since their studies; generally, they do not agree with the statement that their English is good enough and does not require improvement. However, many of them also state that they take advantage of every opportunity to use English.

## Conclusions

On the basis of the results, it can be supposed that teaching causes some language attrition, due to contact with learners' errors as well as the use of a limited number of words or structures, adjusted to the learners' level. For example, teachers have less contact with words and structures which are not part of the school curriculum. As one of the participants commented in the questionnaire:

The last statement ideally sums up my answers. The level of my students and pupils at school and kindergarten doesn't require to improve my qualifications. Sometimes, when I give private lessons, I am asked about something more difficult and I have to deliberate it. Of course, I would like to improve my English, but work and duties at home do not leave me too much free time.

The statement the respondent was referring to was: 'I feel that my English has become limited mainly to the words and structures included in the school curriculum.' Even though few of the participants were as sincere as the above mentioned one was, it might be assumed that more of them encounter similar problems.

Even though some attrition can be observed in all the areas under investigation, such areas as articles and reported speech seem to have undergone more attrition than, for example, conditionals and vocabulary. It is also rather disquieting that in the error correction task the participants overlooked a number of errors. In fact, the structures which caused them particular difficulty (e.g., mixed conditionals, the use of conditionals in reported speech, article use which went beyond the basic rules of definiteness and indefiniteness, etc.) are more likely to appear in a C2 level textbook than in everyday English, which provides evidence in favor of Moorcroft and Gardner's (1987) conclusion that structures acquired last and not practiced long enough are particularly prone

to attrition. As the results of the chi-square test show, the correctness of the responses does depend on the type of task.

However, teachers are also aware of this fact and try to maintain their English language skills, counterbalance attrition, and improve their English. As the results of the questionnaire show, the majority of the participants do more than one thing to maintain and develop their English language skills; they mostly read books and articles and watch films in English, but they also speak English in Poland and abroad, with native and non-native speakers of English, as well as with other Poles who are English philologists.

As for the participants' attitudes towards the English language and linguistic correctness, they are undoubtedly positive and the participants understand the need to maintain and improve their English. They are motivated to do so and try to profit from every opportunity to use English. However, lack of time often prevents them from devoting as much time to the improvement of their English language skills as they would like to. This proves Cherciov's (2013) statement that a positive attitude is not enough to prevent attrition if it is not accompanied by a concrete effort.

In conclusion, English language teaching can be regarded as a profession that requires life-long learning. One of the participants, an academic teacher with a master's degree, who teaches practical English skills to English Philology students, wrote: "I'm under the impression that my English has improved considerably over the years due to the constant challenge I have to face in my teaching work and new subjects that I teach." Thus, as the two practically opposite quotations indicate, the impact of teaching on teachers' English language competence can be either positive or negative, depending on such factors as the requirements of the job or, as discussed earlier, exposure to errors, which might lead to excessive tolerance of them and even to the acquisition of erroneous structures. In particular, it seems important whether the teacher is obliged to improve his or her language skills or, on the contrary, whether his or her job is limited to teaching beginners basic vocabulary and structures.

Another limitation of the present study is that, while some attrition could be observed and while it was reported by some of the participants themselves, its extent is difficult to research more quantitatively. On the one hand, as Herdina and Jessner (2002, p. 96) have remarked, attrition is generally difficult to investigate, among other things, because speakers try to counterbalance it, which is also the case of the teachers under analysis. Not only do they counteract attrition by maintaining their English language skills, but it is also possible that for the same reason they provided some of the non-target responses. Instead of retrieving the target words, they may have looked for other words—or structures, as in the key-word transformations—which could also be acceptable. On the other hand, attrition research is also probabilistic because the initial state of linguistic competence before the onset of attrition is usually unknown and has to be

established approximately and, similarly, the lengths of the incubation phases (which term, in the present study, does not refer to a time when the participants did not use English much, but when they no longer studied English as regularly and intensively as they had done at university) could vary. However, this is allowed by attrition research methodology: for example, in Riemer's (2005) study, the participants had studied French for at least two years and the incubation phases lasted between 12 and 240 months (the mean was 80.45 months). It can thus be seen that the group does not have to be homogeneous and that, actually, the participants' language attrition can also vary. In fact, the initial state in the present study can be established relatively precisely, as it is based on a typical English Philology curriculum and the requirements usually posed on students.

However, given the fact that not only does language attrition occur in teachers, but they also maintain their English on their own, it would, arguably, be advisable to organize some workshops or webinars, and perhaps to prepare some materials, which would help teachers to identify the elements of their knowledge of English that were especially prone to attrition and to counterbalance it in a more regular and systematic way. Yet, this would require larger-scale research and more cooperation on the part of teachers. Unfortunately, as has been mentioned above, some teachers refused to take part in the study as soon as they saw the test, claiming that they had already taken all English language tests in their lives. Still, it is possible that they realized they had forgotten some of the structures involved and, rather than testing themselves and checking in what areas their English had deteriorated, they refused to participate in the study. Therefore, some future research should also be carried out on the methodology of testing teachers' knowledge of English so as not to discourage them from participating. For example—also for the purpose of investigating the attrition of oral skills—a study might be carried out in the form of informal interviews about the participants' interests related to the English language and perhaps English literature and culture, so that they could talk spontaneously, which could reveal a decrease in fluency, accuracy, and/or complexity.

Moreover, in order to compare the effects of teaching practice, including exposure to learners' errors, with attrition in English Philology graduates who do not teach, a similar study might be carried out with English philologists who work in international corporations and who, despite using English on a daily basis, may be exposed to errors made by their foreign colleagues such as engineers, economists, etc., who may be fluent in English but less focused on accuracy, as the present author's (Włosowicz, 2016b) study on adult learners' expectations indicates. In addition, it would be advisable to research the influence of the level of English taught on teachers' English language proficiency: for example, it might be investigated whether attrition is more likely in kindergarten or primary school teachers, who use simple structures and are exposed to a lot of errors made by beginners than, for instance, in secondary school or university teachers.

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Teresa Maria Włosowicz

### **Der Verlust der Englischkenntnisse bei Englischlehrern: Sprachkompetenz, Aufrechterhaltung der Sprachfähigkeiten und Einstellung zur Sprache**

#### Zusammenfassung

Der Zweck der Studie ist eine Untersuchung des Verlusts der Englischkenntnisse bei Englischlehrern, deren Muttersprache Polnisch ist. Sie konzentriert sich auf den Verlust von Vokabeln und grammatischen Strukturen auf fortgeschrittener Ebene, die an den Fakultäten für Englische Philologie von Universitäten gelehrt werden, aber die den Englischlehrern, insbesondere auf niedrigeren Bildungsstufen, nicht unbedingt nötig sind und die, aus diesem Grund dem Sprachverfall (language attrition) besonders ausgesetzt sind. Gleichzeitig enthält die Studie einen Fragebogen, der bezweckt, die Einstellung der Probanden zur sprachlichen Korrektheit und deren Strategien zum Aufrechterhalten der Sprachkompetenz zu untersuchen. Wie die Ergebnisse zeigen, lässt sich wirklich ein gewisser Sprachverfall beobachten, es ist jedoch zu bemerken, dass sich die Lehrer selbst bemühen, ihr Kompetenzniveau im Englischen aufrechtzuerhalten, indem sie die Sprache auf verschiedene Art und Weise gebrauchen, zum Beispiel indem sie Bücher und Artikel auf Englisch lesen, sich englischsprachige Filme ansehen, sich mit Muttersprachlern unterhalten, usw.



