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Preface

Theory and Practice of Second Language Acquisition has already entered its fourth consecutive year of publication. Founded in 2015, when very few journals of a related profile were available in Poland, it filled a niche recognized by not only Polish, but also international scholars. Following the publication of the first issue, it became clear that its scope would attract submissions from many specialists and researchers around the world. Thus far, *TAPSLA* has featured articles by such renowned scholars in the field as David Singleton, Larissa Aronin, Jean-Marc Dewaele, Tammy Gregersen, and many others representing innovative movements in SLA research worldwide. The journal has become a venue for the exchange of ideas for academics at home and abroad, focusing on often un-researched issues and new currents in SLA studies. Especially today, when journal publications are seen as the most valued and highly recognized evidence of academic excellence, the perspectives for its rapid and successful development seem to be very promising. A guarantee of the journal's high standards is *TAPSLA*'s Editorial Board, which includes both Polish and foreign experts in the area, representing the wide range of research interests of its members. All updated information on the journal is available on the University of Silesia Institute of English webpage at www.ija.us.edu.pl (via a special link) and the journal webpage at www.journals.us.edu.pl/index.php/TAPSLA.

The present issue opens with a fascinating insight into the significance of the "love factor" for late L2 proficiency development. In their paper "L2 Proficiency as a Function of Cultural Identity in Interlingual Couples" David Singleton and Simone Pfenninger offer a comprehensive review of a number of qualitative studies which demonstrate how significant the affective dimension can be both for the ultimate success in acquisition of L2 proficiency as well as for the adoption of cultural identity by one of the partners. The facilitative role of out-of-class immersion activities is presented by Jorge Pinto in the second article, entitled "Immersion Learning Activities: Developing Communicative Tasks in the

Community." The author argues for the extension of the learning environment to the beyond-the-classroom sphere which allows for a more extensive development of learners' communicative skills in L2. Although the research results are based on an L2 Portuguese course taught at the University of Lisbon, the implications seem to be universally applicable. The third paper, "Social Constraints of Aspirations for Second Language Achievement" by Joanna Rokita-Jaśkow, seeks an explanation for the relatively unambitious and vague aspirations of Polish vocational school English philology students, adding another perspective to the discussion on the role of learning environments. The perspective is narrowed down to the classroom environment in the fourth paper, "New School, the Same Old Rut? Action Research of Unsuccessful First-year Students in a High School" by Joanna Masoń-Budzyń. In order to formulate useful and experience-based suggestions, the author attempts to diagnose the sources of learners' unsuccessful performance, looking at a number of potential contributing factors. The fifth article, "Rethink Your Old Teaching Methods: Designing a Pronunciation Course for Young Teenagers" by Dorota Lipińska, also focuses on a FL classroom environment, but the author's interest revolves around the issue of EFL pronunciation teaching to 11- to 13-year-olds. Lamenting the inefficiency of both the teaching resources and the primary school syllabi, the author proposes her own ideas about how pronunciation could be taught, providing some suggestive evidence from speech production and speech perception tests. The subject of pronunciation learning is also the topic of the last paper in the issue, "Pronunciation Learning Environment: EFL Students' Cognitions of In-class and Out-of-class Factors Affecting Pronunciation Acquisition" by Magdalena Szyszka. The author attempts to identify the most significant contributors to the learners' ultimate pronunciation learning achievement, looking not only at the classroom environment and at teachers' pronunciation, but also at the patterns encountered by the learners in their daily exposure to entertainment media.

If a common denominator were to be noted for the papers included in the present issue, the dimension of various learning environments would be a good candidate. The authors have attempted to show in what way the widely understood context in which learning and acquisition takes place exerts an influence on learners' ultimate L2 performance and success. We hope that this issue will be of interest to all researchers working in the field of second language acquisition. At the same time, we would like to invite Polish and foreign academics to share their scholarly research with us by submitting their work to the journal *Theory and Practice of Second Language Acquisition*, published by the prestigious Polish academic publisher Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego (University of Silesia Press).

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L2 Proficiency as a Function of Cultural Identity in Interlingual Couples

Abstract

The "love factor" has increasingly figured in SLA research. Thus, Piller (2002) studied the language "glue" between cross-lingual couples; Marinova-Todd (2003) found a link between L2 proficiency and co-habitation with native speakers; Muñoz and Singleton (2007) reported a romantic connection between successful late L2 learners and native speakers; Gonçalves (2013) explored hybridity in bicultural relationships; and Kinsella and Singleton (2014) found that the participants in their study of late L2 learners whose L2 test results were all within native-speaker range had native-speaker life-partners. This issue is now being taken very seriously, as Dewaele and Salomidou's (2017) recent article on "loving […] in a foreign language" demonstrates. In the present article we report on the results of some recent qualitative research, based on interview data collected from five individuals who are involved in intercultural and cross-lingual relationships. The research shows the L2 learning process to be clearly influenced by the affective context in which it occurs. The data also suggest that identity construction may be moved in a particular direction by the language principally adopted by the couple, and that, for the partner for whom this language is an L2, the results can be dramatic in terms of both linguistic and cultural affiliation.

Keywords: identity, interlingual couples, love, L2 proficiency, affective

Introduction

With the increasing urge in today's society to travel as well as to engage and communicate with people from all over the world, many people have found love with a person from a different country from their own and, as a result,

find themselves living in an intercultural, binational relationship. While it is argued that such a cross-cultural exchange can offer many advantages, such as the sharing of traditional customs, people in intercultural relationships often find their own cultural understanding to be challenged, as they are confronted with the juggling of identities and the ideologies associated with them (see Breger & Hill, 1998). As language has been shown to form an essential part of an individual's identity (e.g., Bucholtz & Hall, 2004, 2005, 2010), being able to speak one's native language in an intercultural relationship has been argued to be a stabilizing component of individual identity construction, while the abdication of native language use has been portrayed as rather adverse.

Interlingual relationships have, on the other hand, frequently been talked about in SLA research in connection with the dramatic rise in L2 proficiency of the partner who opts to use the language of his/her "significant other." One thinks of Marinova-Todd's (2003) study of 30 post-pubertal learners of English from 25 countries, which found that the six most proficient participants co-habited with native English speakers. Or of Muñoz and Singleton's (2007) study, which found that of the most successful late L2 learners, in a group of 11 Spanish/Catalan-L1 near-native learners of English they investigated in Ireland, one was espoused to an Irishman and the other had an Irish boyfriend (whom she subsequently married).

Nor are we surprised by such results. We always knew that falling in love with a speaker of another tongue could change not only your life, but also your command of his/her language—and, adverting to our earlier point, to some extent your sense of self. Such changes very much relate to "the degree to which the individual is open to disruptive novelty in terms of developing identity" (Skrzypek & Singleton, 2016, p. 89; cf. Schumann, 1976). This kind of openness appears to be encouraged by romantic love, which seems to have the capacity to take the threat out of threats to identity. As Gonçalves (2013) points out, at least some of the people experiencing intercultural relationships are "culturally hybrid individuals," "living in the in-between" (2013, p. 528). They live another identity, besides the one they grew with, and perform accordingly.

Such developments are not unique to intercultural couples. One thinks of the Latin poet, Quintus Ennius, who, because he had three languages, used to say he had three hearts. In a similar vein, Dewaele (2016) mentions Pavlenko's (2006) analysis of the feedback from the Bilingualism and Emotion Questionnaire. Pavlenko found that almost two-thirds of participants reported feeling like different people when they switched languages. Interlingual/intercultural couples do though offer prime examples of the phenomenon!

This paper aims to contribute to our understanding of language acquisition in "bilingual, cross-cultural, interpersonal communication" (Piller, 2000, p. 1). It outlines the obstacles and communicative challenges confronted by three intercultural couples as well as their varying motivation and success in learning,

maintaining and using a second language. With communication as a vital factor in the make-up of a modern romantic relationship (see Piller, 2001), how and to what extent do significant others in couples whose languages, cultures, and identities differ influence each other with respect to L2 acquisition, maintenance, and attrition? How do the couples choose their language? What are the reasons behind those choices? We report on three cases of relationships involving pairs of native speakers of different languages. We describe the communicative configuration that resulted in each case and tentatively explore an explanation for the differences between them.

Literature Review

Identity Construction and SLA

Communication between partners is crucial for a relationship (Piller, 2001). Additionally, when the two individuals in question stem from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, an extra dimension is added to an already complex psychological process (Dewaele & Salomidou, 2017, p. 117). Importantly, in situations of cultural contact, equal status may be won, if at all, via struggle (Bucholtz & Hall, 2003). It is now widely understood that engagement in language learning is an "investment in a learner's own identity, an identity which is constantly changing across time and space" (Norton, 2013, p. 51). The period of destabilization described above has also been referred to as the third place (Bhabha, 1994; Hall, 1996), in which the past and present "encounter and transform each other" (Papastergiadis, 2000, p. 170).

In her 2002 study of German-English couples, Piller describes the importance of private language, which is the central element of the relationship, "a glue that binds it together" (p. 222). Piller found that many couples perceive their private language as the foundation of their relationship: "[…] we were both happy then that we could speak German, and our relationship started with drinking coffee and speaking, and so speaking was very important to us and whenever we are having a serious conversation, it really needs to be in German, otherwise it doesn't go well, and it doesn't feel right" (Piller, 2002, p. 222). Dewaele (2013) went on to describe this private communication as depending on three channels: a visual channel such as body language, facial expressions, and gestures, a vocal channel such as vocalizations, prosody, intonation, pitch, volume, and a verbal channel that covers the content of the speech. If the information shared between the partners is not congruent on all three channels, difficulties within the communication can arise. For instance, when somebody

sounds but does not look angry, or when somebody says something positive without looking and sounding positive (Dewaele, 2013; Dewaele & Salomidou, 2017, p. 118).

Love and SLA

SLA research is now taking the love issue and its consequences very seriously: various studies, some of which have already been mentioned, have focused in detail on the language of love among multilinguals and their preferred languages for inner and articulated speech. Kinsella and Singleton (2014) found that, of the 20 Anglophone late learners of French they investigated, the three whose French test results were all within native-speaker range had each married French natives and had either bilingual or French-speaking children. French, for all three, was the language spoken at home. Thus, all three had strong links to the French community, and the majority of their social interactions were carried out through French (Kinsella & Singleton, 2014, p. 16). In 2008, Dewaele found that while the phrase *I love you* has most emotional weight in an L1, 30% of investigated participants felt that it had equal weight in their L1 and an LX, and 25% felt it was stronger in their LX. In their wide-ranging article on "loving a partner in a foreign language," Dewaele and Salomidou (2017) explored the perceptions of multilinguals reflecting on emotional communication in LXs in romantic relationships, concluding that love in an LX is perfectly possible but it adds "some extra challenges," while love and sex allow partners with different L1s to bridge the inevitable linguistic gaps and to create their own unique multilingual and multicultural relationship. The authors (p. 117) quote the claim made by Piller (2002)—in regard to a study of German-English couples—that these days in intimate relationships—including crosslinguistic relationships—communication is key. Dewaele and Salomidou note that, amongst their own participating couples, one of the partners' languages often became "the language of the heart" (p. 128) for both, and the females more often adopted the language of the males. We shall see in what follows, however, that this trend is not without exceptions.

Addressing the issue of hybridity in terms of identity construction, Said argued as early as 1999 that "all cultures are involved in one another" and "none is considered to be single and pure, all are hybrid and heterogeneous" (pp. 112–115). Nevertheless, partners living in an intercultural relationship, who experience this 'in-between' or 'third place' of cultures, often do not see themselves as hybrid (Bhabha, 1994; Bystydzienski, 2011; Gonçalves, 2010). Exploring hybridity in bicultural relationships in a Swiss context, Gonçalves (2013) bases her research on Bucholtz and Hall's sociocultural linguistic model, which views identity as emergent in social interaction, but emphasizes its so-

cial salience in that identity becomes the social positioning of self and others (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 586). Bucholtz and Hall's concepts of sameness and difference take a central position in our study—two phenomenological processes that emerge from social interaction. According to the authors (2003, p. 369), sameness allows for individuals to imagine themselves as a group, while difference produces social distance between those who perceive themselves as unlike.

In an earlier study Gonçalves (2010) re-conceptualizes the saliency of individuals' situated past identities, positions, and practices and juxtaposes them with individuals' current situational identities, positions, and practices in order to facilitate their rejection of hybridity, by proposing the terms *situated* and *situational identities* within ethnographic studies. *Situated identity* is described as "an individual's sense of self, which is often characterized as 'stable,' 'fixed,' and 'unchanged' in that it is how individuals consider themselves to be or act inherently" (Gonçalves, 2010, pp. 81 ff.). Furthermore, *situated identities* can also refer to how individuals are "seen," placed or situated by others as certain individuals within a specific context. A *situational identity*, on the other hand is more flexible, dynamic, temporary and can be constructed by oneself or co-constructed by others (Gonçalves, 2010, pp. 81 ff.). Having analyzed individuals' first-order perception of identity in a Swiss context, Gonçalves concluded that hybridity ultimately means "scrutinizing interpersonal discourse within an intimate community of practice where the positioning of self and other constantly emerges" (2010, p. 86):

> While it is impossible to account for identity "as a whole," […] individuals living in a binational relationship come to terms with their hybrid cultural identities by discursively co-constructing this notion and, simultaneously, performing hybridity by drawing on an array of language resources and linguistic features. (Gonçalves, 2013, p. 544)

Finally, it is also interesting to note that some neuroscientists (e.g., Aron, Fisher, Mashek, Strong, Li, & Brown, 2005) have characterized romantic love as not so much a specific emotion as a "motivation state" with respect to an imperative to be with the beloved and to protect the relationship in question. Clearly, such an imperative is, among other things, connected to seeking out means of communication and to developing and looking after such means—with obvious implications for skills in relevant languages.

This Study

Data, Participants, and Site of Study

Semi-structured interviews were carried out in Austria (community language German) with five participants (two couples and one male individual) who were in relationships involving different languages and cultures. The couples in question used English as their main language of communication at least at some point in their relationship, whereas the individual male reported German as the overwhelmingly dominant language of his relationship. The participants were carefully selected in regard to sharing essential features such as age and length of relationship at the moment of the interview. While Caitlyn (L1 English) and Stefan (L2 German) used Caitlyn's native English as their common language, Daniela (L1 German) and Vratislav (L1 Czech) used English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). In Kevin's (L1 English) case, on the other hand, the community language, Austrian German, was the language he and his partner (L1 German) used for marital communication.

Caitlyn and Stefan met in South Africa, during Stefan's participation in a student exchange program at Caitlyn's home university. After the year-long exchange, the couple moved to Salzburg, Austria, as Stefan already had a secure job and Caitlyn had just finished her undergraduate degree at the time. In terms of language practices, the couple speak English exclusively, as Caitlyn's German proficiency is as yet insufficient in order to have a spontaneous conversation. While Caitlyn did take a German language class at university for the duration of one semester, she has stated that she stopped taking classes of any form and is now "picking up bits just as she goes along," which has apparently significantly undermined her progress in German.

Daniela and Vratislav met during Vratislav's business travels to Vienna which was Daniela's place of residence at the time. After a short time of practicing a long-distance relationship, Daniela moved to Prague as she was admittedly "more flexible" due to the conditions of her job as a singer/actress. As neither of the two spoke each other's native language at the time, the couple have been using English as main language of communication since the start. Both individuals show a high English proficiency as both use English on a daily basis as part of their occupations respectively. Since living in Prague, Daniela has been taking Czech lessons on a regular basis and is already able to have an unprompted conversation in Czech. Vratislav has also just started taking German lessons online. His skills are yet at a beginner's level, as he has only been actively practicing for a few weeks and is not exposed to German on a regular basis. Table 1 summarizes the basic information about the above participants.

Table 1

Information about the participants

Couple	NL2		ELF	
Name	Caitlyn	Stefan	Daniela	Vratislav
Nationality	South-Africa	Austria	Austria	Czech Republic
Native Lang.	English	German	German	Czech
Age	25	26	27	29
Occupation	university student (MA)	quality/process manager	translator, singer, dancer, actress	IT manager
L2	–	English	English	English
Location	Salzburg, Austria		Prague, Czech Republic	
Length of Relationship	2 years; 6 months		2 years; 9 months	

Finally, Kevin grew up monolingually and monoculturally, learning no languages other than English—even at school—until the age of 16. Nevertheless, his local high school did whet his appetite for contact with other languages and cultures by exposing him to encounters with visiting foreign exchange students. On returning to America, he began his tertiary studies, in which he focused on Spanish and Chemistry. During the late 90s, when he was living in Spain, he made the projection that the German language would become dominant in the EU "domestic" market. On the basis of this projection, he decided to learn German by taking part in an exchange program that took him to Graz in Austria. It was in Austria, in his 20s, that he had his "significant encounter."

Task and Procedure

The following questions guided the conversations:

1. Do both of you speak each other's native language on a sufficient level for basic communication? If not, do you understand your partner's first language?
2. Which language(s) do you use? Have you and your partner created your own language?
3. Do you correct your partner when he/she makes mistakes in his/her second language?
4. Do you have any troubles in making yourself understood?
5. How does it make you feel when you talk to native speakers?
6. What do you consider to be stronger: your community language or English as a world language?
7. In how far has the constant exposure to your second language affected your first language use? Do you consider this change to be positive or negative?

8. Have you noticed any difference in terms of formality and register when using your first and second language? For example, using more advanced vocabulary in one language.
9. Are there any holidays/customs/traditions that you share with your partner, which you may have not celebrated before your relationship?
10. Do you feel like you have adapted an "Austrian way of life"? If yes, please exemplify.

This set, however, only functioned as rough guideline, as in all cases a natural, non-scripted conversation between interviewers and interviewees developed. The rationale for this design was twofold: on the one hand, it aimed to elicit self-reported information on the couple's language practices and language attitudes, and, on the other hand, to yield samples of couple talk (see also Piller, 2002).

The transcripts were coded manually and divided into four main topics emerging in all the conversations, that is, everyday socio-cultural practices (cultural immersion), L2 learning motivation, identity claims (implicit identity claims, explicit identity claims), and language choice and language practices (incl. couple discourse). For the purpose of this paper, we focus on drivers of second language acquisition, maintenance, and attrition.

Results and Analysis

The Far-travelling American

Up to the point of commencing German, Kevin had never been persuaded by the merits of formal instructional language learning—perceiving full immersion in the target language to be the only valid methodology. Nevertheless, in Austria, he found he was able to use his knowledge gained from learning Spanish to catalyze his acquisition of German. His oral proficiency developed from the A1 to the C2 (CEFR) level within six months (when he was 23–24 years of age). His writing and reading proficiency, by his own account, lagged significantly behind and still does 14 years later. This remarkable progress—and the area in which it occurred—is clearly not solely attributable to his transfer of skills acquired during his struggle with Spanish. The extraordinary flowering of his oral proficiency in German—whose phonological, grammatical, and lexical resemblance to Spanish is distinctly limited—may more plausibly be explained in terms of the consequences of his "significant encounter." Let us allow Kevin now to continue the story in his own words:

(1) I returned home to finish my undergraduate studies and then returned a year later to get married to my Austrian wife. Since then, I have been living and working using almost exclusively the German language. My wife and I only spoke German to each other—it was almost as if speaking English was some sort of pseudo-communication. Even after my first child was born, we still spoke German. I knew that I had to speak English to her, if she was going to be bilingual, but it didn't feel "real" to speak English at home or in public with my family.

Here we see the beginnings of identity being modified through the sedimentation of what Bucholtz and Hall (2003) call "habitual action." They (p. 378) argue that although linguistic practice is more often rooted in embodied repetition than in deliberate action, this does not preclude the possibility that it may be the outcome of social agency. The result of what happened following Kevin's "significant encounter" is that he now, according to his colleagues, performs spoken Austrian German—which he began, recall, in his twenties—"like a native," as they say. His almost exclusive use of German in his life for more than a decade clearly has a lot to do with this. Another dimension would appear to be that—at least while he was in Austria—German was the language he identified with as the authentic medium of self-expression.

Things have begun to change for Kevin more recently:

(2) Around four years ago, I began an MA in TESOL in Ireland. At this point I was forced to use English for academic and professional development, which created a turning point for my use of language. I began to speak much more English at home and my wife began also to use some English within our relationship. Now I speak predominantly English with my children, but still feel more comfortable speaking German with them in public settings. I have also been working at the University of Salzburg teaching English which has forced me to almost exclusively speak English at work.

He claims that these changes have had a deleterious impact on his German lexicon and on what he calls his "phonological façade." It has to be said that this impact has not been registered by the German-speakers around him. Even if they are true, the fact that his German reached such a high-water mark appears to be due in the main to the influence of his relationship with his wife, including the influence of this relationship on his language identity, and any decline from that level, because of his increasing use of English, would appear to relate in part to the results of another kind of love—paternal love!

Without wishing to enter here into the critical period debate, it is perhaps worth reiterating that Kevin's first exposure to German was in his twenties—

long after the critical age is generally said by Critical Period Hypothesis advocates to have expired. The fact that he was able to make such rapid and dramatic progress seems to confirm the view that, whatever our views on the critical period, identity adjustments, induced by love or otherwise, are an extremely important dimension of successful L2 learning in adulthood (cf. Skzypek & Singleton, 2016; Schumann, 1975).

The Adaptable but Thwarted South African

For our second case-study we shall again focus on an Anglophone who became very attached to an Austrian and who moved to Austria to be with him. In this case, however, we do not see the very rapid attainment of proficiency in L2 German under conditions of virtually total immersion but a more problematic development in a context where both English and German are at play, and where openness to both cultures on the part of both partners in the relationship is very striking, but where the situation presents some obstacles to the L2 acquisition of German on the part of the English speaker.

This second story begins in South Africa, where Caitlyn, an English-speaking South-African meets Stefan, a German-speaking Austrian taking part in a student-exchange program and studying for a year at Caitlyn's home university. At the end of the Stefan's year-long exchange, Caitlyn moved with him—her studies incomplete—to Austria, where Stefan had a secure job waiting for him. The couple spoke (and still speak) English exclusively to each other. While Caitlyn did take a German language class at university for the duration of one semester, she has apparently now stopped taking German classes of any form and is, according to her own account, "picking up bits just as she goes along."

It is particularly interesting, and not a little surprising, that neither Caitlyn nor Stefan shows an unshakeable attachment to their home culture. Caitlyn says that when she first moved to Austria she was "very much South African" but that now when goes back to South Africa she misses aspects of life in Austria:

(3) In the beginning when I first moved here I was very much South African. […] I'm like that when I'm in South Africa, I've missed stuff from Austria and I'll miss Austrian things.

Caitlyn refers to herself as "being South African" using the past tense, emphasizing her increasing adaptability and hybridity of her cultural identity. Stefan expresses similar sentiments. He says he was never "that proud Austrian that just likes Austrian things and nothing else. […] [S]ince I have been South Africa like, like a part of my heart is there."

Caitlyn and Stefan both, then, evince cultural permeability, which is evident from the way in which they combine elements from both cultures on high days and holidays. Thus Caitlyn says:

(4) Yeah, so now we've like combined it. So, when we've with Stef's parents for Christmas we'll do it on the 24th at night [the Austrian way] but then we'll also do something on the 25th as well [the South African way].

On the language front, however, she reports that going about her daily routine does not necessarily require her to speak German, and that her efforts to communicate in German do not evoke an encouraging response:

(5) Obviously, the main problem is the language but that's all up to me to just learn German. It's harder than I thought and people aren't as… welcoming with regards to like the German people in the city, if I try and speak German a lot of people are like "no." They're not willing to have a conversation with me. Like, people our age at the university or Stef's family, they're willing to talk to me no matter how stupid I sound, but other people aren't interested really.

Thus, Caitlyn feels that her L2 acquisition benefited from the way she is treated by others. Her mention of the willingness of her immediate circle to "speak German no matter how stupid she sounds," brings us back to Stefan's role in the situation. Through the course of the interview, he repeatedly stresses his being perfectly comfortable speaking English. He also speaks in a diminishing way of his own German: "Usually I'm not speaking proper German." He is referring here to his very distinctive Austrian accent and to the fact that Austrian German contains elements that are not in use in the German of Germany. Stefan also reports that it is odd for him to speak Standard German to Caitlyn, "because," he says, "we met in English and it's like talking in a foreign language to her… like it feels weird." This is the nub of the matter; Stefan muses that if they spoke more German to each other, Caitlyn would learn more, and Caitlyn protests that when they visit Stefan's parents they "speak a lot more German, because his mum doesn't really speak English," but the fact is that *their* language, the language of their initial encounters, the language of their first endearments, the language of their entire relationship is English.

The fact that—despite Caitlyn having moved to a German-speaking country to be with her German-speaking partner—the language through which she has continued to express herself (including her feelings) to him is English, and this is also the language through which he feels most comfortable expressing himself to her. For the purposes of their intimate relationship, German is superfluous.

The Case of the ELF Couple

Both couples show high degrees of cultural immersion and have explicitly mentioned social conventions they practice in order to actively perform hybridity. Strikingly, in both cases this adaptability was stressed by the female participants, who also both left their individual cultural environments in order to move in with their partners:

(6) Daniela: There are some differences, like, for example, when you celebrate Easter there are many different traditions (both laugh).
      Interviewer: Can you tell me an example?
      Daniela: No, so in the Czech Republic at Easter the boys go from house to house with a stick and beat the girls! I'm not kidding! And this means the girls will be healthy the whole year. So yeah… in his family they do that but I still get to make my Easter nests so it's okay (both laugh).

In sociolinguistic research this tactic is typically referred to as "distinction," which is the mechanism whereby salient difference is produced (Bucholtz & Hall, 2003, p. 384). As our example demonstrates, distinction most often operates in a binary fashion, establishing a dichotomy between social identities constructed as oppositional or contrastive. However, example (5) also illustrates that Daniela seems to have found compromises in terms of their respective cultural practices and that she seeks to celebrate "the best of both worlds." Open-mindedness towards their partners' respective native culture thus seems to be present in both female participants, yet it was only when interviewing the ELF couple that the influence of language on cultural immersion was explicitly stated. While Caitlyn stated that her going about her daily routine does not necessarily require her to speak German (see above), Daniela continuously stressed the importance of speaking Czech within the city of Prague and emphasized her desire to become part of Czech culture in connection with her L2 learning motivation:

(7) I always think if you want to get to know a culture and want to become a part of it, it is really important to know the language or at least do your best to learn it.

Therefore, it can be argued that cultural immersion and the cultural hybridity it involves seem to be less affected by the status of the main language of communication within the setting of cultural practices, but plays an essential role regarding the status of the main language of (in this case) English in relation to the community language. The less an individual seems to "get by" using English within the non-native community, the higher the value that is placed

on the community language with regard to cultural importance. The results somewhat contradict previous ELF studies; according to Jenkins (2008), for instance, ELF emphasizes the role of English in communication between speakers from different L1s and emphasizes that people have something in common rather than their differences.

While Caitlyn's social network does not require her to learn German, a different picture emerges for Daniela, whose non-native language community is less familiar with the English language. This has resulted in Daniela taking Czech lessons from the very beginnings of her move to Prague:

(8) I started with individual lessons from the beginning on when I first moved here, and now I'm doing a course twice a week which actually helps me a lot. So now we talk a lot more Czech to each other and I pick up a lot more of the language when we speak to each other.

She states that while she and Vratislav initially only used English, her motivation in acquiring the community language has resulted in them increasingly including Czech into their everyday conversations as a couple. Vratislav, on the other hand, has not yet started taking a language class but is planning to do so soon:

(9) Vratislav: No we don't speak German because I'm too lazy (laughs).
Daniela: But he is starting a course really soon! It's just because we live in Prague I need to use Czech a lot more than he needs to speak German.
Vratislav: Yes, that's definitely one of the major reasons why also now speak a lot more Czech with each other.
Daniela: Yes, that's why I have a much bigger motivation to learn Czech and I focus more on it so there is not space for German unfortunately.

Like Stefan, Vratislav did not have to leave his country for his relationship and was able to continue with his life previous to his intercultural relationship. However, unlike Stefan, who openly admitted to his lack of patriotism, Vratislav showed the stability that is usually reported in ELF couples, referring to his being able to maintain his language practices as they were prior to the relationship to the assurance of his cultural identity:

(10) I still speak my native language and I still speak the same way I did before, using English at work. So I don't think my identity has really changed. I am really Czech! (laughs)

Daniela further emphasizes the importance of the language community to her as their ELF, English, appears to be less widely-spoken within their language

community when compared to the Austrian community described above. She also explicitly states her partner's family to be her main motivation behind her process of acquiring Czech:

(11) My main motivation is not even the people here but mostly his family, because they don't speak any German or English and I just want to talk to them. With my family and German it's not that much of a problem but it's just annoying when he always has to translate everything.

Concluding Remarks

Piller (2002) points to the crucial importance of the couple's private language, which she describes as the central element of the relationship, "a glue that binds it together" (p. 222). Unlike in some previous research findings (see, e.g., Piller, 2001, 2002), however, our couples reported that they did not necessarily stick exclusively to this private language in each other's presence, deploying another language when circumstances demanded it.

The "glue" in the case of Kevin's relationship is German. Kevin went to Austria with a view to acquiring German, and his partner had little English. Accordingly, it was natural and necessary for German to be their language of intimacy, and as a result it became the language with which Kevin increasingly identified and which developed into the (for many years) language of his everyday life. The fact that English has entered more into the picture now has to do with the arrival of children and also developments in his professional life.

In the case of Caitlyn and Stefan the "glue" is English, Caitlyn's L1 and a language in which Stefan is very proficient; this is the language in which their relationship first began (in an Anglophone context) and in which their communication overwhelmingly continues. It also happens that in Caitlyn's milieu in Austria she can use English for most everyday purposes, which effectively allows the glue of her relationship also to function as the glue of her day-to-day living. She does, however, try to speak German with Stefan's family. Interestingly, in respect of both the above relationships it was the language of the female partner that was adopted as the couple's "language of the heart."

Regarding Daniela and Vratislav, the "glue" in this instance is the native language of neither, but a language they both know well, English, and in which their relationship began. Interestingly, the present trend is for Daniela to incorporate more of Vratislav's L1 (Czech) into her discourse that for Vratislav

to use Daniela's L1 (German). This is no doubt partly because they are now living in Prague and Daniela cannot always get by in English in the context of day-to-day living, although she makes much of her desire to be in contact with his family, who have no English or German.

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David Singleton, Simone E. Pfenninger

Die Gewandtheit in der Zweitsprache als Resultante der kulturellen Identität bei verschiedensprachigen Paaren

Zusammenfassung

Der „Liebesfaktor" spielt immer größere Rolle in den Forschungen zur Erwerbung der Zweitsprache. Ein Beispiel dafür ist Piller (2002), die in ihren Forschungen die Sprache als ein gewisses Bindemittel zwischen verschiedensprachigen Lebenspartnern untersuchte. Marinova-Todd (2003) ist zum Schluss gekommen, dass es eine Wechselbeziehung gibt zwischen dem Gewandtheitsgrad in der Zweitsprache und dem gemeinsamen Leben mit einem Muttersprachler. Muñioz und Singleton (2007) betrachteten ein romantisches Verhältnis zwischen den die Zweitsprache im späten Erwachsenenalter mit Erfolg Lernenden und den Muttersprachlern. Gonçalves (2003) dagegen untersuchte die Hybridität der partnerschaftlichen Beziehung von den von zwei verschiedenen Kulturen abstammenden Personen. Kinsella und Singleton (2014) wiederum behaupten, dass die im späten Erwachsenenalter eine Zweitsprache Lernenden, die in Sprachtests die den Muttersprachlern ähnlichen Ergebnisse erreichten, einen Lebenspartner hatten, der Muttersprachler war. Der neueste Beitrag von Dewaele und Salomidous (2017) ist der „Liebe […] in einer Fremdsprache" gewidmet, was klarmacht, dass sich gerade diese Frage heutzutage im Interessengebiet der Forscher befindet. Der vorliegende Aufsatz führt die Ergebnisse der kürzlich durchgeführten quantitativen Forschung in Form einer Umfrage an. An der Umfrage nahmen fünf Personen teil, welche in festen zwischenkulturellen und zwischensprachlichen Beziehungen waren. Die erreichten Daten weisen darauf hin, dass der Prozess des Zweitspracherwerbs mit seinem affektiven Kontext eng verbunden ist. Aus den Daten folgt darüber hinaus, dass der Prozess der Identitätsentwicklung durch die Kommunikationssprache der Lebenspartner bedingt ist. Die Folgen des Prozesses, wie die Forscher behaupten, können für den diese Sprache als Zweitsprache sprechenden Partner sowohl hinsichtlich der Sprachangehörigkeit als auch der Kulturangehörigkeit dramatisch sein.

Schlüsselwörter: Zweitspracherwerb, Spracherwerbung, Identität, Liebe, Motivation

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Immersion Learning Activities:
Developing Communicative Tasks in the Community

Abstract

This paper examines some out-of-class Portuguese language teaching activities for foreign students learning Portuguese at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Lisbon and their results in the learners' output. Even in contexts of immersion, students tend to focus only on class activities and not on community activities that involve face-to-face contact with native speakers. To change this situation, we have created a new subject, built on task-based language teaching, called Immersion Activities for the Portuguese Foreign Language Annual Course. We present the preliminary results of a study carried out with eighty students and twelve teachers, whose objective is to verify up to what extent this subject translates into a more effective learning of the language and if students' perceptions, at the end of the semester, regarding the learning outcomes, coincide or not with those of the teachers. From the results, it is possible to observe that the students' and teachers' opinions converge in the same sense: immersion activities provide a better development of students' communicative competence in Portuguese.