## The form used in the study: The English language test and the questionnaire

### PART ONE: ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEST

#### 1) Change the following sentences into reported speech:

1. Margaret: 'Let's go for a walk! The weather is beautiful today.'

Margaret suggested \_\_\_\_\_

2. Kate: 'Grandma, did you have Spanish classes when you were at school?'

Kate asked her grandmother \_\_\_\_\_

3. Alice: 'If I were you, I would take the job they are offering you.'

Alice told Sylvia \_\_\_\_\_

4. Agatha: 'When will you finally finish the book you started reading last year?'

Agatha asked Charles \_\_\_\_\_

5. Agnes: 'Next month Caroline and Gordon will have been married for ten years.'

Agnes said \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2) Paraphrase the following sentences, using the appropriate conditionals:

1. I had an opportunity to go to Zakopane with my friends, but I chose to stay at home, so I did not climb Giewont.

If \_\_\_\_\_

2. The parcel might not arrive on time. In such a case, please, call our customer service.

Should \_\_\_\_\_

3. We'll go to the mountains next weekend as long as the weather is fine.

Provided \_\_\_\_\_

4. Olivia was advised to obtain a French language certificate, but she did not obtain it. That is why she cannot work for a French company now.

If \_\_\_\_\_

5. John is quite irresponsible, that is why he has lost his job.

Were \_\_\_\_\_

#### 3) Use the right articles. If you think no article is necessary, please, mark the blank with a tick, a minus sign, etc.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Queen Elizabeth made \_\_\_\_\_ speech about \_\_\_\_\_ condition of \_\_\_\_\_ unemployed.

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Monday before \_\_\_\_\_ last, Jack bought \_\_\_\_\_ pineapples at \_\_\_\_\_ two pounds \_\_\_\_\_ kilo.

3. Nick left in \_\_\_\_\_ hurry, was hit by \_\_\_\_\_ car and spent \_\_\_\_\_ few months in \_\_\_\_\_ hospital.

4. At \_\_\_\_\_ end of \_\_\_\_\_ wedding ceremony, \_\_\_\_\_ priest said: 'I now pronounce you \_\_\_\_\_ man and \_\_\_\_\_ wife.'

5. \_\_\_\_\_ novel was written by \_\_\_\_\_ British author Philippa Gregory, who specializes in \_\_\_\_\_ historical novels about \_\_\_\_\_ English kings and queens.

#### 4) Correct the errors in the following sentences. There may be more than one error in a sentence.

1. Hindi is one of the languages using in India. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Mark wanted to see Himalayas, so he flew to the Nepal. \_\_\_\_\_



3. If I weren't interested in psycholinguistics, I wouldn't go to Professor Frost's lecture yesterday.

4. Alexandra said she had enjoyed watching football since she had been a child. \_\_\_\_\_

5. Rarely Victoria travels during the holidays because she prefers to stay at home and knit. \_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**5) Key word transformations: Paraphrase the following sentences, using the words given in capital letters.**

Example:

Arabic is much more difficult to learn than English. NEAR

English is nowhere near as difficult to learn as Arabic.

1. Thank you for the flowers you brought me on my birthday, but that really wasn't necessary.

HAVE

You \_\_\_\_\_ flowers on my birthday.

2. Jane had no idea of the bad news she was going to hear from her sister. KNOW

Little \_\_\_\_\_ her sister was going to break.

3. However hard you try, you won't get a job at Harvard University. MIGHT

Try \_\_\_\_\_ a job at Harvard University.

4. You won't pass the exam if you don't study hard. UNLESS

You \_\_\_\_\_ study hard.

5. I'm sorry, but I must tell you the whole truth bluntly. It was extremely rude of you to laugh at Mr Smith's funeral! MINCE

I'm sorry, \_\_\_\_\_: it was extremely rude of you to laugh at Mr Smith's funeral!

6. They stole Phil's car yesterday. HAD

Phil \_\_\_\_\_ yesterday.

7. Amy dyed her hair black in order not to be confused with her twin sister. AVOID

Amy dyed her hair black \_\_\_\_\_ with her twin sister.

8. Helen likes all of Michael Jackson's songs, apart from *Smooth Criminal*. OF

Helen likes all of Michael Jackson's songs \_\_\_\_\_ *Smooth Criminal*.

9. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, parents did not let their teenage daughters go out on their own. TO

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, teenage girls \_\_\_\_\_ go out on their own.

10. Everybody knows that the actor has divorced his wife to marry a fashion model.

KNOWLEDGE

It \_\_\_\_\_ divorced his wife to marry a fashion model.

**6) Vocabulary: Fill in the gaps in the following sentences with the appropriate words.**

1. On retirement, Peter received a golden \_\_\_\_\_ from the company.

2. There is no \_\_\_\_\_ in buying a violin if you are not going to play it.

3. The word 'vitamin' is \_\_\_\_\_ from the Latin word for 'life'.

4. \_\_\_\_\_ has it that this castle was built by King Arthur.

5. A law-\_\_\_\_\_ citizen would never take bribes.

6. As a secretary, Eve is a white-\_\_\_\_\_ worker.

7. The President's mistake was so funny that the audience found it hard to keep a \_\_\_\_\_ face.

8. Don't even try to persuade me to smuggle gold into China, as I have no \_\_\_\_\_ of breaking the law.

9. As evidence of his role in the assassination of the Prime Minister came to light, the accused \_\_\_\_\_ guilty.

10. The refugees are \_\_\_\_\_ seekers. They are Iraqi Christians persecuted in their country for their faith.

## PART TWO: QUESTIONNAIRE

Sex: F\_\_/M\_\_

1. Native language: \_\_\_\_\_

L2: \_\_\_\_\_ Level of proficiency: \_\_\_\_\_

L3: \_\_\_\_\_ Level of proficiency: \_\_\_\_\_

What other languages have you studied? Please, indicate your proficiency levels

2. a) Degree in English Philology: B.A./M.A./Ph.D.

b) Year of obtaining your master's degree: \_\_\_\_\_

If you graduated less than a year ago, please, indicate the month too: \_\_\_\_\_

If you have only a bachelor's degree, please, indicate the year you obtained it: \_\_\_\_\_

If you also have a Ph.D., please, indicate the year of obtaining it **in addition to** the year of obtaining your master's degree: \_\_\_\_\_

(In the latter case, do you think that working on your Ph.D. improved your English language skills? If so, in what way?)

c) Where do you teach English? (You can choose more than one answer.)

- at a kindergarten
- at a primary school
- at a middle (junior high) school
- at a secondary (high) school
- at a technical college
- at a vocational school
- at a college or university, at a department other than English Philology
- at the English Philology department of a college or university
- at the Polytechnic
- at a language school
- in a company or companies
- I give private classes to children who have difficulty learning English
- I give private classes to gifted children
- I give private classes to children who do not have much difficulty learning English, but who just take extra classes outside school
- I give private classes to adults
- other (please, specify) \_\_\_\_\_

3. a) What do you do in order to maintain your level of proficiency in English? (You can choose more than one answer.)