Keywords: immersion learning environment, out-of-class activities, task-based language teaching, Portuguese Foreign Language

Introduction

The goal of language teaching was always to prepare students for out-of-class uses of language, but the focus in language teaching is usually on classroom-based language learning. However, recent studies emphasize the importance of language learning outside the classroom, in different contexts, such as at home and in the community (e.g., Guo, 2011; Hyland, 2004; Pearson, 2004; Richards, 2015). It is important to consider the context in which the

language is used (Willis & Willis, 2007), and that students should be exposed to the characteristics of spontaneous speech since they have to be prepared for the real world: people who speak quickly, use abbreviations, vague language, that is, aspects that are often not addressed to in classroom situations.

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) provides language learning in real contexts of communication (Nunan, 2004). Thus, students understand that language varies according to the social context, purposes, and circumstances in which it is used. This approach proposes the use of tasks as the main component of language teaching as they create better situations to activate students' acquisition processes to promote the learning of an L2. Richards and Rogers (2001, p. 228) also suggest this since "tasks are believed to foster processes of negotiation, modification, rephrasing, and experimentation that are at the heart of second language learning."

On the one hand, the TBLT seeks to provide students with language learning from real contexts; the tasks have a clear pedagogical relationship with the communicative needs of the real world (Long & Crookes, 1992). Therefore, it is important to consider the social context in which the language is used and to make students aware of this social dimension. At the same time, it is also important to raise students' awareness of how language is used in these contexts. On the other hand, the TBLT leads students to work together to complete a task and gives them the opportunity to interact. It is thought that such interaction facilitates language acquisition as students have to strive to talk clearly and to make themselves understood (Larsen-Freeman, 1986).

Based on these assumptions, and to promote foreign students' contact with native speakers, we have created a subject called Immersion Activities for the Portuguese Foreign Language Annual Course. The tasks that students perform in this new subject take into account the social environment in which the language is used as they are placed in direct contact with native speakers, in the community. Learning is done through action. It is suggested that students acquire a communicative competence, which integrates different competences as language is conceived in terms of performance and appropriate behaviors, in the context of an interaction between individuals with a social purpose.

In this sense, we present the partial results of a study carried out with four A1 and four A2 level classes, in a total of eighty students and twelve teachers, in which a TBLT approach was adopted and out-of-class activities were performed as a complement to the usual classroom activities. At the end of the semester, we consider fundamental to verify in what way the students' beliefs coincide with those of the teachers, regarding the learning outcomes. Therefore, students and teachers answered a questionnaire, whose results allowed us to perceive that their opinions are similar: this subject helps students to develop communicative competence in Portuguese.

Immersion Learning Activities (Out-of-class Learning)

We can define the immersion teaching mode as the delivery of a second language curriculum in an immersed foreign language learning environment to learners who have different mother tongues. In this mode, learners are completely immersed in the target language environment and they are stimulated to use it exclusively during the learning process and the social time. In this context of immersion, learners contact with the language in two ways: an informal one (they learn some structures and lexicon without formal teaching, only from the exposure to the language), and another more formal in-classroom situation way (learners are focused on the functioning of the target language, such as on syntax rules, for instance).

Using Portuguese for social interaction in immersion learning activities provides many opportunities for learners to maintain and extend their proficiency in Portuguese. The objectives of these out-of-class activities, guided by a teacher, may be acquiring specific knowledge, developing language skills or consolidating and systematizing previous learned knowledge in the classroom. Learners need to develop the ability to acquire information that is available in the two contexts: in the out- and in-classroom ones (Field, 2007). Therefore, to enhance students learning, teachers should motivate them to devote more of their time outside the classroom to language learning purposeful activities.

The immersion learning activities give students the possibility to work with the target language in different contexts of use, in the community, interacting with native speakers to solve different tasks. There is evidence that exposure to authentic language and opportunities to use the target language in real situations of communication are fundamental to language learning that forms part of an immersion language learning experience (in-country where the language is spoken). As Hyland (2004, p. 180) says, "language learning is not limited to the classroom, but can take place at any time and in any place, including the home and the community."

Out-of-class learning has been defined as any kind of learning that takes place outside the classroom and involves self-instruction (where learners deliberately plan to improve the target language and search for resources to help them do this), naturalistic learning (where students learn mainly unintentionally through communication and interaction with the target language group) or self-directed naturalistic learning (where learners create or seek out a language learning situation, but may not focus directly on learning the language while they are in that situation) (Benson, 2001, p. 62).

Cortina-Pérez and Solano-Tenorio (2013, p. 168) distinguish two main modalities of out-of-class language learning: oriented (where the teacher provides the learners with opportunities to improve their communicative skills out of the

classroom) and autonomous (where the learner himself decides which activities to be involved with to improve his communicative skills in the target language).

For this study, we have considered a definition that includes all the activities students perform out of the classroom with the goal of improving their language skills, including those which are prepared with the teacher and guided by him. Every functional out-of-class activity and exposure to the target language is decisive for developing fluency in language skills (Bialystok, 1981).

We are convinced that guided out-of-class activities help learners to:
– develop general linguistic skills;
– develop specifically speaking and writing skills;
– improve their cultural competence;
– challenge learners to interact more with the native speakers in their daily life.

Previous Research on Out-of-class Language Learning

Until 2000, only a few studies of out-of-class learning activities have been carried out. Bialystok (1978) was one of the first researchers to underline the importance of out-of-class strategies in language learning. She concluded that the exposure of the learners to the target language in out-of-class communicative situations helped them develop all their language skills. Pickard (1996) interviewed a group of German students learning English in Germany about the out-of-class learning strategies that they used. He found that the students were most frequently involved in leisure activities connected to receptive skills, like watching TV, reading newspapers, etc., mainly because they were interested in them and they were easier to access than activities involving productive skills. Hyland (2004) conducted a study with students in Hong Kong, analyzing their out-of-class English language learning activities. She found out that many students devoted considerable time studying and practicing English outside the classroom, but were more involved in receptive activities than productive ones. More recently, Cortina-Pérez and Solano-Tenorio (2013) carried out a study with a group of native-Spanish students from Colombia to observe the effect of out-of-class language learning in communicative competence in English within a special English Foreign Language program. It showed that the participants in the program improved their communicative competence, mainly fluency.

Other studies have been undertaken with second language learners studying in the target language environment, such as the ones conducted by Suh, Wasanasomsithi, Short, and Majid (1999) and Brooks (1992), which investigated their out-of-class learning strategies, and identified watching television, going to the cinema, listening to music and inter-acting with native speakers as their major out-of-class activities. In the same learning context, Schmidt and Frota (1986) carried out a journal of Schmidt's learning of Portuguese which showed

how he used the social environment to practice what he had learnt in class. Another example is the diary study kept by Campbell (1996), where she registered her attempts to learn Spanish and made the point that socializing with the teachers was crucial in her language development.

Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT)

Students learn in different ways: by watching and listening; by reflecting and acting; by reasoning logically and intuitively; by learning by heart and by visualizing. As a result, teaching methodologies also vary.

The TBLT has been developed through a better understanding of how languages are learned. This is an approach based on a series of ideas coming from the philosophy of education, theories of second or foreign language acquisition, empirical studies on effective educational strategies, and requirements from language learning process in a contemporary society.

This TBLT engages students in learning the language they use to perform tasks, to get information, to reflect and give their opinion. It proposes the use of tasks as the main component of language courses, because they present better conditions for activating acquisition processes and promoting language learning. Another reason is that the task "fournit un contexte, une raison 'sociale' pour acquérir une langue" (van Thienen, 2009, p. 60).

Thus, a task can be characterized as a learning activity (or set of activities), whose goal is that students express meanings in a given situational context, which implies that they must learn, manipulate, produce or interact with the target language. It is the task that advances the student's system by activating the acquisition processes (Long & Crookes, 1993).

There are several types of tasks, but the purpose of each one of them is to solve a communicative situation through a spontaneous exchange of meanings, which has a relation with real life and the students' experience, arousing their interest and their involvement in learning (Willis, 1996; Bygate, Skehan, & Swain, 2001; Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004). The Council of Europe (2001, p. 218), in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, specifies this contextualization of tasks, this real communication situation that works as a motivating factor:

Communicative pedagogic tasks (as opposed to exercises focusing specifically on decontextualised practice of forms) aim to actively involve learners in meaningful communication, are relevant (here and now in the formal learning context), are challenging but feasible (with task manipulation where appropriate), and have identifiable (and possibly less immediately evident) outcomes. Such tasks may involve 'metacommunicative'

(sub)tasks, i.e. communication around task implementation and the language
used in carrying out the task.

In performing a task, students focus on meaning; its communication is mo-
tivated by a purpose, which must approximate the real use of the language
(Pinto, 2011). "By engaging in meaningful activities, such as problem-solving,
discussions, or narratives, the learner's interlanguage system is stretched and
encouraged to develop" (Foster, 1999, p. 69). During the task, students engage
in a communicative activity that closely reflects the language used outside
the classroom or, as in the case of this study, that uses the language in real
contexts of communication. In this sense, the task implies an activity in which
the student is involved in order to be able to fulfill a non-linguistic objective
but for which he or she needs linguistic resources.

Therefore, the TBLT offers some alternatives for teachers. According to
Skehan (1994), there are three main learning objectives for this approach: flu-
ency (accuracy and correction in target language production), complexity (range
of available and reproduced structures) and fluidity (capacity of production).
Teachers must therefore use tasks that enable students to enrich their interlan-
guage in a natural and balanced way.

However, since the eighties, when the TBLT attracted increasing attention
from researchers and teacher educators, this approach has been subjected to
criticism by some authors, defenders of the structural syllabus and traditional
approaches, such as Bruton (2002a, 2002b), Seedhouse (1999, 2005), Sheen
(1994), Swan (2005), and Widdowson (2003).

The critics argue against the definition of task considering that "the criteria
that are proposed as defining features of tasks are […] so loosely formulated
[…] that they do not distinguish tasks from other more traditional classroom
activities" (Widdowson, 2003, p. 126) or that it is impossible to predict the "ac-
tivity" that results from the performance of a "task" and, therefore, tasks cannot
serve as units for planning a language course (Seedhouse, 2005). However, the
criteria defined by Ellis (2009, p. 223) for a language-teaching activity to be
a "task" are very clear and contradict the position of Widdowson:

1. The primary focus should be on "meaning" (by which is meant that learn-
   ers should be mainly concerned with processing the semantic and pragmatic
   meaning of utterances).
2. There should be some kind of "gap" (i.e., a need to convey information, to
   express an opinion or to infer meaning).
3. Learners should largely have to rely on their own resources (linguistic and
   non-linguistic) in order to complete the activity.
4. There is a clearly defined outcome other than the use of language (i.e., the
   language serves as the means for achieving the outcome, not as an end in
   its own right).

So, the main goal of a task is to achieve a communicative outcome, but the goal of an exercise is to display correct use of a target feature (Ellis, 2014). In reply to the critic of Seedhouse, Ellis (2014, p. 107) argues that "[i]f the aim is to create contexts for natural language and incidental acquisition, then, arguably, prediction is not necessary." The prediction only matters if the teacher's intension is to use tasks to teach a structural syllabus.

Widdowson also criticizes the idea of the authenticity of the tasks, arguing that the TBLT overemphasizes authentic language use, because "the classroom contexts within which language has usually to be learnt are totally different from those within which the language is used" (Widdowson, 2003, p. 112). However, we agree with Long (2016, p. 6), when he says that "work on approximations to real world tasks can be very realistic in genuine task-based LT classrooms or other instructional environments." In fact, tasks have a clear pedagogical relationship with the communicative needs of the real world.

Another criticism against the TLBT is about the grammar teaching. Sheen (2003) and Swan (2005) argued that in task-based language teaching there is "no grammar syllabus." In fact, what happens is just the opposite. As Ellis (2014, p. 109) claimed, "[a]ttention to grammar can be achieved in all the phases of task-based lesson." In this approach, "linguistic items are dealt with, and dealt with in a more scientifically defensible manner than by the traditional synthetic syllabus" (Long, 2016, p. 17). One of the methodological principles of the TBLT is the focus on form, in which, according to Long (1991), communication remains the central goal of the instruction and the main difference is the attempt to solve problems that arise in the interaction, focusing the attention briefly on linguistic aspects. Focusing on form allows students to make a pause in the focus on the meaning to pay attention to certain grammatical forms that usually pose a problem for them. Focus on form (that includes notions such as consciousness-raising, form-focused instruction, or form-focused intervention) can also incorporate modified conversational interactions to make the message understandable by drawing students' attention to the relationships of form, meaning and function of the L2 (Pica, 2002).

In sum, despite all the criticism against the TBLT, this approach does worry about the development of the students' communicative competence and about the focus on linguistic competence contextualized in the communicative purposes of the structure in question, which is suggested by the focus on form. The TBLT enables students to share information in the target language with other colleagues, to interact by recreating real situations. Thus, the association of this approach with out-of-class activities can promote an enhancement of students' language skills.

The Study

Methodology

The present study intends to investigate the effect of the out-of-class activities, developed in the context of the curriculum subject Immersion Activities, on the students' language learning in a Portuguese language environment. The study considered the following research questions:

(1) What perceptions did students and teachers have about using and practicing Portuguese outside the classroom, within the community, with native speakers?
(2) Did these perceptions affect the performing of the out-of-class activities?
(3) What is the effect of participating in out-of-class learning activities on Portuguese learners' communicative competence?
(4) In what sense can the Immersion Activities favor the teaching and learning in the articulation between language and culture?

During the semester, students participated in out-of-class activities (32 hours/semester—2 hours per week), supervised and guided by a teacher. In this curriculum subject students performed activities such as: visiting traditional markets (interaction with sellers), visiting museums (interaction with guides; contact with different aspects of Portuguese culture), in town peddy-papers with specific goals, going to the shopping center (interaction with sellers in the different sectors of trade—clothing, bookstores, etc.), interacting with other students at the university (doing surveys about students' routines, for instance), and going to a tourist office (asking for places, directions, public transports, etc.). The main goal of each activity was always to develop receptive and productive language skills as well as acquire cultural knowledge—contents they had previously learnt in class. Every activity has a tab with all the information about it, as in the example shown in Figure 1.

In order for a communicative task to succeed, it is necessary to select, balance, activate, and coordinate the appropriate components of all skills needed for planning, execution, control/evaluation and remediation of the task in order to successfully carry out the communicative purposes (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 159). In this sense, every activity is previously prepared in the classroom. Teachers here have a crucial role, too. The way they act is determinant for students' motivation, interest, and implication in the activity. Therefore, teachers should maximize learning opportunities and provide the maximum opportunities for students' participation, as well as foster cooperation among them (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Brown, 2000). However, there are still other factors to take into account, such as language learning directed to its uses in social

context, control of learning, interaction, promotion of communicative activities, student autonomy, the integration of new skills and knowledge (Wajnryb, 1992), and well-defined objectives (Scrivener, 2005) of the activity being prepared.

The Portuguese tile	
Place and date	National Tile Museum 15th December 2016
Goals	Contacting with some aspects of Portuguese culture: architecture and religious decoration; tradition and art of tiling. Using past tenses to describe (Pretérito Imperfeito do Indicativo) and to report specific events already finished (Pretérito Perfeito Simples do Indicativo).
Task	Collecting information with the guide during the visit to the museum. Participation in a tile workshop after the visit. Oral presentation in the classroom of the tile produced in the workshop.
Evaluation	Oral presentation of the tile produced in the workshop. Completion of a questionnaire with the information collected during the visit.

Figure 1. Example of a tab of an out-of-class activity.

At the end of the semester, we applied a survey to all students ($N = 80$) who participated in the study (A1 and A2 levels) and their teachers ($N = 12$). A convenience sampling was adopted in this study. The survey consisted of 20 sentences to be classified in a Likert scale and it investigated several different domains including information on the students' perceptions regarding the learning outcomes, attitude during the tasks (collaboration, interaction, etc.), use of languages (mother tongue, Portuguese, other foreign languages), and perceptions regarding task-based learning in out-of-class activities.

This methodology allowed us to obtain data from students' performance during these out-of-class activities, to compare them with teachers' perceptions, and, consequently, to do a reflection on the effectiveness of these activities.

Findings and Discussion

Students' and teachers' perceptions regarding the learning outcomes. First, we aim to find out the students' and teachers' perceptions about the effectiveness of using out-of-class activities, involving interaction and negotiation of meaning with native speakers, in the improvement of their communicative competence.
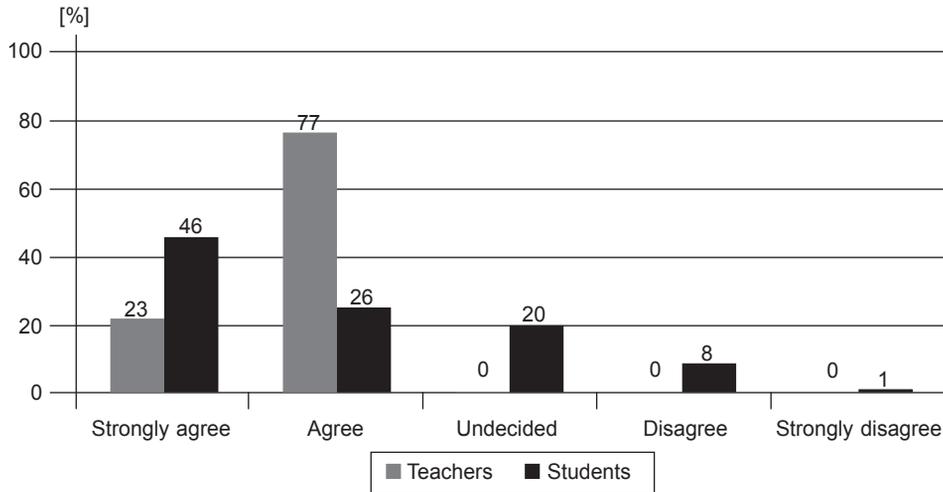
Figure 2. Improvement of communicative competence in interaction with native speakers.

As we can see in Figure 2, students and teachers agree and strongly agree that the out-of-class activities and the consequent direct contact with native speakers globally help students improve their communicative competence. This is because students interact by seeking mutual understanding, making questions of clarification or confirmation of what the native speaker said, or even verifying their own understanding. Nevertheless, teachers are more confident in this improvement than students are, since 20% are undecided and 8% disagree. We think that this difference in results lies in the fact that students are not used to these more naturalistic ways of learning, which involves face-to-face contacts (see Wu Man-fat, 2012), and, therefore, they see the work developed in the classroom as more effective for language learning.

However, during the out-of-class activities, students, contact with different situations of communication developed their ability to learn the Portuguese language in these varied contexts. In this point, we fully agree with Cortina-Pérez and Solano-Tenorio (2013), considering that students' communicative competence would develop more deeply if they had more opportunities for interaction in a variety of out-of-classroom contexts, thus having more opportunities for natural exposure to the target language (Ellis, 1994).
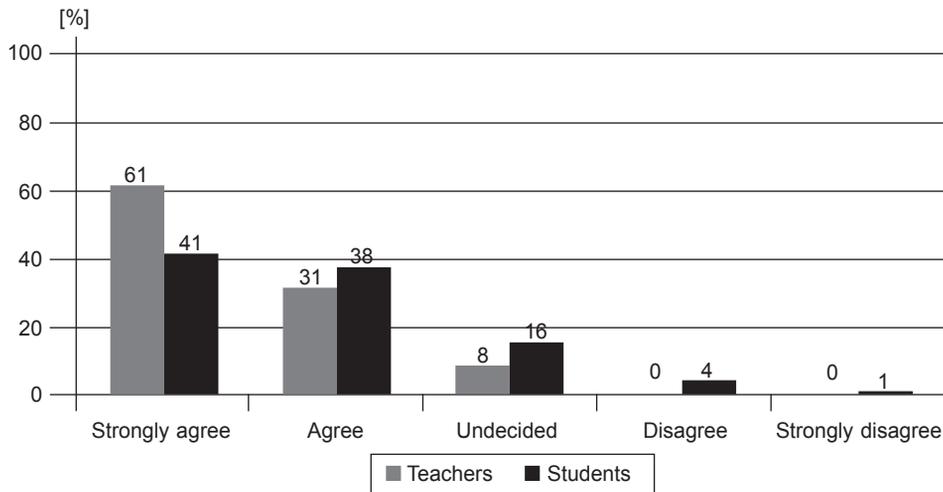
Figure 3. Students develop the ability to effectively learn the uses of language in different situations of communication.

Figure 3 shows us that students' and teachers' perceptions are once more in the same line, but, again, teachers are more aware of students' abilities to learn the language in specific contexts of communication. These interaction activities expose students to different input provided by native speakers and their colleagues, as well as foster output production during the interactive act. We agree therefore with Swain (2000) when she states that input and output together play a significant role in the L2 acquisition process. We verified that among the roles provided by the interaction, one is used to give students the input while the other fosters the use and practice of the L2 through the production of output. That is why students develop their ability to effectively learn the uses of language in different situations of communication for the L2 is introduced in a holistic way with the purpose of communicating meaning constantly. Studies show us (see Luan & Guo, 2011) that through the immersion learning context, the students' language ability, especially their ability to use the language, can be greatly improved.

Linked to the previous question, we wanted to know how students and teachers perceive the ability of the formers to use the language in these different contexts, applying all the linguistic knowledge learnt in-class.
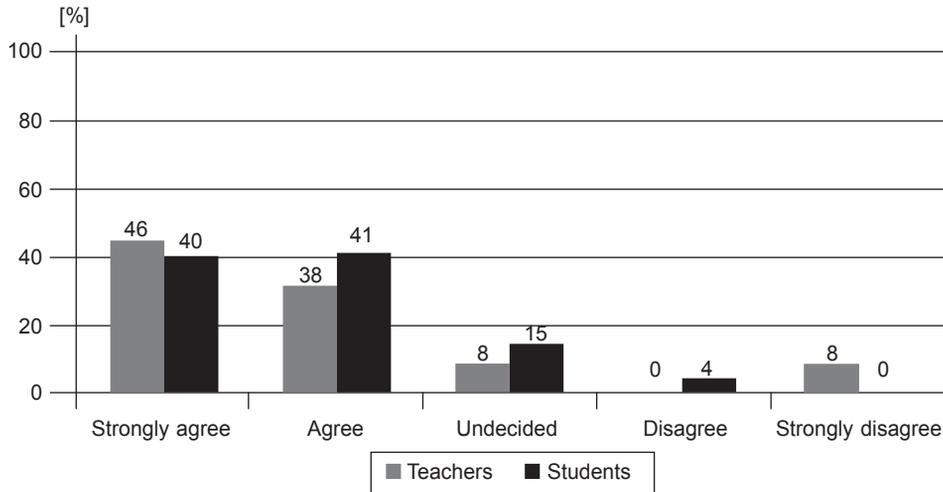
Figure 4. Students are able to apply the knowledge acquired in the classroom

In this case, there is proximity in the answers given by students and teachers, as we can see in Figure 4. Most of them consider that, during the out-of-class activities, students use the specific structures and lexicon for each situation that they acquired in the classroom. These results show us that the guided out-of-class activities are more effective in the language learning than the self-instruction outside the classroom, as shown by Benson's study (2001), where learners report a sense of discontinuity between what is learning within the classroom and the experience of expanding it outside. In fact, "what they are doing in these activities is activating and applying what they know already" (Field, 2007, p. 34).

In the same sense, data show that teachers and students believe that these activities help students to improve their levels of correction and fluency. The percentage of answers is very similar to those of the previous question (see Figure 5), which confirm that the participants in the study are aware of the positive learning outcomes that they achieve by participating in the out-of-class activities. This leads us precisely to the study presented by Knight (2007), in which the author demonstrates a relationship between using the language out-of-class and learner proficiency in the L2, which confirms the influence of out-of-class activities in the student's language proficiency.
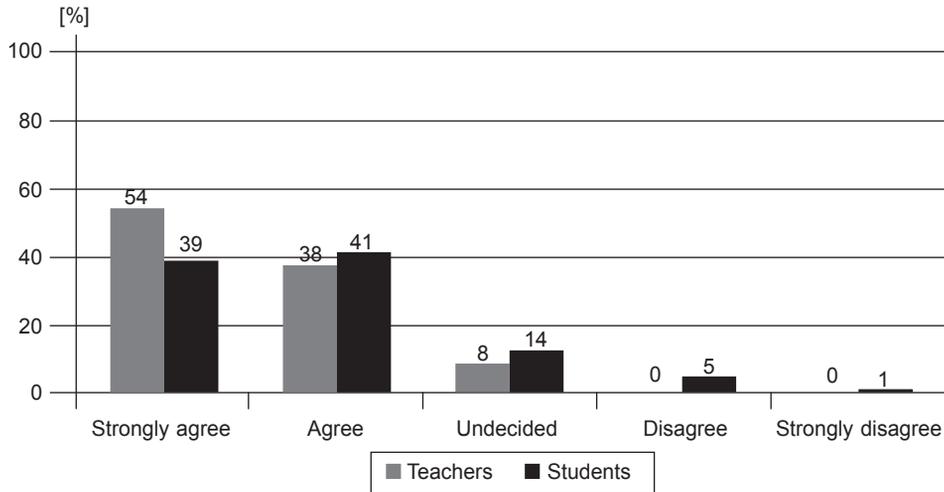
Figure 5. Students visibly improve their levels of correction and fluency.

Tasks that students perform consider the social environment in which the language is used and its culture as they are placed in direct contact with native speakers and are guided in the discovery of Portuguese culture. Learning is done through action, through the use of language in real contexts of communicative interaction and through the exploration of diverse cultural aspects.
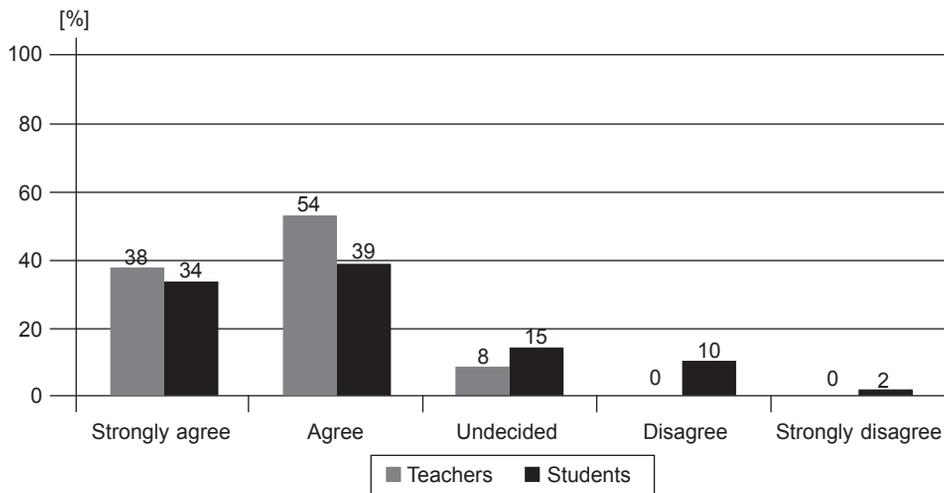
Figure 6. Students develop their sociocultural knowledge of Portuguese society.

The data show that, in this particular aspect, the majority of teachers and students "strongly agree" and "agree" that the out-of-class activities allow students to develop their sociocultural knowledge, too (see Figure 6). We consider that these activities lead students to understand that the language is used with a social purpose, in which language and culture are inseparable. Therefore, we think it is essential to focus on alternative methodologies to traditional teaching that take into account the social and cultural context in which the language is spoken. Many studies carried out cover the teaching of language-culture and intercultural issues as an important perspective in the teaching of foreign languages (Kramsch, 1993, 1998; Moran, 2001; McConachy, 2017).

One of the goals of the activities is to get the students to know more about the world they come from and the world and the culture of the target language, developing their intercultural awareness. It is not only a matter of guaranteeing students the ability to master the language, but rather to help them form their linguistic and cultural identity, based on the principle of otherness; to develop their capacities through these diverse experiences, using other language and knowing another culture. As culture is a complex concept, several approaches are being used to seek to better integrate this topic in the classes of Portuguese as a foreign language, trying to value all the cultures present in class and compare them with the Portuguese. The students' and teachers' perceptions in this matter are pretty much the same as is the percentage obtained in the two groups (see Figure 7). So, we can deduce that these activities also promote the development of students' intercultural awareness.
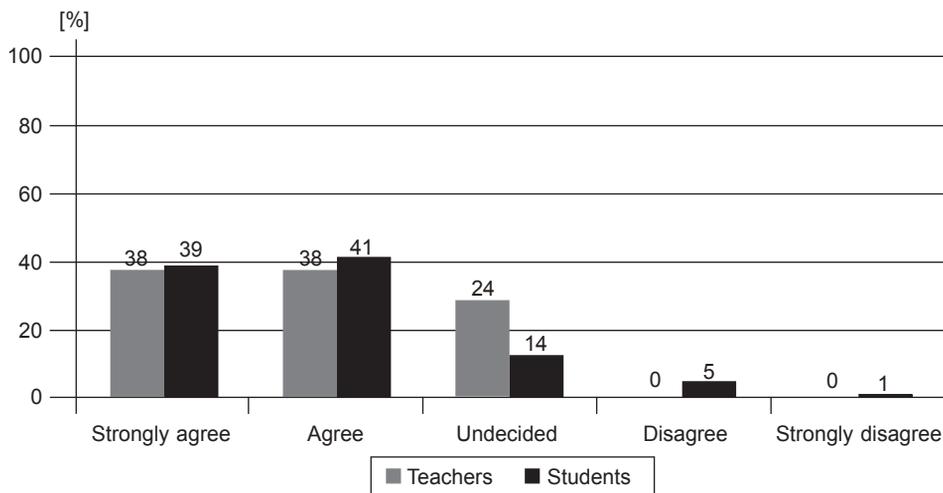
Figure 7. Students develop their intercultural awareness.

Currently, language teaching should generally enable students to intervene in both linguistic and intercultural terms so that they become social agents in continuous interaction with their colleagues and all the community.

Students' and teachers' perceptions regarding students' attitudes during the tasks. The perceptions change when participants are asked about the willingness and spontaneity to communicate in Portuguese. Again, teachers think students become more spontaneous and willing since the majority strongly agree (46%) and agree (46%). However, students are more divided in the answers, as we can see in Figure 8. As for most of the students, this kind of activities is new, so they do not feel so comfortable speaking in a public context with native speakers. This can be due to individual and social factors (Hyland, 2004) as well to the exposure to different methodologies of teaching and learning. So, teachers in this case have a crucial role in helping them, they "should further foster the positive beliefs such as a high level of motivation and implementation of popular activities" (Wu Man-fat, 2012, p. 47). Furthermore, immersing students in the target language helps them use it more independently and more spontaneously.
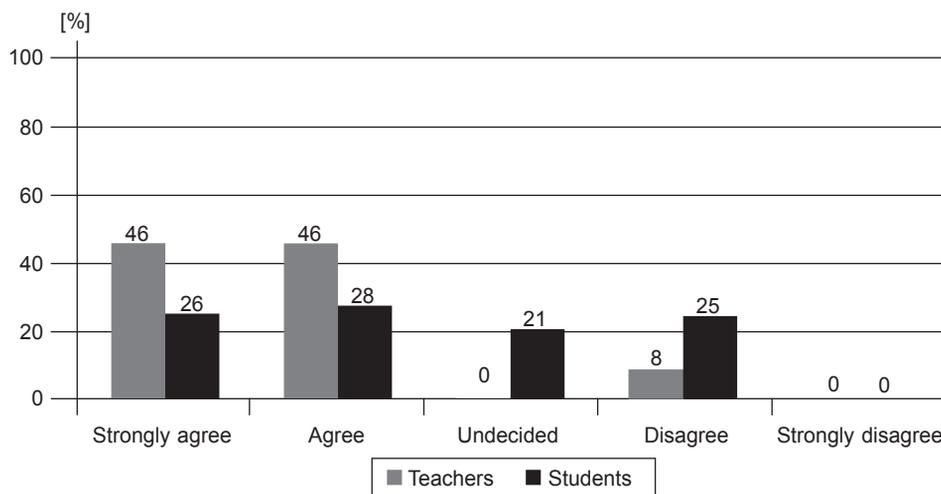
Figure 8. Students acquire a greater willingness and spontaneity to communicate in Portuguese.

Related to this topic, but with different results, is the question about the interaction with native speakers while doing the tasks. These activities promote the interaction of students with native speakers, giving them the opportunity to learn Portuguese through a social use of the language, since this approach provides students with the necessary skills to perform tasks in a real context

of communication. Even students who do not feel comfortable to interact with strangers in public seem to strive for it (see Figure 9).
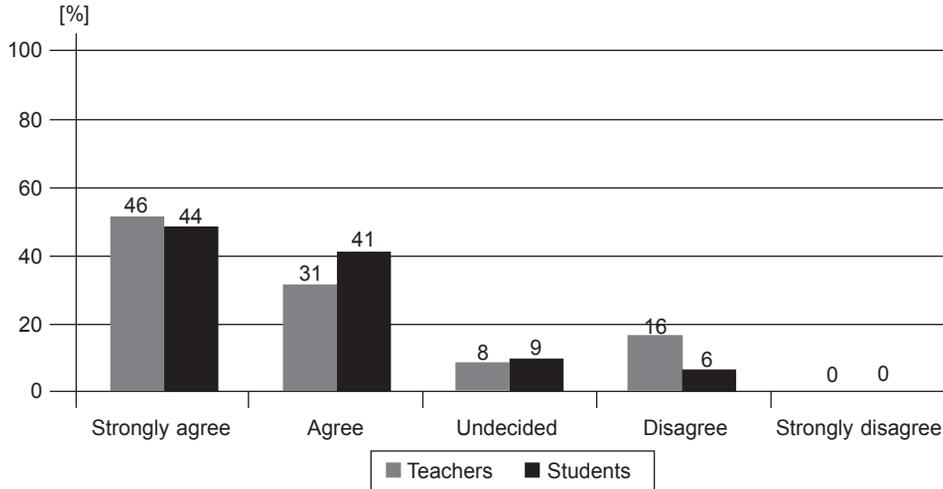
Figure 9. Students strive to interact with native speakers while doing the tasks.