- I read books in English
- I watch films in English
- I read newspapers or magazines in English
- I read articles in English on the Internet
- I do exercises from textbooks for advanced learners, such as CPE textbooks
- I practise conversation with a native speaker of English
- I speak English with foreigners who are not native speakers of English
- I speak English while travelling abroad
- I correspond with native speakers of English
- I correspond in English with foreigners who are not native speakers of English
- I chat with native speakers of English, for example, on Facebook
- I chat with foreigners in English, for example, on Facebook

- I speak English with Polish friends who are also English philologists  
 other (please, specify) \_\_\_\_\_

b) **Apart from teaching**, how often do you have contact with English?

- every day  
 a few times a week  
 once a week  
 once a month  
 once in a few weeks  
 once a month  
 once in a few months  
 once a year  
 other (please, specify) \_\_\_\_\_

c) To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (1 – completely disagree, 5 – fully agree)

- I have too little time to maintain or improve my English. 1 2 3 4 5  
 I am too busy teaching to devote time to improving my English. 1 2 3 4 5  
 I have a strong motivation to use English and improve it as much as possible. 1 2 3 4 5  
 I do my best to profit from every opportunity to use English. 1 2 3 4 5  
 I rarely have any opportunity to use English outside the classroom. 1 2 3 4 5  
 I feel no need to improve my English because the vocabulary and grammar I know are enough for the school curriculum. 1 2 3 4 5  
 I think my English is good enough and does not require any improvement. 1 2 3 4 5  
 Instead of focusing on English, I have too much administrative work to do. 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

4 a) How do you perceive the influence of teaching on your level of proficiency and attitude to English? (Please, indicate to what extent you agree with the statements below. 1 – completely disagree, 5 – fully agree)

- I gradually become more tolerant of my pupils' or students' errors in English. 1 2 3 4 5  
 I have more and more difficulty distinguishing erroneous structures and usages from correct ones. 1 2 3 4 5  
 I adopt a communicative approach in which fluency is more important than accuracy. 1 2 3 4 5  
 I feel that I have forgotten quite a lot of the vocabulary and grammar I learnt during my studies. 1 2 3 4 5  
 If I notice that I have made a mistake speaking English to my pupils or students, I correct it immediately. 1 2 3 4 5  
 I am sometimes unsure about the correctness of what I have just said or written in English. 1 2 3 4 5  
 I feel that I have become less fluent in English than I was during my studies. 1 2 3 4 5  
 I have to simplify certain rules and meanings so that my pupils or students can understand them more easily. 1 2 3 4 5  
 Teaching English motivates me to improve my English constantly, which I do as much as possible. 1 2 3 4 5  
 While preparing my classes, I always check the compatibility of my answers with the key in order to make sure that I have done the exercises correctly. 1 2 3 4 5  
 While preparing my classes, I look up all answers in the key, but I have no time to do all the exercises myself at home. 1 2 3 4 5

- I sometimes find my pupils' or students' questions about the English language too difficult to answer. 1 2 3 4 5
- If I find a pupil's or a student's question too difficult, I promise to look up the word or structure and answer him or her later. 1 2 3 4 5
- If I find a pupil's or a student's question too difficult, I give him or her an evasive answer, for example, that such a word does not exist in English, even if it may actually exist. 1 2 3 4 5
- I am frustrated with my pupils' or students' lack of motivation to learn English, which decreases my motivation to maintain and improve my English language skills too. 1 2 3 4 5
- I feel that my English has become limited mainly to the words and structures included in the school curriculum. 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

- Have you noticed any other effects of teaching practice on your proficiency in English? (If so, please, describe them.)

How difficult were the tasks in the practical part of the study for you? (1 – very easy, 5 – very difficult)

- Reported speech 1 2 3 4 5
- Conditional 1 2 3 4 5
- Articles 1 2 3 4 5
- Error correction 1 2 3 4 5
- Key word transformations 1 2 3 4 5
- Vocabulary 1 2 3 4 5

Please, explain why (you may choose more than one answer):

- I forgot some of the words, idioms and structures I had learnt during my studies.
- Some of the words, idioms and structures seemed completely new to me.
- I had some of the words on the tip of my tongue, but I could not recall them fully.
- I was unsure about the grammatical structures which I do not regularly use.
- I got out of practice in solving grammar and vocabulary tests.
- I do not do such exercises with my pupils or students.
- During my studies, I rarely practised reported speech/ conditionals/ articles/ error correction/ key word transformations/ gap-filling tasks. (Please, indicate which task types you rarely practised.)
- I found it hard to guess what words, idioms or structures were expected in some of the sentence contexts.
- other (please, specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you very much.



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## **Multimodality of Cultural Content in ELT Materials for Young Learners**

### **Abstract**

Cultural content is incorporated into EL materials to enrich linguistic content. The paper focuses on English materials as cultural artefacts analyzed in terms of multimodality. The aim is to identify the most important multimodal aspects of cultural content offered in English course books for early language education. Following the multimodal discourse analysis, the image–language relations presented in the culture sections are examined. The paper seeks to address two following questions: What is the multimodality of cultural content in English course books for young learners? What are the image-language relations involved in the construction of cultural content? The project involves an analysis of nine course books currently used in teaching English to young learners in Polish primary schools. The data will be collected during the evaluation studies, which here are both quantitative and qualitative in nature. The study is based on a set of universal, content-specific, multimodal, and intermodal criteria. It is hoped that the results from the research project will enrich the process of ELT materials design in terms of multimodality. They will support the need for developing multimodal (visual) literacy through multicultural education in early language education.

*Keywords:* multimodality, ELT materials, cultural content, visual literacy, young learners

### **Introduction**

There is an increasing number of multilingual and multicultural children with various skills and needs in Europe and all over the world. In this article the term young learners (YL) refers to children whose age ranges between six and eight. They experience cultural diversity and live in different language backgrounds as a result of globalization, emigration, mobility, and tourism. Early language education is widely supported in Europe, among others due to

its positive effect on children's holistic development, personal skills, positive attitudes to other languages and cultures (cf. Brewster, Ellis, & Girard, 2002, pp. 5, 54). Educational policies with the focus on multicultural and multilingual elements tend to celebrate cultural and linguistic differences in a positive way. All children use English course books that include cultural content. They participate in the intercultural process from the very beginning, as any language learning requires social interaction, comparing, and connecting cultures (Lee-McKay, 2002, p. 85; Rivers, 2010, pp. 21–24). It is well known that language is a part of culture and culture is encoded in the language itself (Kramsch, 1998, p. 3). Then, an integrated approach to teaching language and culture dominates in the global course books (Pulverness & Tomlinson, 2013, pp. 444–448) through which YL are exposed to the multimodal paper texts and thus develop multimodal communicative competence. They are expected to comprehend, interpret, and design visual elements as the active viewers (Royce, 2002, pp. 191–205). The texts in English course books are semiotic resources composed of images, language, sounds, and music (Kawka, 2016, p. 294). However, too little attention has been paid to the multimodality of ELT (English language teaching) materials, not to mention the interplay between verbal and non-verbal semiotics in English course books for children. which has led to pursue this research project.