In this case, the majority of students and teachers consider that students do make an effort to interact with native speakers during the accomplishment of the tasks. As the activities are followed by teachers, students feel more guided by them during the tasks and the interaction is mainly controlled. It is in spontaneous situations of communication that they reveal greater difficulties. Some previous studies reveal that students prefer receptive activities than productive ones (Yap, 1998; Littlewood & Liu, 1996). However, in these particular out-of-class activities, as they have to interact with native speakers to accomplish the tasks, they strive for it, even if they need the teacher support.

With this type of activity, we also want to help students feel more comfortable when they communicate in Portuguese with native speakers, which is not always evident, and to improve their ability to communicate effectively, in or out of the classroom.

Students' and teachers' perceptions regarding the use of languages. As there are many students of the same country attending the language courses, we consider it important to understand up to what extent they use languages other than Portuguese, including their mother tongue, in the performing of tasks, as this may affect the desired development of their competence in Portuguese.
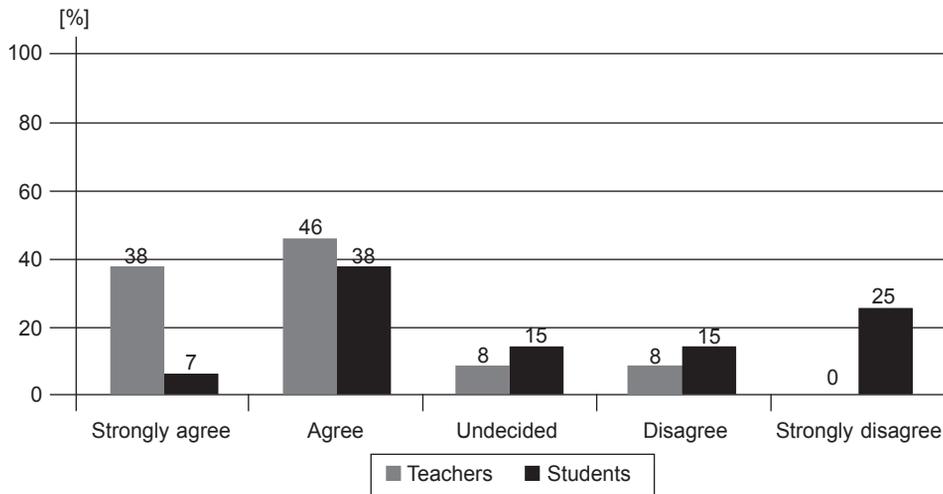
Figure 10. Students often use their mother tongue to interact with colleagues from the same country.
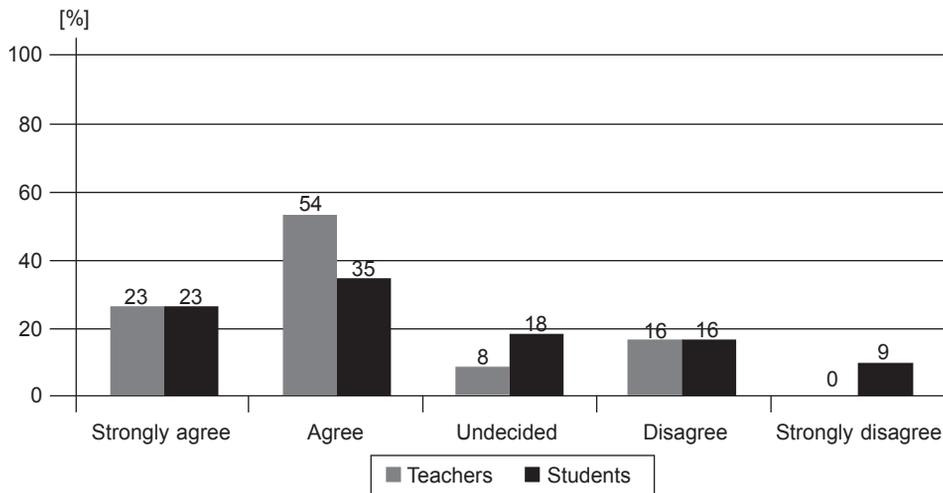
Figure 11. Students often use other foreign languages (e.g., English) to communicate with their colleagues.

The results show us that students and teachers have different perceptions regarding the use of other languages during the tasks (see Figures 10 and 11). Teachers consider that students often use their mother tongue to interact with colleagues from the same country or with the same mother tongue and also use another foreign language to talk with other colleagues. One of the reasons

could be related to the origin of the majority of our students: 60% are Chinese. Their interaction in the mother tongue is a reality. However, students in their responses seem not to agree with the teachers' position—only 7% strongly agree and 38% agree. And for the first time, there is a high percentage of students that strongly disagree with the question. Students do not have the perception that they often use their mother tongue, or they hardly assume it, as they know that the language they should be using during the activities is Portuguese. Another possibility is advanced by Hyland (2004). She suggests that it would be embarrassing for Chinese students to talk to each other in other language than Chinese.

We have similar results with the use of other foreign languages; however, in this case, students are more aware of using it than the mother tongue. Probably, they see the other foreign language, mainly English, as a language they often use to communicate with teachers and colleagues when there are gaps in Portuguese that need to be filled. In these situations, English establishes bridges with Portuguese.
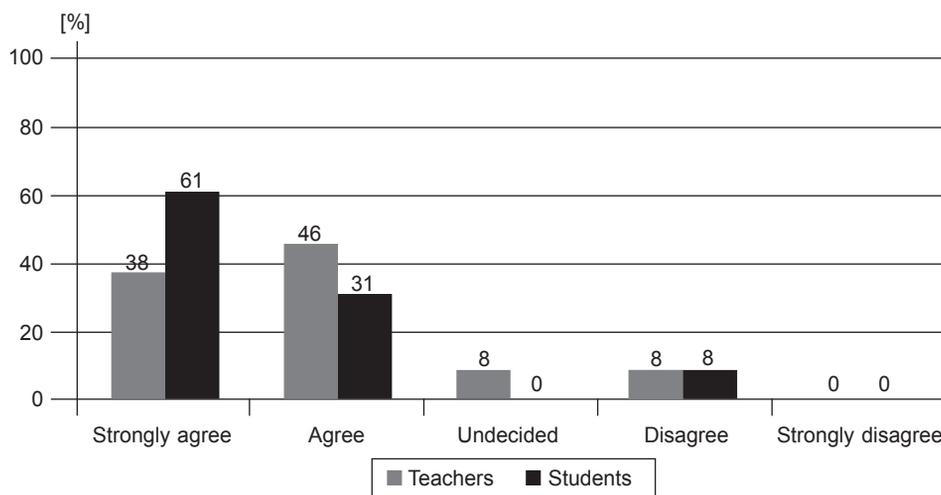
Figure 12. Students speak mainly in Portuguese with their colleagues during the tasks.

Comparing the use of other languages and of Portuguese during the tasks, data confirm the students' perceptions regarding the use of the latter as the main language during the tasks (see Figure 12). There is a significant difference between teachers and students if we see the first category, "strongly agree," that registers a gap of 23% between the two groups. Even the majority of teachers who "strongly agree" and "agree" in this question are not as peremptory in their evaluation as students are. We can infer from the data that, according to

both groups, Portuguese is in fact the main language that students use with their colleagues during the tasks, not excluding, however, other languages that can help support the communication between them.

Students' and teachers' perceptions regarding task-based learning in out-of-class activities. Group tasks involve a constant share of ideas and knowledge to be satisfactorily completed. That is why one of the questions of the survey was about the students' collaboration during the tasks. We wanted to know if the students collaborated with the other members of the group in the performing of the tasks, that is, if in addition to the sharing of ideas and knowledge they had effectively collaborated in the resolution of the different stages that led to the accomplishment of the objectives of each task.

Figure 13 allows us to verify that students collaborated with their colleagues during the activities, as they and their teachers mostly "strongly agree" and "agree" in this question. As we can observe from the data, this kind of learning was very enjoyable to the students, since it enabled them to interact with their colleagues in order to collaborate in different learning situations, in the construction of their knowledge. Students, as a team, working in a collaborative system, will improve their communicative competence and will be able to reproduce this knowledge later in other real situations of communication (Long, 2016).
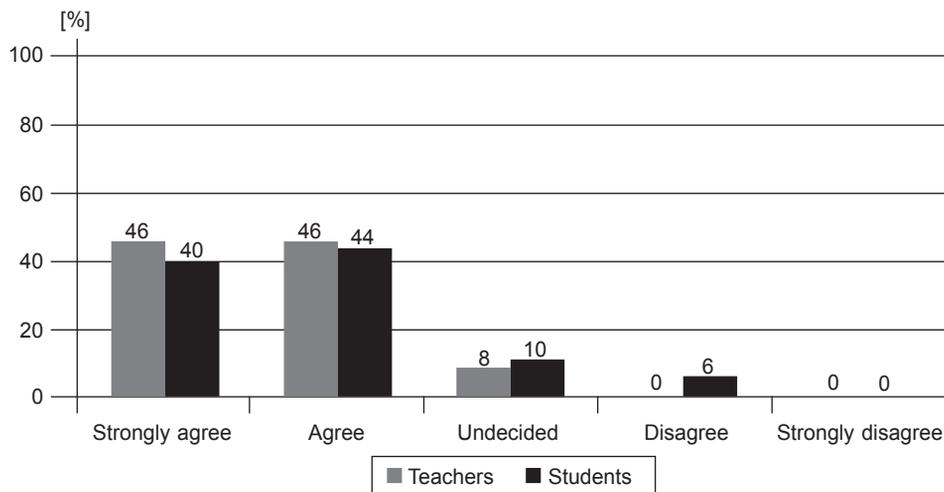
Figure 13. Students collaborate effectively in workgroup.

One of the characteristics of this type of tasks is to involve students more actively in their accomplishment. Therefore, we want to see if they actually

had a dynamic participation and felt motivated during their performances. Analyzing Figure 14, we can observe that teachers and students have different perceptions. Teachers are more convinced of the dynamism and motivations of their students, as all of them respond "strongly agree" (23%) and "agree" (77%).
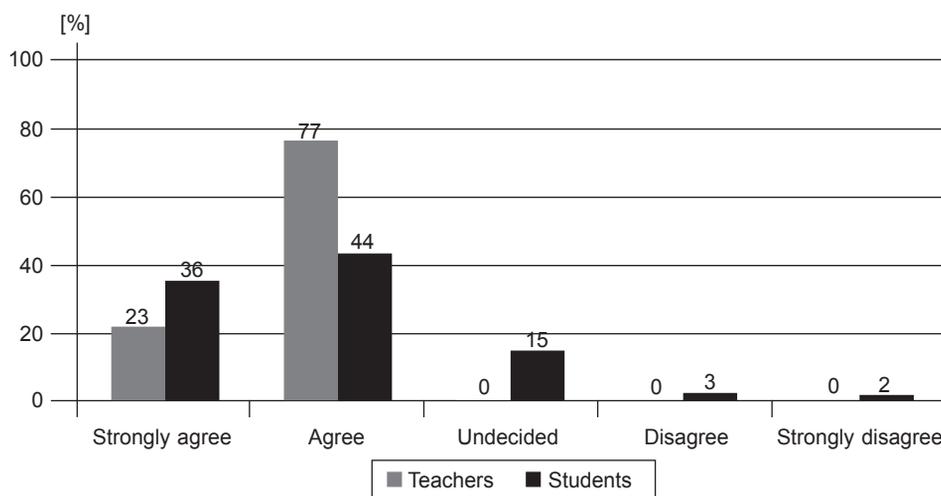
Figure 14. Students are motivated and dynamic in the accomplishment of the tasks.

Motivation is intrinsic to the student, but sometimes it must be triggered by the teacher, through interesting, stimulating strategies and, above all, it has to be compatible with the students' culture. Factors such as inhibition, self-esteem, accepting risks, tolerance of differences, are some of the characteristics that teachers must consider in order to help students overcome problems that are an impediment to their language learning in a different context. However, most students (36% responded "strongly agree" and 44%—"agree") felt motivated and dynamic in the accomplishment of the tasks. The diversity of the tasks that the students had to perform was also a motivating element, because it broke some of the monotony and repetition of the activities to which they were exposed in the classroom. Any student needs to be motivated to learn, because monotony eventually leads to dissatisfaction, and so change and diversity are necessary. Effectively, task-based language learning allows students to become more motivated, more active, and more responsible for building their knowledge, contrary to the passive tendency to which they are usually submitted in some classroom contexts. As Nunan (2004, p. 15) says:

[B]y using "task" as a basic unit of learning, and by incorporating a focus on strategies, we open to the students the possibility of planning and monitoring their own learning, and begin to break down some of the traditional hierarchies.

The development of communicative competence is related to the ability of students to be able to interpret and use a greater number of linguistic resources, either in written or oral form, in an appropriate way in diverse situations of interaction, being them formal or informal. For a better use of the language, students should be able to reflect on aspects of the language in real situations of communication, namely using knowledge acquired through practice and linguistic analysis to expand their capacity for reflection and increase their ability to use the language in its different possibilities of use.
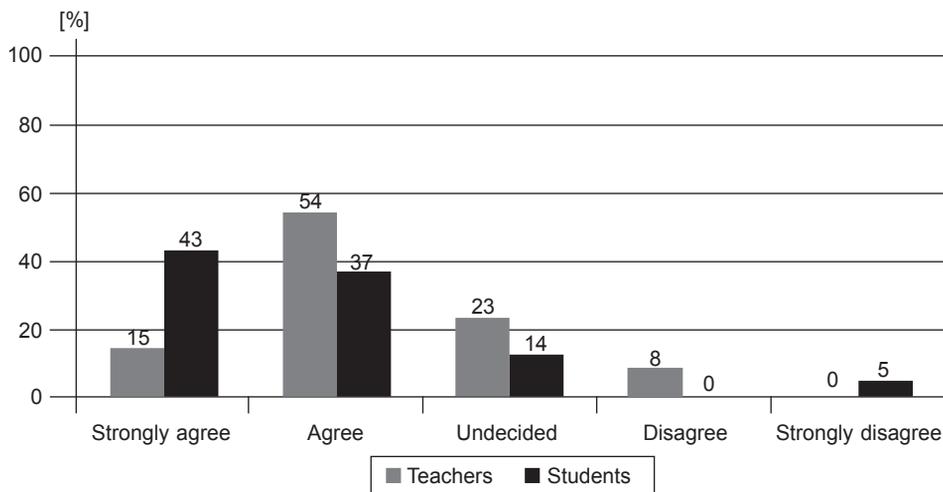
Figure 15. Students become more aware of the evolution of their language learning.

In this sense, we would like to understand if students, with the out-of-class activities, would be more aware of their language knowledge and their learning evolution, and what the perspective of their teachers might be, too. The data show (see Figure 15) that in this particular case the majority of the students think they can evaluate the development of their language learning better, with 43% of them ticking "strongly agree" and 31% "agree." Teachers are not so optimist, as 23% are "undecided" and 8% "disagree." However, we found a majority (53%) agreeing with the question and 15% strongly agreeing, which reveals in some way that they also believe that these activities help students be more aware of the evolution of their language learning.

Therefore, we believe that these activities more focused on students make them more active and more aware of their own learning, which will be even more significant if the activities are related directly to their experiences, interests, and needs. We consider that learning a foreign language must be adapted to different contexts, to the potentialities and the communicative needs of the students, allowing them to consciously interact in the construction of their knowledge, inside and outside of the classroom, in a collaborative way, which will foster their autonomy and spirit of reflection (Woodward, 2001).

Conclusions

The results suggest that teachers and students agree that task-based learning offers the ideal conditions for the development of interaction and cooperative learning in out-of-class activities even though the students' linguistic competence is not high (A1 and A2 levels). Students feel motivated to participate and interact, and they do not feel uncomfortable during the accomplishment of the tasks.

The results show that the participation of the students is in fact stimulated and that they feel more motivated and interested in using Portuguese during the tasks. With out-of-class activities Portuguese is learnt in a variety of contexts and the meanings attached to the use of Portuguese outside the classroom vary within these contexts. The present study demonstrates that these activities encourage students to expand their language experience to the outside of the classroom. An out-of-class activity can increase students' exposure to Portuguese in existing and familiar contexts.

Their conscious attention to Portuguese use in the real world can also increase students' language ability and knowledge about Portuguese culture and society. It is worthwhile for educators in similar PFL environments to implement these purposeful out-of-class activities as a means of promoting Portuguese language awareness and enhancing the learning of Portuguese in its local contexts. It is also important to note that this part of the research evaluates the perceptions of teachers and students regarding task-based learning in out-of-class activities, and in some way the students' performance. However, further investigation would be necessary to provide "evidence of the language outcomes and of the subject matter achievements" (Zydatib, 2012, p. 28).