## Literature Review

ELT materials produced commercially are cultural artefacts with a variety of roles in education. They can be informative, instructional, experiential, eliciting, and exploratory in nature. Above all they present the meaning of English and the world of English for learners (Tomlinson, after Gray, 2013, pp. 2–16). ELT materials are linked to the social and historical developments influenced by the context in which they occur. They are “rooted in particular time and culture” (Littlejohn, 2012, p. 283). It is claimed that currently they reflect McDonaldization and globalization in their design.<sup>1</sup> ELT materials are

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<sup>1</sup> A considerable amount of literature has been published on ELT materials designed for the local and global markets. Since the 1980s they have included more relevant and familiar concepts to learners' life. ELT materials produced in the UK or the USA are the ambassadors of Anglo-Saxon culture, being criticized for presenting stereotypical representations of others and outdated content (Gray, 2000, p. 274; Romanowski, 2005, pp. 48–53). Namely, they advocate a western, cosmopolitan and middle-class lifestyle (Lee-McKay, 2002, p. 95; Littlejohn, 2011, pp. 211–214; Byram & Masuhara, 2013, p. 145; Harwood, 2014, pp. 4–5; Gray & Block, 2014, pp. 45–71). Although ELT materials are criticized for not reflecting the latest research into language acquisition or cultural realities, still they constitute the basic resource center for

standardized sources with guides, proper selection, and sequence of the content, including the cultural content (Littlejohn, 2012, pp. 290–293; Hadley, 2014, pp. 205–238).

In recent years, there have been three major categories of educational materials. The first category involves course books (i.e., textbooks available with teacher's book, student's book, tests, video materials, CALL materials) produced by publishers and educating institutions. The second category includes profit-making materials such as dictionaries, grammar books, readers, and other practice materials. The third category includes teacher-prepared materials such as authentic print materials, authentic recordings (e.g., songs, Internet resources), worksheets, and teacher-developed materials (e.g., DIY), games, realia, and representations (e.g., photos and drawings) (McGrath, 2013, pp. 2–3). In this paper the term ELT materials refers to English course books produced commercially for Polish YL and accepted by Polish Ministry of Education.

ELT resources “mirror” cultural values in more or less considerable degree, influencing learners' perceptions and attitudes towards the target language culture (Cunningsworth, 1995, p. 90; Krawiec, 2012, pp. 105–116). The relations between culturally familiar and less familiar concepts are developed by the authors, who use comparisons for cross-cultural comprehension or use universal concepts for the interpretation of concepts. The cultural content in the materials for YL influences their holistic development (cognitive, mental, individual, social, and emotional spheres) and the amount of English they will remember as well as their behavior and interactions, willingness to communicate, motivation, and perception about themselves (Gerngross & Puchta, 2000, pp. 12–13; Harwood, 2014, pp. 4–5). Course books are the initial source of knowledge for the beginners where elements of culture are usually presented in the form of specific “culture pages,” “culture corners” or “culture reviews” (Brewster, Ellis, & Girard, 2002, p. 148). The general tendency is to develop intercultural communicative competence (ICC), which in the context of YL, is described as discovery-based learning. YL are supported to discover culture for themselves, following “ethnographic approach” (Brewster, Ellis, & Girard, 2002, pp. 146–148; Vickov, 2007, pp. 105–120; Rivers, 2010, pp. 21–24).

The latest Polish and international ELT materials promote ICC and include aspects of intercultural teaching rather than British studies only. This type of teaching is more experiential in nature. The process leads to the progress in skills of observation, empathy for others, adaptation skills in the intercultural situations, fostering of learners' cultural identity (Bolt, 2001, p. 101; Marczak, 2012, pp. 15–16; Byram Masuhara, 2013, pp. 144–147). The idea is to teach cross-cultural sensitivity as culture is defined as “the fifth language skill” in

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both teachers and learners including the multilingual ones (Littlejohn, 2011: 181; Nunan, 2011, pp. 204–205; Tomlinson, 2013a, pp. 15–18, McGrath, 2013, pp. 5–17).

addition to the receptive and productive skills (cf. Tomalin, 2008, pp. 1–2). The aim is to develop critical cultural awareness including meta-cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, awareness of their own cultural identity as well as develop empathy and tolerance towards others, supporting curiosity and critical thinking (Lee-McKay, 2002, pp. 83–84; Jaroszewska, 2007, pp. 319–322; Sobkowiak, 2008, pp. 53–54; Pulverness & Tomlinson, 2013, pp. 443–459).

There are always questions associated with culture in ELT materials. Whose culture should be taught? What is the best amount of culture to be taught? What level learners should be exposed to cultural content? Traditionally, three dimensions can be identified in English materials concerning cultural content,<sup>2</sup> namely, a focus on the learners' own culture, the target language culture of the countries where English is spoken as the first language and, finally, the international culture where English is used as a lingua franca (Cortazzi & Jim, 1999, p. 204; Lee-McKay, 2002, pp. 81–88; McGrath, 2013, p. 198).

Young learners acquire the target language and culture from ELT materials, which promote both visible and invisible aspects of culture. The visible aspects (“the top of the iceberg”) are easy to explain and clear to all learners, for example, traditions and customs such as Christmas and cuisine. The invisible aspects of culture (“the bottom of the iceberg,” including value systems, beliefs, and socio-cultural norms, are difficult to explain and usually are not examined intellectually in a classroom<sup>3</sup> (Hinkel, 2001, pp. 443–458; Peterson, 2004, pp. 385–400). On the other hand, there are questions related to meaning and values promoted by the cultural content. As far as design of ELT materials is concerned, questions may refer to the manner of presenting cultural content

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<sup>2</sup> Cultural components in ELT materials may be analyzed in various scope and with different focus and approach (McGrath, 2013, pp. 207–208). They are generally evaluated with checklists or other inventories. Namely, the checklist for social and cultural values was offered by Cunningsworth (1995, pp. 91–92). The inventory of cultural components based on the Likert scale was offered by Razi (2012, pp. 168–186). The guidelines needed for the evaluation of ELT resources of the cultural content may include such factors as learners' needs, hidden curriculum, stereotypes, and generalizations (Kramersch, 1998, p. 131; Kilickaya, 2004, pp. 4–6). Evaluation of ELT materials with a focus on the cultural content is linked with such factors as knowledge of oneself and others, awareness of oneself and others, attitudes towards oneself and others, skills needed for exploring, interpreting culture and interacting with others (Byram & Masuhara, 2013, pp. 150–154). These factors are also important for understanding the cultural content in illustrations (Davies, 2013, pp. 1–10).

<sup>3</sup> The subject literature shows that a limited coverage of art and literature (“C” culture) is found in the latest ELT materials. In the same way, multicultural aspects are enclosed infrequently (Szymańska-Czaplak, 2009, pp. 229–230). Richness and variety within cultures should be balanced as “that which is true of the whole is not necessarily true of the parts” (Guest, 2002, p. 156). The role of cultural content seems to involve, among others, the presentation of diversity that exists within any culture (Lee-McKay, 2002, p. 94). The cultural content which supports the national stereotypes should be avoided as the best is the content with multicultural aspects and illustrations of authentic cultural traditions (Jaroszewska, 2009, pp. 160–178).



in audio-visual texts and procedures offered there for teaching culture (Clouet, 2006, p. 53; Tomalin, 2008, pp. 1–2). What modes are used in the construction of the cultural content? What mode carries the most cultural information load? What mode supports the development of intercultural communication and multimodal (visual) literacy? These are a few questions related to multimodal aspects of ELT materials.

Multimodality has been advocated by multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) and described as multimodal semiotics (O'Halloran, 2011, p. 120). It is a relatively new field of scientific interest which focuses on the combination of speaking, writing, visualization, and music in the construction of meaning (Perez-Gonzalez, 2014, p. 185). Apart from language MDA advocates various sign systems that are also the sources of meaning, such as image, color, sound, music, and gesture. These semantic resources are defined as modes and constitute the central area in MDA. Core modes are various sensing channels on which our opinions are formed about the audio-visual texts. The resources (modes) integrate across modalities (senses) in the multimodal texts such as the paper ELT materials. Multimodality is based on the information exchange realized by three or more of these sensing channels involved in communication.

Kress stresses that each mode has a function. A mode of image presents a picture that can be read faster than words. A mode of writing describes everything that is difficult to illustrate while a mode of color underlines and frames the messages (Kress, 2010, pp. 1–8, 79). The foundations of multimodality were provided in a functional semiotic theory on reading images and visuals developed by Gunter Kress and Theo van Leeuwen in the 1980s and 1990s. The theory had originated from Michael Halliday's social semiotic approach to language. Modes are socially shaped and culturally developed semiotic resources for making meaning used in our representation, recognition, and communication (Kress, 2010, p. 79). They have several implications for design and use of the cultural content in ELT materials. The most interesting seems to be the intersemiotic relation between verbal and visual content. English course books can be perceived as the visual and auditory semiotic resources with the complementary relations between verbal and visual content. Illustrations, pictures, and images do not perform only a decorative function as they construct meaning through the representation of culture (Hurst, 2014, p. 21).

The core modes (images, language, sounds, and music) and their medial variants are deeply involved in our perception and communication of messages (Stöckl, 2004, p. 14; Perez-Gonzalez, 2014, p. 194). The core mode of language is realized through speech (para-verbal-means), state writing and animated writing, which is not considered in this paper (Perez-Gonzalez, 2014, pp. 204–199). The core mode of image can be realized through static (still) and dynamic

(moving) medial variants. For this paper, only the static variants are accepted, such as size and composition of the visual content (Perez-Gonzalez, 2014, p. 214). The mode of sound and music, which are vital for the acquisition of all verbal languages, can be realized through auditory and visual media. They are designed in the form of the recorded speech, effects, chants, songs as the soundtracks accompanying the respective texts or images. The printed or electronic spectrograms are not usually included in ELT materials and are not considered in this paper. The core mode of music acoustically is realized through the music recorded as a complement to the semantic input of speech involving the song lyrics (Perez-Gonzalez, 2014, pp. 204–209). Similarly, the core mode of image and language can be examined in more than one medial variant.

Visual elements are presently more and more effective for many purposes. It is estimated that 87% of information enters our brain by eyes, only 9% by ears and 4% by other senses. It is even stated that “modern forms of understanding the world depend on a scopic regime that equates seeing with knowledge” (Rose, 2012, p. 3). Similarly, the role of colors is stressed. Although 12 colors are commonly used a modern dictionary of colors in Europe includes 5,000 of them (Gage, 2010, p. 263). The visuals represent and interpret different cultures and languages in a range of colors.

The visual elements in ELT materials constitute the significant factor. They transmit cultural meanings, stimulate children’s cognitive development and visual perception. In the process of teaching YL, illustrations provide a framework for understanding English (Wright, 1989, p. 2) and “offer a lifebelt in the sea of language” (Vida, 2010, p. 15). It is stated that “seeing comes before words” as children first observe and recognize before they start speaking (Rose, 2012, p. 3; Tomlinson, 2013a, p. 13). The visuals arouse YLs’ emotions and support their understanding of characters’ emotions (Nielsen-Hibbing & Rankin-Erickson, 2003, pp. 764–765). It is proved that YL pay attention initially to the content of photographs in comparison with older children, who focus more on the style and composition of illustrations (Sharples, after Banks, 2009, p. 25). The visuals gain children’s attention, add variety to the process of English learning and provide support (Petty, 2009, pp. 375–407).

The visual elements serve as the supporting items to the linguistic content or as the stimulating items for discussions (Wright, 1989, pp. 7–8; Krawiec, 2012, p. 112) although about 50% of the pictures in ELT course books are used for decorative purposes<sup>4</sup> only (Hill, 2013, p. 163). The graphic quality of teaching materials has improved and currently they are “full of stylish color drawings and state-of-the-art photographs” (Hill, 2013, p. 157). Both the context visu-

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<sup>4</sup> Wright identifies eight categories of illustrations in ELT materials. These are pictures of objects (food, clothes, animals), people (stars and celebrities), people in action (everyday activities, travel), places (views), history (costumes), news, fantasies, maps, and other symbols (Wright, after Krawiec, 2012, p. 112).

als and content visuals are carefully designed (Guest, 2002, p. 154; Krawiec, 2012, p. 109; Basaran & Cocuk, 2013, pp. 137–139). A careful consideration should be given to explicit and implicit meanings of cultural information in the visual content<sup>5</sup> which can be interpreted in many ways. Illustrations and images show but also say something to an individual learner, being able to speak their own language (Banks, 2009, pp. 185–198; Hurst, 2014, p. 25). The printed ELT course books are multimodal texts as they combine written language, illustrations, and pictures, music, spoken language, and sounds. They may also include films and online materials with the audio-visual elements and become both multimodal and multimedia ones (Perez-Gonzales, 2014, p. 187). The project focuses only on the print ELT materials among others to indicate the power of still images.

## Research Project

The project involves MDA and follows Stöckl's framework for the investigation of the semiotic resources. It focuses on the examination of cultural content including four core modes such as image, language, sounds, and music (Stöckl, 2004, p. 14; Perez-Gonzalez, 2014, p. 194). It is the initial examination of multimodality in this context and will be limited to the selected medial variants. To exemplify the complex character of MDA in the print texts, the project will also focus on the image-language relations. They will be examined following Halliday's framework (2004) improved by Unsworth (2006, p. 1175) and adopted here to ELT materials for YL. The research project is based on the principles of pre-use evaluation and illuminative evaluation of ELT resources<sup>6</sup> (Tomlinson, 2013b, p. 30).

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<sup>5</sup> There are at least three sites at which meaning of visual content can be examined. Namely, the site of production (process), the site of image/object itself (appearance) and the site of its audience (perception) (Rose, 2012, p. 346).

<sup>6</sup> The pre-use evaluation refers here to suitability in terms of teaching cultural content in English course books for YL (Cunningsworth, 1995, pp. 14–15). The illuminative evaluation is applied here as it provides the interpretation of different aspects involved in the project (White, 1987, p. 216; Williams & Burden, 1994, p. 23) including the cultural content in terms of visual and verbal input (Banks, 2009, pp. 19–43).

## Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose is to investigate the multimodality of the cultural content in English course books implemented in Polish early language education. The focus is on the image-language relations as the interplay between verbal and non-verbal semiotics in the construction of the cultural content. The idea is to find answers to the following questions:

- a) What is the multimodality of cultural content in English course books for YL?
- b) What are the image-language relations involved in the construction of cultural content?