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Jorge Pinto

Immersiver Sprachunterricht: Entwicklung der Kommunikationsaufgaben im natürlichen Sprachmilieu

Zusammenfassung

In dem Beitrag werden verschiedene Methoden der Ausnutzung von den Lehrveranstaltungen außerhalb des Unterrichts beim Erlernen der portugiesischen Sprache von ausländischen Studenten der Humanistischen Fakultät der Lisabonner Universität dargestellt und deren Einfluss auf sprachliche Aussagen der Studenten untersucht. Es wurde folgendes festgestellt: sogar beim Spracheintauchen (Immersion) neigen ausländische Studenten dazu, sich eher auf die Lehrveranstaltungen an der Universität zu konzentrieren, statt einen direkten Kontakt mit den Muttersprachlern in ihrem natürlichen Milieu (außerhalb der Universität) aufzunehmen. Um diese Erscheinung zu verhindern, ließ man ein neues Fach – Immersionslehrveranstaltungen entstehen, die auf einer aufgabeorientierten Herangehensweise beruhen und ein Teil des einjährigen Lehrgangs „Portugiesisch als Fremdsprache" sind. In seinem Beitrag präsentiert der Verfasser vorläufige Ergebnisse der an 80 Studenten und 12 Lehrern durchgeführten Forschung. Die Forschung sollte überprüfen, inwiefern die neuen Lehrveranstaltungen zu effizienterer Sprachlehre beitragen. Das andere Ziel war, zu vergleichen, ob die Bemerkungen der Studenten zu ihren Lernerfolgen am Ende des Semesters mit den der Lehrer übereinstimmen.

Anhand der Forschungsergebnisse konnte man erkennen, dass die von Studenten und Lehrern vertretenen Ansichten in einem Punkt konvergent sind: die auf dem Spracheintauchen beruhenden Lehrveranstaltungen tragen zu besserer Entwicklung der Kommunikationskompetenz in der portugiesischen Sprache bei ausländischen Studenten bei.

Schlüsselwörter: immersives   Bildungsmilieu,   außeruniversitäre   Lehrveranstaltungen, Portugiesisch

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Pedagogical University of Cracow

Social Constraints of Aspirations
for Second Language Achievement

A b s t r a c t

Educational aspirations are defined as "educational goals students set for themselves" (Trebbels, 2015, p. 37). They are widely studied in psychological and sociological research, in which it was found that, firstly, aspirations form in late adolescence and early adulthood, and secondly, their goal and level (i.e., high vs. low) are determined by the social environment they come from, that is, their family background, peer and school influence.

The paper presents the results of the qualitative study, in which 56 students of English philology in one of the vocational schools in the south of Poland expressed their aspirations in reference to their future foreign attainment and associated vocational goals. The results showed that in the majority of cases the aspirations are not so high and fully-formed, which, it is hypothesized, is rooted in the social background the students come from.

Keywords: foreign language, young adults, educational aspirations, social background

Introduction

In the poststructuralist framework to the study of SLA, it is emphasized that success in foreign language (FL) learning does not depend merely on the individual psychological traits of the learner, but on the social context in which learning takes place, such as the family, the school, the neighborhood, and even the socio-political situation of the country one lives in. Each of these environments determines educational opportunities and limitations, and thus may indirectly impact the learners' educational decisions. This impact has long been studied in educational psychology (e.g., Marjoribanks, 2006; Spera, Wentzel, & Mato, 2009). It has been generally found that educational success is to a large extent dependant on the family environment in the early years, and

on peer and school influence in the adolescent years. This impact manifests in the arousal and directioning of educational aspirations, which, in turn, justify the effort undertaken towards the achievement of educational goals.

While many of the studies focus on the educational aspirations of middle-class youth from big city environments, this one focuses on the aspirations of young people from a rather provincial and rural area. More precisely, it aims to investigate what goals and aspirations young adult learners of L2 English have towards their achievement, how they plan to utilize their L2 knowledge for vocational purposes, and if their aspirations are dependant on social variables.

Educational Aspirations —
Defining the Concept and Their Determinants

Educational aspirations are defined as "educational goals an individual sets for himself/herself" (Fraser & Garg, 2017, p. 807). They can be measured as high, low or medium. The level of aspirations an individual possesses is particularly relevant for educational achievement, as it has been found in research (cf. Majoribanks, 2003; Farmer, 1985; Lewowicki, 1987) that individuals of high educational aspirations tend to achieve higher success in education, which in turn leads to better-paid occupational careers. If that causal relationship is true, one should be interested in boosting educational aspirations in adolescents and young adults, as it is at this age that individuals decide about their vocations.

While possessing high/low educational aspirations can be related to a variety of personal characteristics (e.g., Skorny, 1980) such as experience of success and failure, level of intelligence, personality, level of neurosis, and perception of Self (cf. Galas & Lewowicki, 1991), more recent research focuses on the social/environmental factors that contribute to the growth of aspirations, particularly to the role of family, and later in the adolescent years, of school, peers, and even wider educational policy.

The influence of the family is seen as an interplay of proximal and distal characteristics. The former relate to socio-emotional and cognitive interactions among the family members. For example, it was found that children of parents presenting an authoritative parenting style characterized by support, emotional warmth, attention, and clear demands are more likely to achieve better results at school (Baumrind, 1989). Additionally, Rosenzweig (1989) identified seven parental practices which contribute to high school attainment: parental educational aspirations and grade expectations, parental engagement, authoritative

parenting, autonomy support, emotional support, providing resources and learning experiences, and parental participation in school. These factors stem from the general family orientations towards upbringing and education and are less dependent or dependent indirectly on distal characteristics.

The distal characteristics of the family include: socio-economic status (SES), ethnicity, availability of material resources, parental level of education, age of the parents, child gender, family size, living standards, place of living. The most commonly studied of these variables is SES, although its impact on the level of aspirations is not direct. On the one hand, higher-SES families can provide their children with better access to material resources, and can pay for additional/ private tuition. Higher-SES parents may also have a higher level of education and show better educational awareness, thus may hold higher educational aspirations. Yet, due to performing more time-consuming jobs, they may be less involved, or have less time to engage directly, in their children's education. As a result, these parents may delegate the role of supporter to teachers, often in private school and private tutoring. By contrast, lower-SES families, not having such capabilities, may aspire for their children's high educational and occupational achievement more directly by providing such cognitive stimulation on their own.

These dependencies show that parents' own educational aspirations can further be transferred onto children and contribute to the growth of the children's educational aspirations which normally manifest in late adolescence or early adulthood. It is unclear as to what is first in this cause-effect relationship between aspirations and achievement: is it high educational aspirations which boost higher achievement, or is it high achievement caused by parental educational aspirations which boost high school achievement, where the feeling of success contributes further to the growth of children's own educational aspirations?

A model of growth of educational aspirations has been proposed by Garg et al. (2002), who take into account similar characteristics as above, that is, background, environmental and personal factors. The background factors would coincide with the distal factors as distinguished by Majoribanks (2003). The environmental factors refer to parental involvement, including their support and communication with school. These could partly overlap with proximal factors. The last element distinguished by Garg et al. (2002) is the personal factor, called academic Self-Schema, which is composed of self-perception of competence, school achievement, attitudes toward education and work, and extracurricular activities such as reading at home. According to the authors, students who have a positive Self-Schema lay more trust in their learning abilities and find learning more enjoyable. I believe this concept is related to what is known in motivational theories as self-efficacy beliefs. Both of these concepts may be an outcome of inborn traits as well as parental support and prior learning

experiences, thus there is a great role for schooling institutions to support and not discourage learning.

Finally, it has to be noted that research on educational aspirations is markedly boosted in liberal and democratic societies, where there is an opportunity to move up the social mobility ladder, and where education is considered to be one of the keys to it. High educational aspirations are less likely to arise in communities which have a fairly established social structure, and as a result, little chance to change social position. For this reason, research on educational aspirations has been particularly strong in Australia (Majoribanks, 2003, 2006), especially among groups of immigrants, and in the USA (Spera, Wentzel, & Mato, 2009), predominatly in the 1970s and 1980s. Research conducted in more recent years, that is, from 2000 onwards, has observed that in times of neoliberal economy, it is more difficult to guarantee mobility merely through education. As the number of university graduates has grown, the number of positions for which educated people are required has not. The competition for occupational positions has kept the salaries stable, or has even seen salaries lowered, thus it is hard to say that high educational achievement leads to higher vocational positions and social mobility. As Devine (2004), working in the British context, noticed, it was much easier to achieve advancement in the 1960s when the post-war generation had grown-up as there were more places to be filled by educated labor than nowadays. Yet, previous advancement occurred not so much due to removing the elite from the privileged positions, but due to a higher demand for skilled professionals and more space at the top. This shows that aspirations are more likely to arise in the times of sociological and historical change.

For similar reasons, there is a well-established tradition for psychological and sociological research on aspirations in the Polish setting. Already in communist times of the 1970s and 1980s, individuals who were willing to complete a higher education usually obtained jobs of higher prestige, although not necessarily much better paid due to the official policy of equality (Janowski, 1977; Lewowicki, 1987; Domański, 2007). Another historical moment which precipitated the growth of aspirations, and particularly the need for foreign language competence, was the fall of communism. This was the time when the borders opened, thus giving ground for foreign investments. Individuals who knew any FLs made astonishing careers in foreign companies, even without formal qualifications for which they made up later on. The 1990s was the period when a variety of foreign languages was learnt and required in the job market. However, with the growth of popularity of English as a global language, this yearning for multilinguality diminished. English dominated the educational and job market, not least since Poland joined the EU in 2004. A similar shift in FL motivation has been noticed in Hungary, which passed through similar historical moments (cf. Dörnyei, Csizer, & Nemeth, 2006).

Joining the EU has given many a chance for personal and professional mobility for which languages are necessary, both for communication and functioning in the job market. Thus it seems young people should be willing and motivated to learn foreign languages, especially lingua franca English. Thanks to it they have a chance to move upwards either in the social or occupational structure.

Aspirations and SLA

In SLA theory, aspirations have received more attention in theories of language learning motivation, originating in psychology. One of the major theories within achievement motivation theory is *attribution theory*. Attribution theory deals with individuals' perceptions of their causality and their understanding of cause-effect relationships between various phenomena. It also identifies relationships between a person's perceptions of causality and their behavioral tendency in the future, especially in reference to achievement motivation and the level of aspirations (Weiner, 1972). So the attribution theory has utilized the concept of experience in formulating individuals' aspirations.

The theory claims that people of higher achievement motivation are more likely to attribute their success or failure to their own work and effort. What is more, past experience of a similar type positively influences a person's orientation towards goals of similar type. By contrast, people of low achievement motivation ascribe their success or failure to pure luck and coincidence, or lack of ability (in the case of failure). This causative relationship can lie at the bottom of the formation of aspirations, as only persons who feel that they have influence over their success or failure in the future can formulate stronger aspirations. Weiner (1972) introduced the term *locus of control* to describe an individual's power to direct one's behavior. The locus is the place where an individual places this power in the continuum from objectivity to subjectivity, and can be dependent on the person's volition, intelligence, ability, or on external influences.

Aspirations are also regarded as an important component of Ideal L2 Self, that is, a Motivational L2 Self Theory proposed by Dörnyei (2009), as they set goals for learning. In further development of the theory Dörnyei (2014, 2015), stated that what motivates learners for the learning activity are their visions of future achievement, which, to my belief, coincides with aspirations. Thus imagination plays an important role in establishing the vision/goal.

Finally, it must be mentioned that no other studies have dealt with young people's aspirations so far. Some common ground can be found in the studies

conducted by Mystkowska-Wiertelak and Pawlak (2017) on willingness to communicate from the macro- (i.e., as a general learner feature) and micro- (i.e., as a class factor) perspective. The studies were conducted among students of English philology at the Higher Vocational School in Konin with a view to verifying the factors that make some students more willing to communicate than others. Having conducted a number of studies, the authors have proposed a model of interrelated factors influencing WTC. According to them, the variables are: communication confidence, ought-to self, classroom environment, international posture—openness to experience, unplanned in-class WTC, international posture—interest in international affairs, practice-seeking WTC, and planned in-class WTC. Of these factors, WTC correlated the most with the two dimensions of International posture, which indicates that learners who are more willing to learn and use the language are those who see its utility in the wider world. This stance, I believe, is rooted in prior experience and social background, and these learners have been found to seek more practice in out-of-class situations. The classroom environment was found to be conducive to WTC only if foreign-exchange students were present in class, which indicates that the classroom environment generates fewer communicative activities.

This study, focusing only on WTC, has omitted social reasons due to which learners may be motivated towards learning a language and believe in achieving the final goal.

While the aforementioned study focused on WTC, the following paper aims to verify the general motivation towards L2 achievement, which could be called the willingness to study. The common feature of both studies is the fact that a learner willing to obtain communicative competence in a FL must be motivated and willing to undertake the effort to study the language, and to actively seek opportunities to use it both in class and in the outside world.

The Study

The following study aims to investigate what are the goals and aspirations for L2 achievement of young adults. It is assumed that in early adulthood aspirations of young people coincide with vocational aspirations, as young adults are at the threshold of making serious decisions regarding their future. Their vocational goals determine their educational decisions. It is also assumed that the vision of their future attainment is what can motivate them to undertake a serious effort in pursuing the goal. More precisely, it is investigated why young adults choose to study English philology in a vocational school and how this relates to their vocational aspirations.

The following research questions have been addressed:

1. What goals and aspirations do young adult learners of L2 English have towards their FL achievement?
2. How do they plan to utilize their L2 knowledge for vocational purposes?
3. Are their aspirations dependant on social variables? If so, which ones?
4. What do they ascribe their FLL success to, that is, to what situations, events, factors, people?

The social variables taken into account are: socio-economic status (SES)-measured as a self-perceived feature on a 7-point scale (1–poor, 7–excellent), parental level of education (1–primary, 5–doctorate level), family size, parental level of FL knowledge. In reference to the last variable, it is believed that those parents who have some FL knowledge can support their children in FL learning by either directly helping with the retention of class material, or by setting positive models and creating opportunities for L2 use.

The Instrument

The instrument was a survey which consisted of seven open-ended questions inquiring about factors, situations and life events which influenced their current FL knowledge, beliefs about factors contributing to/inhibiting success, visions of Self and their FL ability in five years' time, a scale about self-efficacy beliefs, which was to provide information about their locus of control (in their ability of external factors).

Additionally, the demographic information about self-assessed L2 proficiency, length of learning, gender, age of the learner, as well as their parental level of education, occupation and level of FL knowledge was collected, and the size of family and self-perceived SES measured on the self-assessment scale (1–very bad, 7–very good).

The study was qualitative in nature, yet the data will be presented in reference to the social variables.

Participants

The participants of the study were 63 students in their 2nd year of English philology at the Higher Vocational School in Nowy Targ. There were: 15 males and 48 females. Their mean age was: 20.6. There were 33 students in the teaching specialization group (coded as S1–S33), and 30 students who had chosen the translation specialization (codes S34–63). In the teacher specialization, there was only one male student.

At this point, it should be mentioned that the region where the school is located differs from others in the sense that traditionally, it has been a place where families were quite big (had many children) and where it was common to emigrate to the USA. Thus, there is a long-standing need and willingness to learn English for utilitarian purposes as this language enables communication and higher earnings abroad.

Also, what makes this study different is the fact that it is the students in big city institutions that are usually investigated/studied, who by getting a place at a prestigious university already show a certain degree of success and ability. The participants in this study come from lower SES families, a group which is quite underrepresented in research.

Results

The following section presents the results of the study, first presenting the quantitative data for the synthesis of the findings, and then illustrating the key points with qualitative remarks.

As regards their proficiency level, the students assessed their ability at either B2 ($N = 34$) or B1 level ($N = 28$), most probably referring to their results at the Matura exam. Only one person self-reported a C1 level. This level of FL knowledge allows communicative use, yet still requires further development. It is notable to say that the students have studied L2 English for a relatively long time (Mean length of study: 11.2 years), which indicates they have mainly learnt the language throughout the schooling years, however, not always successfully, as the attainment of B1 level shows. Surprisingly, more students at B1 level were in the teaching specialization group, while in the translation section there were more students at B2 level.

Table 1 below shows the types of aspirations as identified in the qualitative analysis together with the quantity of their appearance.

In regard to the students' aspirations referring to their FL attainment and vocational attainment, it can be seen that the learning goals are quite varied. Nearly half of the students are language aficionados, as they either aim for achieving a native-like level of English (25%) or wish to learn other foreign languages (22%). Thirteen students (21%) would like to be teachers and eight students (13%) would like to be translators, while ten students (16%) would like to emigrate.

It seems that to a certain extent their vocational plans are connected with the choice of specialization. The desire to become teachers has been voiced by almost all students in that specialization (88%), whereas in the translation section, vocational plans seem to be more ambiguous. This is manifested in the vast array of responses showing plans which seem to remain in the sphere of

dreams rather than being fully materialized plans (positions 8–20). Apparently, the choice of this specialization was dictated by the lack of willingness to become a teacher on the one hand, and the desire to obtain additional time before making a final decision on the other.