## Research Procedure

To date, various methods and procedures have been developed to measure MDA, which belongs to the qualitative research methods. As this project is the preliminary examination of the printed English course books in terms of multimodality, it follows both quantitative and qualitative approaches that are performed in two stages respectively. The first stage involves the analysis of the cultural content in English course books for YL with the focus on the core modes. The second stage involves the analysis of the image-language relations with the focus on visual-verbal cultural content presented in the same course books. The investigation is initiated by a sample selection. ELT course books selected had to fulfill four criteria modified for this evaluation as follows:

1. Universal criteria: related to early English language education (grades 1–3).
2. Content specific criteria: related to the cultural content (home and English culture limited here to celebrations and festivals) offered in ELT course books.
3. Multimodal criteria: related to the core modes of image, language, sound, and music depicting cultural content in ELT course books.
4. Intermodal criteria: related to the visual and verbal semiotics depicting the cultural content in ELT materials (Williams, 1983, pp. 251–255; Tomlinson, 2013, pp. 30–41; Unsworth, 2006, pp. 1174–1204).

For the investigation three series of the course books are selected and coded respectively: nine course books. They were published by Nowa Era, Macmillan Education, and Pearson Longman. The project is based on the data obtained during the review studies for Polish Ministry of Education. The instrument is designed and entitled: *Children's Course Book Evaluation: A Checklist for Multimodality of Cultural Content*. The first part of the checklist implemented

in the project is composed of four major sets of the following groups of questions:

1. Questions about *context* and *user definition* relate to the description of the target group (their assumed knowledge and language skills).
2. Questions about *objectives* and *scope* relate to the description of the general learning objectives, the detailed objectives and extra objectives such as multicultural education.
3. Questions about *content* and *coverage* relate to the teaching cultural content and topics promoted in ELT materials.
4. Questions about *multimodality* relate to the multimodal aspects of cultural content only and include the following sub-groups:
  - a) questions about the core mode of *image* relate to the visual presentation of the cultural content in the materials (static pictures, illustrations, drawings) and their meaning;
  - b) questions about the core mode of *language* relate to the verbal presentation of the cultural content in the materials (speech and state writing);
  - c) questions about the core mode of *sounds* relate to the verbal presentation of the cultural content in the materials (soundtracks, recordings of dialogues, phrase, and song lyrics);
  - d) questions about the core mode of *music* relate to the verbal and musical presentation of the cultural content in the materials (performed songs and chants).

The process requires a precise identification of feedback and analysis of data. The results from the evaluation are recorded and compiled on charts.

The second stage of this project focuses on the qualitative analysis of the image-language relations in terms of expansion and projection of meaning in the cultural content. The second part of the checklist includes the following questions:

1. Questions about *concurrency* related to the image-language agreement and correspondence (clarification, exposition, exemplification, and homospatiality).
2. Questions about *complementarity* related to the image-language supplement, augmentation or divergence.
3. Questions about *projection* related to the image-language presentation (verbal and mental as perception and cognition).
4. The process requires an accurate analysis of data and narrative description. The final step is to compare the answers collected in the two stages of the project.

## Presentation and Interpretation of the Results

The results indicate that ELT materials for YL form a multidimensional and multimodal framework. The opening results serve as the introduction to the central data and include the following categories:

1. The target language users are young learners in the first stage of schooling in 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades of primary schools.
2. The teaching objectives are listed as linguistic skills to be learnt by YL defined in the operational forms. The extra objectives include ICC, development of the positive attitude to other languages and cultures.
3. The cultural content and topics are listed under the headings of *Me and my country*, *Me and other countries*. The tendency is to introduce initially the topics linked with the nearest background of YL. These are topics linked with family and school, and only later topics related both to “home” – *My country* – and the target language culture – *Other countries*. At this stage of early language education, the most popular ones are celebrations and festivals. The detailed coverage of topics related to teaching culture in English course books for YL are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

*Development of ICC in the selected English course books for YL*

Course book	Home (Polish) Culture	English (Anglo-Saxon) Culture
Course books for YL (1–3 grades)	Christmas Happy New Year Easter	Halloween Christmas New Year's Eve Valentine's Day Easter

The list of items in all the selected course books indicate a dominating presence of Anglo-Saxon culture aspects. The ELT materials share here three standard cultural items, which can simultaneously be related to both home and target language culture. Namely, these are Christmas, New Year's celebrations, and Easter. However, YL learn also about Halloween, Valentine's day, Mother's Day mainly in English culture context, which may differ from the Polish perspective on the matters.

The initial results collected in this project on the multimodality of ELT materials are grouped per course books, grades, core modes, and presented in Table 2, Table 3, and Table 4 respectively. Table 2 depicts multimodality of the selected English course books offered in the first year of primary education.

Table 2

*Multimodality of the cultural content ELT course books for the 1st grade*

Course books 1st grade	Culture content Totals	Core modes				
		Image	Language		Sound	Music
		Static pictures	Speech	State writing	Soundtracks	Songs
CB1	Christmas	6	15	4	3	1
CB1	Easter	5	11	4	3	1
<b>CB1</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>
CB2	Christmas	19	13	–	1	–
CB2	Easter	5	18	–	1	–
<b>CB2</b>	<b>Totals:</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>–</b>
CB3	Halloween	3	5	–	1	–
CB3	Christmas	3	27	–	1	1
CB3	Easter	3	22	–	1	1
<b>CB3</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>

*Note.* CB 1 – course books from the 1st series; CB 2 – course books from the 2nd series; CB3 – course books from the 3rd series.

The core of image varies between nine or 11 pictures even if one more topic is added, as the CB3 offers “Halloween” at this stage of education. The most surprising amount is in CB2 with the total number of 24 pictures that carry most information load of the cultural content. To consider size of the visual input, the results show that there are eight small pictures and three big ones in CB1, 16 small pictures and eight big ones in CB2; six small pictures and three big ones in CB3.

As far as the core mode of language is concerned, the medial variant of speech includes phrases, stories, and song lyrics, which on average counted as five phrases (plus numbers 1–10, six colors, and three animals). This channel is widely used in the cultural sections with the average number of 26 and 31 phrases. A considerable number of 54 phrases is included in the third series of CB3. As it was mentioned above, the explanation refers to the additional topic incorporated in the course book. The medial variant of state writing, which represents the written words and sentences, is included in the number of eight phrases only in one series (CB1) out of the three investigated in this project. Other course books (CB2 and CB3) do not present phrases in the written forms. From the data in Table 2, it is apparent that the considerable amount of the verbal content is represented orally in the cultural sections,

following the principle of teaching the receptive skills before the productive ones in early language education. The core mode of sound, which is related to soundtracks of the verbal language (stories, songs, and drills for the pronunciation practice), is realized through two or three soundtracks per each cultural section in C2 and CB3. Interestingly, CB1 offers the extensive number of six soundtracks. Similarly, the core mode of music, which is related to the songs and chants performed and recorded, is realized through two songs in CB1 and CB3. Surprisingly, only CB2 does not include songs in the cultural sections.

Table 3 depicts multimodality of the selected English course books offered in the second year of primary education.

Table 3

*Multimodality of the cultural content ELT course books for the 2nd grade*

Course books 2nd grade	Culture content Totals	Core modes				
		Image	Language		Sound	Music
		Static pictures	Speech	State writing	Soundtracks	Songs
CB1	New Year	7	13	8	3	1
CB1	Mother's Day	6	12	6	3	1
<b>CB1</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>
CB2	Halloween	9	11	6	1	1
CB2	Christmas	6	28	16	1	-
<b>CB2</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
CB3	Christmas	3	19	6	1	1
CB3	Valentine's Day	3	15	6	1	1
CB3	Easter	6	14	4	1	1
<b>CB3</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>

It is apparent from this table that the core mode of image is realized through 12 up to 15 pictures on average in each cultural section. There is not a significant difference in their totals across the selected series. To consider size of the visual input, the results show that there are eight small pictures and five big ones in CB1; eight small pictures and seven big ones in CB2; eight small pictures and four big ones in CB3. Comparing the core mode of image offered in the first and second year of early language education, the visual content is integrated with the verbal content more precisely in the composition of pictures in grade 2 that include phrases or very short sentences.



There is a significant increase in the number of phrases and sentences in the core mode of language. The medial variant of speech is realized through phrases introduced orally, short sentences, stories, and song lyrics. This sensing channel is the most widely recognized in the course books and realized through 25 up to 48 speeches. A clear increase in the medial variant of state writing is also detected in Table 3. The written forms of phrases and sentences range between 14 and 22 per each cultural section in the second year of primary education. It is the striking result that indicates a gradual development from the auditory channel and semantic resource offered in early language communication towards the growth in written and visual resources.

The data associated with the core mode of sound in this table shows, similarly to the data in Table 2, the same number of soundtracks per each cultural content in the respective course books. These results can be compared with the details linked with the mode of music to reveal an intensification of the songs in the numbers of two or three ones provided in each section. There is only one difference in “Christmas” section in CB2, where a story is recorded in a soundtrack but there is not any song provided in the core mode of music.

Table 4 depicts multimodality of the selected English course books offered in the third year of primary education.

Table 4

*Multimodality of the cultural content ELT course books for the 3rd grade*

Course books 3rd grade	Culture content Totals	Core modes				
		Image	Language		Sound	Music
		Static pictures	Speech	State writing	Soundtracks	Songs
CB1	Halloween	1	28	28	3	1
CB1	Valentine's Day	1	28	28	3	1
<b>CB1</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>
CB2	Halloween	4	26	26	2	–
CB2	Christmas	18	35	35	2	–
CB2	Easter	5	16	16	1	–
<b>CB2</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>5</b>	–
CB3	Christmas	1	24	24	3	1
CB3	Easter	1	16	16	3	1
<b>CB3</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>

As this table shows there is a decrease in the number of pictures related to the mode of image in the cultural content. Only CB2 maintains the result of 27, which is close to the one indicated in Table 2. Other course books seem to move from the visual content towards the verbal one. To consider size of the pictures, the results show that there are only two big pictures included both in CB1 and CB3 respectively. On the contrary, only small pictures in the number of 27 are included in CB2. Comparing the core mode of image offered in the first and second year of early language education, the visual content is more and more precisely integrated with the verbal content in the composition of images that include phrases, sentences, and dialogues.

A rapid increase is observed in the core mode of language through the verbal input provided in the cultural sections for the third year. The data collected for the median variant of speech recorded and the median variant of state writing are the same. The results confirm the move from the oral resources of communication towards the written ones. Finally, the core mode of sound, which is related to soundtracks of sentences, stories, and songs, is realized through either five or six soundtracks per each cultural section. The details indicate its steady role in the cultural content across grade 1, 2, and 3. To compare the details depicted in Table 2, the core mode of music in Table 4 is also realized through two songs in CB1 and CB3. Continually, CB2 does not include any songs in the cultural content.



Figure 1. Example of clarification in CB1 (*Our Discovery Island 1*, p. 71)

The results from the second part of the project related to the image-language relations provided the thought-provoking data on the inner construction of the visual and verbal input in the cultural sections. These are model units which consist of an image (simple or complex) and meaning related to it by content. The results related to the expansion and projection of meaning brought the most challenging details. Namely, the category of concurrence as the visual and verbal agreement was observed in four following subcategories: clarification, exposition, exemplification, and homo-spatiality. The results start with the clarification presented in Figure 1 when the image explains the song lyrics.

The image of Santa Claus coming to the town serves here as the precise framework for singing the song entitled “We wish You a Merry Christmas.” The mode of image initiates the meaning provided by the mode of music and sound.

The subcategory of exposition is defined as the equivalence of meanings that are represented in the different modes. It is also the re-expression of the meanings (of the image or the text) in the alternative mode which is shown in Figure 2.

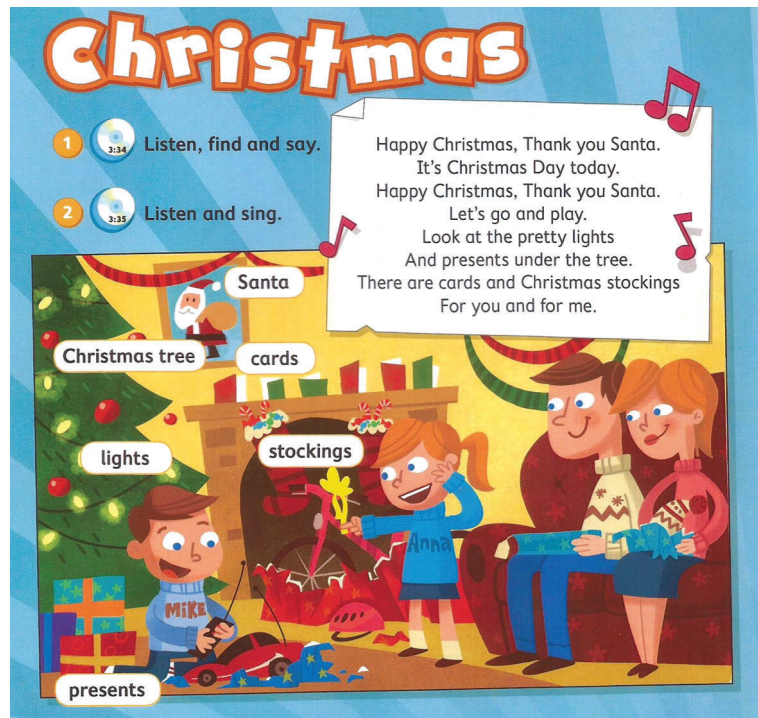


Figure 2. Example of exposition in CB1 (*Our Discovery Island 3*, p. 70)

There are two options here. The first one when a reader or listener concentrates on the image of Christmas, new words included in the state writing or reading the song lyrics. The second option when s/he focuses only on the mode of music singing the song “Happy Christmas.”

Correspondingly, the subcategory of exemplification offers two possibilities. The first one is defined here by the image which serves as an example from the text. The second possibility occurs when the text includes an example of what is mostly depicted in the image which is shown in Figure 3.

## Valentine's Day

Sprawdź znaczenie słów i zwrotów w słowniczku na końcu książki.

lovely   rose   ring   perfume   card   heart  
inside   I love you!