Table 1

Goals of studying English and future vocational/educational aspirations (N = 63)

Aspiration type	Count	Percentage score %
1. Achieving native-like level	16	25
2. Learning other languages (Italian, Russian, German, Spanish)	14	22
3. Work as a teacher	13	21
4. Going/working abroad	10	16
5. Work as a translator in a firm/sworn translator	8	13
6. Working with languages	6	10
7. Emigrate to an EU country/Australia/theUSA	5	8
8. Interpersonal communication	6	10
9. Open my own business (language school/kindergarten/tourist agency)	6	10
10. Working in tourism (as a guide)	4	6
11. Travelling	4	6
12. Learning L2 culture	2	3
13. Working in a corporation	1	2
14. Giving private tution	1	2
15. Study further and work	1	2
16. Work as a journalist	1	2
17. Combine language with studying another field	1	2
18. Translating books	1	2
19. Helping a family member to learn	1	2
20. Working in a consulate	1	2

*The total number of aspirations exceeds the number of respondents as more than one aspiration was expressed.

This tendency can be further endorsed by explicitly stated student aspirations. A student from the teaching specialization clearly knows what she would like to do in the future, saying,

(S1, B2 level): *I would like to teach young children so as to give them the best opportunities and make them speak fluently from the earliest years. I would like to speak the language fluently, just like in Polish.*

From this statement, it can be seen that the student perceives a teaching profession as rewarding, and the student's choice of this career is deliberate with high aspirations for her future learners' achievement.

Whereas the students from the translation specialization group say,

(S 46) *Foreign language learning is a pleasure for me; I would like to combine this (hobby) with my future profession. I hope that my language level in 5 years will be advanced.*
(S 59) *I would like to master English to the degree that would enable me free conversation, however, I am trying not to look too much into the future, and so I have no plans.*
(S 45) *It is difficult to say for the time being as I am not planning my future yet. However, I would like to work, maybe as a translator. In that situation I would use the language every day during my work.*
(S 56) *I am going to continue learning L2 in my own way so that it is pleasant and motivating towards the goal. Nothing enforced.*

These students supposedly enjoy learning English, but as they reported elsewhere in the questionnaire, they learnt it to a large extent effortlessly, often by playing online games or using the Internet. It might be hypothesized that if students acquired language to a large extent implicitly, they are less familiarized with effective studying techniques, but may have willingness or interest to learn. Those who acquired it through conscientious study might have taken liking to it, and consequently, would like to pass their interest and competence to others via the teaching profession.

Additionally, due to the fact that the students have unclearly specified vocational goals, the students may be less knowledgeable or aware of the ways which help to pursue them. Table 2 shows a summary of the students' beliefs as to what leads to success in a FL.

As can be seen, about one third of the students (33%) believe that systematic learning/working hard is sufficient to realize their learning and vocational goals. What is more, nine students (14%) believe that graduation from English studies will help to attain these goals. Another five students believe that the key to success is enrolling in additional FL courses. These choices were supported by 53% of the students, and indicated their belief in external factors aiding the process of a FL. The opinions relating to students' autonomous learning were solitary, and denoted such aspects of learning as: going abroad temporarily (14%), looking for an opportunity to communicate (8%),

reading in English (6%), and watching films (6%). Furthermore, there were only singular innovative ideas about ways of improving their FL command, such as learning words and structures daily (3 persons) or even finding a job where English is required (2 persons) as a means of improving their command. Clearly, these students felt that the best way to improve language skills is to use it frequently (e.g., as when abroad) and for communicative purposes (e.g., at work). It is quite surprising that the learning opportunities provided through various tools on the Internet remained unnoticed. Only one person pointed to the possibility of using various social networking sites as a means of using a FL.

Table 2
Ways of pursuing the aspirations (N = 63)

Ways of pursuing the aspirations	Count	Percentage score %
1. Systematic learning / working hard	21	33
2. Graduate from English studies	9	14
3. Going abroad for a while	9	14
4. Looking for an opportunity to communicate	5	8
5. Enroll on FL courses	5	8
6. Reading in English	4	6
7. Watching films	4	6
8. Learning words and structures daily	3	5
9. Study more on my own	2	3
10. Find a job where English is required	2	3
11. Revising L2 material	2	3
12. Study more on my own	2	3
13. Reward myself for achievements	1	2
14. Increase L2 contact	1	2
15. Pursue interests	1	2

Most of the ways of pursuing aspirations relate to formal instruction which may also indicate the locus of control is placed outside the learner. This further indicates the learners feel less responsible for their own achievements, do not believe in their self-efficacy, and delegate the responsibility for achievement to their teachers. Thus it may be speculated the learners are not autonomous and cannot pose clear goals themselves. Consequently, learning a foreign language seems for them to be an infinite process.

One could wonder what the reasons for this situation might be: the long-lasting experience of authoritarian education which does not foster autonomy, or lack of out-of-class experiences for learning the language. Indeed, in the times of the Internet and availability of online resources, the lack of its use is surprising. One would expect greater autonomy and a clear pursuit of the goals by university-level students.

The use of metacognitive or affective strategies which would indicate one's autonomy is also scarce. Single metacognitive and affective strategies are mentioned as indicated in statements number 9, 11, 12, 13; however, they were reported only by a few students. This finding may indicate that despite many years of school education, the students still do not know how to learn a language.

Additionally, it was observed that learners who have already achieved a higher level of L2 proficiency (B2) had more concrete visions of what they would like to achieve, and had more goals and more ideas of how to pursue these goals. Similarly, respondents of the teacher specialization group had more accurate plans (students 1–33) than students of the translation group. It may be thus concluded that those who chose a teaching specialization had clearer language learning goals at the start of the study in a higher education institution while those who chose the translation specialization were looking to gain additional time before making a final vocational decision. This stand-point can be illustrated by statements of selected students of the translation group:

(S 39) *I am planning to complete BA and MA studies. If this does not teach me the language, nothing will, not even working abroad.*

(S 61) *First I would like to learn English perfectly and then go abroad, so as to use it skillfully.*

From such statements it is evident that the learners have little knowledge of language learning processes and that they allocate teaching-learning effectiveness to educational institutions rather than holding it in their own hands. This finding is quite surprising, as it is already known from research in language pedagogy that what is most conducive to language learning success is going abroad and intensive communicative language use (Muñoz, 2012), and not school instruction. The role of implicit language acquisition remains unnoticed. This may be due to the fact that contrary to the initial assumption, not many students in the cohort studied have the experience of living/travelling abroad (only one person was born in the US). As it was found from other responses, in this environment, the goal of many of those young people is to emigrate and stay abroad for good. Therefore, language learning is for these

young people a tool which will help them realize an important life goal. They learn the language in order to go abroad, and not use an opportunity to stay abroad to improve language skills. Language learning has a purely instrumental function. It is also possible that the perception of available life choices is limited. The students may observe their own cognitive and social constraints which do not let them to either dedicate a sufficient amount of time to the study, or use extracurricular resources. As the following student says,

(S 41) *When I entered the university I thought I would become a world-famous translator, but now when I understood how difficult it is, I decided to learn the language in order to go abroad. With FL knowledge, it will be easier for me to get a well-paid job, and not e.g. of a cleaner.*

A student from a low socio-economic background says:

(S 37) *I spend too much time helping my parents on a farm, and when I have time, I often do everything to put it off. I have poor concentration, I forget about motives that direct me towards FLL.*

This finding leads us to answering the third research question, which aimed to identify social variables which might determine these rather low educational and vocational aspirations.

In a vast number of sociological studies, SES is measured as an important social variable influencing L2 outcomes as it enables access to a better quality of education, learning materials, cultural resources, etc. In this study, however, the SES has not turned out to be a significant variable. The mean score was 5.6, which denotes a quite high level of satisfaction with one's socio-economic status (on a 7-point scale) and indicates that none of them felt any financial inadequacies. For this reason, on the basis of this scale, it was difficult to single out higher or lower SES students. The reason for that might be that SES was measured as a self-assessed feature, and therefore the respondents may not have been willing to reveal their true SES as it is a delicate issue. Secondly, it is possible that the students' perception of their status is quite positive as there are no huge disparities in the level of income among the students, and the sense of well-being is always measured against others. Therefore, SES defined as a self-perceived feature has not turned out to be a sufficient/objective descriptor of the ability.

However, when we look at other distal variables, such as parental level of education and parental FL knowledge, they can tell us more about the SES of the learners. In the cohort studied, practically no parent knew a FL at a high level (B2). Only in one case both parents were reported to speak English at an intermediate level (B1). In all other cases the parents were re-

ported to have no knowledge or very little (only rudimentary) knowledge of a FL (Mean: 0.8 for mothers and 0.4 for fathers). The same can be observed in reference to parental education (Mean 2.7 on a 5 point scale). The majority of parents had a vocational or intermediate level of education. There were only a few parents, and these were usually mothers, who had a higher level of education.

This data indicates that having taken into account the distal factors of the family environments from which the students came, the group studied was rather homogenous, that is, they came from low socio-economic families in which parents had a lower level of education and no, or only a rudimentary level of, FL knowledge. Yet, it is known from other research in educational psychology that in postmodern society, it is particularly the parental level of education and the type of occupation that define the SES of the family. Erikson, Goldthorpe, and Portocarero (1979) developed scales which describe social structure in postmodern society according to occupations. According to them, the occupations which guarantee the highest SES are: intelligentsia, top corporate management, and large-scale businessman, referred to as service class, while the occupations which denote lower SES are: skilled workers, unqualified manual workers, rural workers, and farm owners. Taking this classification into account, it can be judged that the participants come from lower SES backgrounds. Furthermore, parents of the students studied had little knowledge of a FL themselves, thus were unable to help their children in language learning at school, and/or inspire them for autonomous language development. It may be, therefore, concluded that the impact of low linguistic/cultural capital is evident in the fact that the majority of students ascribe their language success to the teacher and school, or to staying abroad, which, however, was undertaken for work, and not leisure purposes. This view is further illustrated by factors to which the students attributed their current FLL level (Table 3).

As can be seen in Table 3, approximately one third of the students ascribe their current FL success to visits/staying abroad. Yet, as is known from previous analysis, this experience of living/working abroad has not turned out profitable to all of the students. Despite this opportunity, many still believed that attending formal instruction is necessary (cf. Table 1). The reason for this may be twofold: the amount of contact with a FL may have been varied and therefore not everyone profited with high proficiency. Secondly, it may have been the case that some of the students first had a FL experience, and having realized their deficiencies, opted for more systematic formal instruction. As one of the students confessed,

(S 21) *In order to improve my language skills I enrolled to the language studies. In my opinion this has increased my liberty at using English. It's a key element that has influenced my knowledge of English.*

Table 3.
Student attributions to FL competence

Sources of language learning success	Count	Percent
1. Visits abroad; opportunity to practice L2	18	29
2. Watching cartoons/films/TV series	10	16
3. Willingness to communicate with foreigners/foreign friends	6	10
4. Choice of the subject of study/profile class	6	10
5. Work (e.g., restaurants) with an opportunity to speak L2/work abroad	6	10
6. Total time of learning spent at school	6	10
7. Interest in the humanities/languages	5	8
8. School success (in comparison to other school subjects)	5	8
9. Listening to L2 songs	4	6
10. Playing computer games in L2	4	6
11. Private tuition	4	6
12. Reading in English	3	5
13. Early start in a FL	3	5
14. The teacher (bringing additional materials)	3	5
15. Willingness to get to know other cultures	3	5
16. Communication in the Internet	2	3
17. Very good teachers in primary school (raising motivation)	2	3
18. Extended program of FL at school (additional classes)	2	3
19. Living in the English-speaking country	2	3
20. Practice at speaking with foreigners	2	3
21. Exchange programmes with schools from abroad	1	2
22. Requirement to take a FL at school exams	1	2
23. Participation in EU progams (free courses)	1	2
24. Help of a family member	1	2
25. Self-study	1	2
26. Attending language courses	1	2
27. Parents' motivation	1	2
28. *Lack of opportunity to speak L2 with foreigners	1	2
29. Hard work in preparing for exams/tests	1	2
30. Internship abroad	1	2
31. Ambition to improve (due to poor school results)	1	2

Another group of students are those who may not have had a chance of going abroad but found opportunities of learning the language in the home country, arousing their own interest in languages and looking for contacts with foreigners (points 2, 3, 5). However, such self-motivated students constitute only about 10% of the whole cohort. Student 29 illustrates this type of experience best:

(S 29) *I have been always interested in the English language (mainly its melody). I began learning subconsciously with listening to English songs and printing out the lyrics so as to know precisely what they mean. The other factors that influenced my FLL are the willingness to communicate with foreign friends; I have always admired people who could speak this language fluently (teachers, translators), and looked up to them.*

Yet another group of students are those who were successful at language learning at school and therefore chose it as a subject of university study. They attended a special profile class with an extended program of English (position 4), or they ascribe it to their overall time spent at school and relative success in language learning as compared to learning other subjects. All other events took place sporadically as they were mentioned by individual students.

Discussion

The above study showed that not all young adults, despite studying in a higher education institution and having chosen a prestigious subject to study (English philology), have high educational and vocational aspirations. Only 25% point out to clear language learning goals, like achieving native-like competence or learning other FLs (24%). As regards the choice of career, only about one third of the students are positive about their future occupational careers, such as the teaching (21%) or the translation profession (13%).

These findings are quite surprising as in socio-pedagogical literature, young adults, when choosing higher educational institutions, have already well crystallized goals. Yet, the above findings negate this fact and show rather low, or no, educational and vocational aspirations. This finds reflection in a rather relaxed approach to studying in general, and a lack of study skills.

One reason for that fact may be that the students studied have low academic self-schema/self-efficacy beliefs due to low parental involvement at earlier stages of education, and often low language achievement (B1 level). This may denote also that they come from families of low cultural and linguistic

capital. Thus the FL level they have achieved so far can, to a large extent, be attributed to effortless acquisition rather than to a deliberate plan and investment or conscientious study. The reason they chose to study a FL was probably caused by the fact that they found it easy and enjoyable to learn the language in school times.

Another reason, which may overlap with the former, is the fact that in times of crisis of neoliberal economy, young people may be less positive about their future and hesitant about what profession to choose. There are few stable jobs available and a higher level of education no longer guarantees access to secure and better-paid jobs. Consequently, young people additionally opt for 'wait time.' The availability of a free higher education institution in their neighborhood allows them to obtain a diploma, and possibly to gain some academic and/ or professional skills which may turn out useful in the job market. But first and foremost, it allows them to delay making decisions about their vocational future. This often results, in Brzezińska's words, "delayed adolescence" (Brzezińska, Ziółkowska, & Appelt, 2016). Young people have a chance to prolong their carefree years and postpone the time of making crucial life decisions, such as starting up a family or setting on a career path, while having a good excuse of study. It can be further speculated that had a higher education institution not been freely available in their environment, these young people would not have chosen to study and would have started to work earlier, possibly in some manual jobs. This provides the justification for the existence of such higher vocational schools in rural areas. The role of educational institutions is to make up for the deficiencies in cultural capital that a family has not been able to cater to, and provide learning opportunities for ambitious individuals.

On the other hand, it is speculated that those young adults who have higher educational and vocational aspirations, if only they can afford it, decide to study in bigger cities, where more educational and vocational opportunities can be found. It is also possible that higher educational aspirations are characteristic of gifted learners who have internally placed locus of control and who thus feel more responsible for their learning, and set clearer goals. This issue, however, would require further investigation.

Conclusion

The above study was carried out in a specific social environment, characterized by low socio-economic status, low level of parental education, including FL knowledge. These facts denote that learners can rely on the family environment for educational support to a lesser extent than learners

from big city schools, where they receive more support from both parents and peers. Ambitious adolescents coming from less favorable environments can always look up to their privileged friends, aspire for similar status and seek ways for its achievement.

The homogeneity of the group studied is counterproductive as the young adults cannot learn about other career paths or ways to achieve them as they are all in the same boat. Emigration seems to be the only available choice in improving one's socio-economic status. For this reason, the role of school and teachers in awakening educational aspirations, as well as showing means of their realization is even more prominent in rural areas, in a considerable distance from larger educational centers. In a wider socio-political scale, there should be supportive education policies, for example via grants, which enable young people to pursue their aspirations.

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Joanna Rokita-Jaśkow

Soziale Begrenzungen der Bildungsaspirationen beim Zweitspracherwerb

Zusammenfassung

Die Bildungsaspirationen werden meistens definiert als „Bildungsziele, die sich der Lernende setzt" (Trebbels, 2015:37). Diese werden häufig zum Gegenstand der psychologischen und soziologischen Forschungen, in Folge deren es u.a. festgestellt wurde, dass Aspirationen auf Bildung in späten Jugendjahren und /oder im frühen Erwachsenenalter entstehen und deren Ausrichtung und Niveau (hohes oder niedriges) durch soziale Umgebung des Lernenden (d.i. seine Familie, Altersgenossen u. Schule) gestaltet werden.