**1 Listen, say and play.**  C/4

**2 Listen and read.**  C/5



**Tom:** Tomorrow is February 14th. It's Valentine's Day. Daddy has got these lovely presents for Mummy.  
**Hannah:** Look at this beautiful red rose. What's in the box?  
**Tom:** I think it's some chocolates. Mummy likes chocolates.  
**Hannah:** Or maybe it's a ring or some perfume.  
**Tom:** No, I think it's chocolates. Has Mummy got a present for Daddy?  
**Hannah:** Yes, she has got a card for him. It's a red heart. Inside the card it says 'I love you.'  
**Tom:** That's nice.

Figure 3 . Example of exemplification in CB3 (*Our World 3*, p. 117).

The image of Valentine's Day is more general than the text, which discusses only some of the depicted symbols. A reader learns about a red rose, some chocolate, and perfume. There is a ring and a card mentioned in the text but they are not presented in the picture. On the other hand, a viewer perceives a candle, a plate, and fork plus extra red decorations.



The examples of homo-spatiality when two different modes co-occur in one spatial and standardized unit or entity have not been found in the cultural content of the selected course books, and are not described here. A similar situation has occurred with divergence as discrepancies have not been found in the visual input of the investigated cultural content.

The category of complementarity related to the image-language supplement which is described by augmentation (when the image extends the text or the text extends the image) and divergence. The example of the image which extends the text is shown in Figure 4 below.




Figure 4. Example of complementarity in CBI (*Our Discovery Island 1*, p. 70).


The image of Halloween extends the meaning to the one realized by the chant and is provided here only in the music and sound mode. A viewer focuses initially on the picture that is supplemented by the chant lyrics. The example of augmentation when the text extends the image is shown in Figure 5.

## Christmas


**1 Listen, read and match with your fingers.**










Hi! I'm Grace and I'm from England. For Christmas dinner we have roast turkey, sausages and potatoes. For dessert we have Christmas pudding.



I'm Zosia. In Poland we have borscht with dumplings and carp for Christmas. My mum makes a traditional Christmas poppyseed cake. It's delicious! I like gingerbread biscuits, too.



Hello! We're from Australia. Christmas here is in the summer. We like roast turkey for Christmas. Some people eat seafood on the beach! What do you eat at Christmas?

**2 Read and answer.**  
**In which country ...**

1 children eat poppyseed cake?	4 children have Christmas pudding for dessert?
2 Christmas is in the summer?	5 people celebrate Christmas on the beach?
3 people eat seafood?	

Figure 5. Example of complementarity in CB2 (*Quest 3*, p. 69).

The topic of Christmas is described in three texts which are enriched with three small pictures on the left, depicting the respective text holistically. Still, seven symbols presented on the right are incorporated in the text in the state writing, serving as the visual and verbal content. This figure can also be the example of multiple image-language relations.

The category of projection is related to the image-language presentation (verbal and mental as perception and cognition). Namely, the relation involves a balance of verbal and visual content, quoting and reporting words or ideas in a form of cartoons as it is depicted in Figure 6.

## Christmas

**4 Listen and read.**

### The Little Donkey

**1** The Christmas fair is coming to town.

Wait for me!

You're too slow, Little Donkey.

**2** On Christmas Eve Little Donkey is sad and alone.

What's that noise?

Ho, ho, ho! Hello, Little Donkey!

**3** The reindeer is very tired.

This sack is very heavy.

I can help you!

**4** You're very good to help me, Little Donkey.

**5** Thank you for your help. Here's a present.

**6** In the morning ...

Look, there's a little donkey!

It says Merry Christmas. It's a present from Santa!

**7** Two years later ...

You're so big now!

I love you, Little Donkey!

Figure 6. Example of projection in CB2 (Quest 3, p. 69).

Young learners become here the viewers, listeners, and readers who are to follow all multimodal aspects simultaneously. It is another example of multiple image-language relations depicting multimodality of cultural content in ELT materials.



## Conclusions

Multimodality of the cultural content in English course books for YL has been a new area of investigation. As the results show, ELT materials designed for early education include a selection of the cultural topics mainly limited to festivals and celebrations. They are presented in English course books with diverse manifestation and representation. Each section of the cultural content includes the core modes of image, language, sound, and music in different degree. To start with the core mode of image and sound which form and deliver the cultural details in the first years, to continue with more balanced use of all core modes in the third grade. All the resources in their iconographic and textual form spread meaning and values, stressing the connection between the target language learning and culture learning (both home and Anglo-Saxon one). A sensible approach is also advocated in terms of implementing and developing various semantic resource and modes included in the cultural sections. The cultural content is experienced by YL as the readers and listeners, who still develop perception, recognition, and comprehension at this stage of education. They are very sensitive towards both visual and verbal input, which leads to the intrinsic role of multimodality in their background.

The findings indicate challenges that can be faced in the evaluation of image-language relations. It is linked with the expansion and projection of the verbal and visual messages as well as possibilities applied in the construction of their meaning. The amount, intensity, and character of the visual content changes in English course books with regards to the age of learners. Its role seems to decrease with the years of learning and abdicate in favor of the verbal and written messages. The role and amount of the verbal content provided in the cultural sections increase gradually in the subsequent series of course books. However, the visual impact stimulates visual learning and teaching to develop multiliteracies among learners. Consequently, it leads to the increasing number of multimodal materials that can be designed in many possible ways.

The selected course books were not evaluated in terms of the authors and their nationality, which may be another factor for further materials evaluation. It may have implications for the design of teaching materials produced for the local or international market. It would be interesting for MDA to examine other core modes (sound and music) and medial variants such as color in ELT materials for YL. Recommendations for further work are also linked with the evaluation of the image-language relations in terms of children's perception and reception as little or no attention is paid to the use of ELT materials by YL. It would be interesting to assess the image-language impact on successful early English acquisition in multicultural background. Another recommenda-



tion refers to pre-service and in-service teacher education for the exploitation of multimodal ELT materials and visual teaching in Polish context.

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Maria Stec

### **Multimodalität der Kulturinhalte im didaktischen Material der englischen Sprache für Kinder**

#### **Zusammenfassung**

Die Kulturinhalte treten im didaktischen Material auf, um dessen Sprachinhalte zu bereichern. Der vorliegende Beitrag schildert didaktisches Material der englischen Sprache als Kulturartefakte, indem er multimediale Analyse des Diskurses verwendet. Er bezweckt, die wichtigsten Aspekte der Multimodalität in den, den integralen Bestandteil der Englischlehrbücher für Kinder im Frühschulalter bildenden Kulturinhalten festzulegen. Die Verfasserin versucht folgende Fragen zu beantworten: was für Modalität lassen die in den Sprachlehrbüchern für Kleinkinder enthaltenen Kulturinhalte erkennen und wie sehen die visuell-verbale Beziehungen im Aufbau der Kulturinhalte aus. Das zur Analyse verwendete Material stammte aus neun Lehrbüchern für Englischunterricht, die heutzutage in polnischen Elementarschulen gebraucht werden. Die Beurteilung umfasste quantitative und qualitative Analyse. In den Forschungen wurden ausgewählte universale Kriterien für Inhalte, Multimodalität und Intermodalität angewandt. Die Verfasserin hofft darauf, dass ihre Ergebnisse den Prozess der multimedialen Struktur der didaktischen Lehrmittel für Englischunterricht verbessern und den Bedarf an weiterer Entwicklung der Fähigkeit, die Bilder in multikultureller Bildung und im Frühschulbildungsstadium zu deuten, begründen werden.



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