Der vorliegende Beitrag präsentiert die Ergebnisse der Qualitätsforschung, die unter 56 Anglistikstudenten einer der Berufsfachschulen in Südpolen durchgeführt wurde. Sie bezweckte, die Bildungsaspirationen der Studenten auf Englischerwerbung und die damit verbundenen Berufsaspirationen zu untersuchen. Die Ergebnisse zeugen davon, dass diese Aspirationen in den meisten Fällen nicht zu hoch sind, was mit sozialer Herkunft der Studenten begründet werden kann.

Schlüsselwörter: Fremdsprache, Jugend, Bildungsaspirationen, soziale Herkunft

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New School, the Same Old Rut? Action Research of Unsuccessful First-year Students in a High School

Abstract

Action research is one of the tools that a reflective teacher may use in order to solve specific problems they encounter in their daily teaching practice. The article describes action research carried out in a high school to investigate some of the reasons behind the poor performance of some first-year students. It has been observed that students' lack of success during the first semester corresponds directly to their low results in the end-of-middle school exam, despite the fact that they were allocated to groups on the basis of a placement test. In a questionnaire survey, students reflected upon their motivation, attitude, classroom anxiety, and assessed their performance against other group members. This article offers an analysis of the questionnaire results and attempts at presenting certain ways in which teachers could help students who did not manage to wipe the slate clean avoid some learning barriers.

Keywords: action research, unsuccessful students, motivation, attitude, classroom anxiety

Introduction

Professional development is an inherent part of the teacher's job. It is expected by the authorities that teachers who want to climb the career ladder take part in various methodological conferences, complete postgraduate studies, participate in IT courses, etc. This demand certainly makes Polish teachers a professional group for which life-long learning is not just a slogan. But does this mean that teachers' motivation for professional development is solely extrinsic? Perhaps the busy teacher has no time left for critical reflection on their everyday teaching practice, reflection other than "talking shop" with their colleagues, which is often reduced to complaining about the youth of today?

According to Dana and Yendol-Hoppey (2009), although reflection is an in-dispensable element of teacher inquiry, there is a difference between the two. Reflection is coincidental, whereas inquiry is a planned and intentional activity, the results of which are more visible. But is it realistic to expect a school teacher to conduct such classroom inquiry, whose objective is to increase teaching effectiveness, to solve problems teachers face in the classroom and to gain a better understanding of the learners?

Being a practising teacher rather than a researcher, as apart from teaching at the University of Silesia I am also a middle school and high school teacher, I decided to carry out action research, since it overlaps the areas of professional development and conventional research, and for some practising teachers may well form a bridge between the two (Wallace, 1998). Such teachers, however, need to bear in mind some criticisms of practitioner research, for instance insufficient evidence, lack of appropriate methodology or a personal attitude (Cochran-Smyth & Lytle, 2009). Another important point is the issue of ethics. Study participants must give their "voluntary informed consent": they must be informed about the purpose of the research, its tools, and how the findings will be made public (Baumfield, Hall, & Wall, 2013).

This article aims at describing and presenting the results of action research conducted in one of the high schools in Upper Silesia, Poland. The purpose of the research was to investigate possible differences in motivation, attitude, anxiety, and dissatisfaction with the English lessons among two groups of students: freshmen whose semester grades were low, and those who did well and very well during the first semester. The analysis of those differences should enable the teacher to help the weaker students improve their performance.

The first part of the paper briefly describes action research and highlights its importance for teacher development. The next one presents a problem that English teachers encounter at the school in question, which is significant level discrepancies among members of the same language group, reflected in their semester grades. It also discusses a questionnaire survey conducted among first-year students. The aim of the survey was to establish the relationship between learners' performance and their motivation, attitude, anxiety, and the level of satisfaction with English classes. The question is whether students' lack of success corresponds to their low motivation and a negative or lackadaisical attitude towards the English language. Next, the results of the questionnaire are presented and discussed. Finally, the article deals with measures that might be taken by the teacher to help freshmen whose performance is poor.

Action Research

Action research is one of the tools that a reflective teacher has at their disposal. It is part of the reflective cycle suggested by Wallace (1998). The cycle, which is a kind of structured reflection, encompasses problems, asking questions, collecting and analysing data, and finally application of the conclusions to teaching practice. Although it would be unrealistic to expect teachers to have enough time and motivation to reflect upon their performance after every lesson, critical analysis and openness to change are indispensable to maintain a positive attitude towards teaching and to avoid boring routine. Teacher autonomy is necessary to introduce any change into the classroom. Only an autonomous teacher may be perceived as a good manager who feels responsible for making decisions that contribute to overcoming difficulties in the teaching/learning process, which leads to better performance and better results. Such a good manager is by no means an authoritarian manager, on the contrary: they are willing to share the decision-making process with the learners. Both parties should be engaged, at least to a certain extent, in finding solutions to classroom problems. Action research should facilitate the process, as it is precisely action research that is problem focused in its approach and very practical in its intended outcomes (Wallace, 1998). It is so because "action research is conducted by or in cooperation with teachers for the purpose of gaining a better understanding of their educational environment and improving the effectiveness of their teaching" (Dörnyei, 2011, p. 191). It also "brings change into a classroom which ideally results in the elimination or at least progressive minimising of the diagnosed problems" (Gabryś-Barker, 2011, p. 14).

The Problem

According to the ranking of schools published every year by *Perspektywy*, a Polish opinion magazine, in 2017 the school was not ranked among the best 500 high schools in Poland. There are quite a few difficulties that teachers have to cope with on everyday basis. In this paper I would like to outline one of the specific problems encountered by the teachers of English in that school. Every year, freshmen, for whom learning English is compulsory, are allocated to language groups on the basis of a placement test. This is the sole criterion. There is a certain limitation, namely it is not a cross-class division, but students of one class are divided into two groups. In the course of the first semester it was noticed that in every group there were students whose

level was significantly lower, students who had problems with basic structures, which was later reflected in their semester grades, being either 2 (E) or 1 (F), the lowest grades in the Polish grading scale. The first logical conclusion was that the placement test had not fulfilled its role. Consequently, the following year another placement test was used. This time it was a test offered by the publisher whose course books are used during English lessons. Unfortunately, this remedy turned out to be ineffective and the next school year showed the same level discrepancies. Apparently, the problem does not lie solely with the placement test. Perhaps there are some other aspects that the teachers must take into account before they divide freshmen into language groups. Apart from that, there might be other reasons for learners' poor performance, such as lack of motivation or a negative attitude towards English. Should this be the case, the teacher ought to focus on enhancing their motivation and improving attitude.

End-of-middle School Examination

During some paperwork I made another important observation. It was connected with students' exam results. In the Polish education system, secondary education has two levels: the 3-year middle school / lower-secondary school (gimnazjum), which is compulsory for pupils aged 13–16, and several kinds of upper-secondary schools. One of them is the 3-year general high school / upper-secondary school (liceum ogólnokształcące), at the end of which students take a national external matriculation exam (Matura). Educational reform, which is being implemented since 2017, has changed the country's education system, removing middle schools and re-introducing an eight-year primary school and a four-year high school.

For the time being, every Polish middle school graduate sits a compulsory national foreign language end-of-school examination. There are two levels of the exam: basic and extended. In most cases the foreign language is English. In 2016 as many as 296,797 pupils took the basic English exam, whereas 48,323 pupils chose a different language. The national results for the basic level in 2016 were as follows: the mean result for a town with a population of between 20–100 thousand citizens (the population of the town where the school is located falls within that range) was 66%, with standard deviation of 25.7%.

Correlation between Exam Results and Semester Grades

The analysis of exam results and semester grades showed that there was a correlation between those two factors. The Pearson correlation coefficient,

whose value is in the range from –1 to +1, for the exam result and the semester grade variables was 0.79, which indicates that this is a strong positive linear correlation. Figure 1 shows this correlation. The letter D stands for unsuccessful or "defeated" students and the letter G for the successful or good ones.
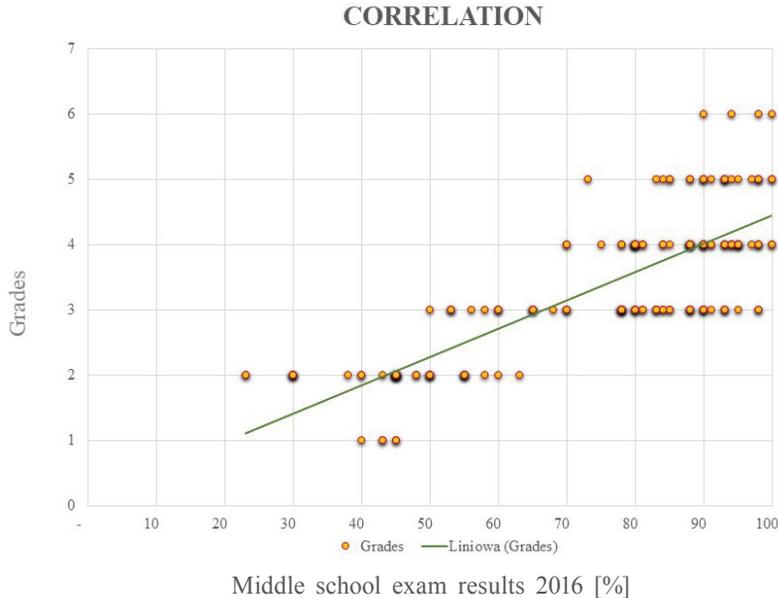
Figure 1. Correlation between exam results and first semester grades.

For the purpose of this action research a low score is a score below 60% in the basic examination, so a score below the average result, with the centile value of 48, which means that 52% of middle school graduates got a higher score in the exam.

Middle school exam results are neglected in the process of group allocation. In fact, very few teachers take them into account, probably because they do not realise their importance, and it requires some effort to get access to them. Nevertheless, we may conclude that low exam results correspond directly to low semester notes (E, F), which shows that students who did not succeed in middle school are still unsuccessful, and apparently, we as teachers do very little to change this state of affairs.

Questions

There arise some questions: what can be done to help those learners who did not manage to wipe the slate clean, those who did badly in the exam and

in the first semester in a new school? Should the system of allocation to language groups that functions in the school be altered? Should middle school exam results be taken into consideration? Should English teachers insist that all students be divided into groups so that it will be a cross-class division? This seems to be a plausible solution, but it neglects other factors. Maybe there are other reasons for poor performance. Perhaps those learners who have been classified as unsuccessful would be underachievers in every group, as they lack the necessary motivation and have a negative attitude towards the English language? Does their motivation differ from the motivation of their more successful colleagues? Do they experience any classroom anxiety or are they simply reluctant to participate in the lessons? Are they dissatisfied with their English classes?

The Questionnaire Survey

In order to find answers to those questions, I decided to try on my "teacher as action researcher" hat (Wallace, 1998, p. 213). At this stage, the research method had to be chosen. The basic division of research is between quantitative and qualitative research. The former deals with numbers and statistical analysis and may therefore be considered more "objective," whereas the latter adopts a more individual approach and focuses on idiosyncratic differences. Quantitative researchers follow a "meaning in the general" strategy, whereas qualitative researchers concentrate on an in-depth understanding of the "meaning in the particular" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 27). Despite this, Dörnyei (2007) claims that there is no real opposition between those two approaches, and advocates combining quantitative and qualitative research methods. During the intervention stage of the present research, when the researcher designs data collection tools, the quantitative approach turned out to be more appealing to an inexperienced researcher. It seemed to be more "tangible," as it is verifiable, systematic, and precise. Since an ill-constructed questionnaire might yield superficial or unreliable data, its items must be worded in a precise manner to ascertain that the respondents do not find them ambiguous. Bearing in mind all the limitations and pitfalls that a teacher/researcher might encounter, since "it is often unrealistic to expect teachers to have the expertise to conduct rigorous research, the danger is that even if teachers decide to initiate an action research project, the chances are that with little background knowledge and insufficient research expertise they will produce questionable or trivial results" (Dörnyei, 2011, pp. 191–192), I decided to adapt Gardner's Attitude and Motivation Test Battery for the purposes of this study. As it was recommended by Wilczyńska

and Michońska-Stadnik (2010), Gardner's AMTB was chosen because of its reliability and validity.

Adaptation of Gardner's AMTB

Gardner's questionnaire was first developed in 1985 and conducted among English-speaking Canadian students who studied French as a foreign language in order to assess their attitudes, motivations, and classroom anxiety, and to evaluate the teacher and the English course. It employed the 5-point Likert scale (1932). For the purposes of this study, the Attitude Motivation Test Battery (Gardner, 2004) was used. It is the English language version of the AMTB to be used among high school students who study English as a foreign language. The present action research was to focus on students' motivation, attitude towards English, classroom anxiety, and their dissatisfaction with the English class, so it was clear that the questionnaire must be adapted to the context of the researched group.

According to Zoltan Dörnyei, "the main emphasis in Gardner's model is on motivational components grounded in the social milieu rather than in the foreign language classroom" (Dörnyei, 1994, p. 273). Knowing that Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) recommend adjusting instruments to the context where they are going to be used, I eliminated those items that were outside the scope of this action research and added others that could contribute to finding satisfactory answers to the questions posed at the beginning. The adapted questionnaire encompassed 40 items, divided into 4 subscales:

a) students' attitude towards English and learning English (7 items),
b) students' motivation (11 items),
c) students' classroom anxiety (9 items),
d) students' dissatisfaction (13 items).

As it was advised by Harkness (2008), the questions were translated into Polish to ensure that participants would not have any problems understanding the statements. The questionnaire included both positively and negatively keyed items. The students were asked to rate each item on a 5-point Likert scale (5–strongly agree, 4–agree, 3–hard to say, 2–disagree, and 1–strongly disagree for the positively keyed items; and 1–strongly agree, 2–agree, 3–hard to say, 4–disagree, 5–strongly disagree for the negatively keyed items) in order to determine their level of agreement with each statement.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted among a small group of students who did not participate in the study proper. The aim of the pilot study was to make the questionnaire more "user-friendly." The subjects were asked to mark their answers and also to give comments that could help improve the questionnaire. After the pilot study, some items were changed not to confuse the participants, other elements were clarified or worded differently. The final version consisted of 40 statements.

General Participant Information. Fine Tuning

Originally, all study participants were supposed to be first-year high school students whose semester grades were E or F and whose end-of-middle school exam results were below 60%. There were 33 such students. They were familiarised with the purpose of the study, their role as research participants and ensured about data confidentiality and anonymity. The survey was administered directly to the students because the sample was small enough (33), so the response rate was 100%. However, since the relationship between the initial problem at the beginning of the research project and the conceptualisation of the problem in the course of the research ought to be dynamic (Wallace, 1998), my initial idea of the research was modified.

The first analysis of the questionnaires made me realise that any analysis would be incomplete without comparing unsuccessful students' results with data obtained from their successful colleagues: students whose middle school exam results were above 75% and who did well and very well in the course of the first semester. Their semester grades were 4 (C), 5 (B), and 6 (A). There were 43 such students to whom the same survey was administered (response rate 100%). Average students whose exam results were between 60% and 75% and their semester grade was 3 (D) did not participate in the study.

Eventually, the questionnaire was administered to two independent samples of learners (aged 16). Group D ($N = 33$): learners with E and F semester grades and middle school exam below 60%. Group G ($N = 43$): learners with C, B, A semester grades and middle school exam above 75%. The total number of participants was 76 ($N = 76$) out of 136 first-year students of the school.

Reliability of the Questionnaire

During statistical analysis, the reliability of the whole questionnaire and the individual subscales was checked using the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient (**α**).

In order to calculate it and for statistical analysis the IBM SPSS Statistics programme was used.

The results for the questionnaire and each subscale are shown in Table 1: the letter D stands for the unsuccessful or defeated group and the letter G for the successful one. As we can see, the questionnaire is reliable for both groups, the results being 0.88 and 0.84, respectively.

Table 1
The Cronbach's alpha value (α)

α	Motivation	Attitude	Anxiety	Dissatisfaction	All subscales
Group D	0.722	0.832	0.919	0.879	0.881
Group G	0.623	0.747	0.877	0.791	0.846

With the lowest result still above the minimum suggested by Zoltan Dörnyei (2007), which is 0.60, the survey results could be calculated and analysed.

Analysis of the Questionnaire Results

For the four subscales survey results are presented in the form of charts (see Figures 2–5). Aggregated values for the four subscales and results for particular items are presented in the form of tables.

Subscale 1: Motivation

It is outside the scope of this paper to present motivation theories; nevertheless, some aspects of motivation need to be discussed from the perspective of this action research. In the final version of the questionnaire, the items concerning students' instrumental orientation, motivational intensity and desire to learn English were included under the broad heading of motivation. Instrumental orientation, as opposed to integrative orientation, is connected with practical reasons for studying a language, reasons such as getting to university or making a career. It must be remembered that Gardner's division between integrative and instrumental orientation is by no means exhaustive. There are other reasons behind learning a foreign language such as the ones described by Oxford and Shearin (1994), for instance "showing off to friends" or "aiding world peace." Also, integrative and instrumental orientation may

be further divided; it was done by Dörnyei (2006) while investigating young Hungarians learning English as a foreign language. Nonetheless, it may be assumed that it is instrumental orientation that plays the most important role for foreign language learners, especially at the intermediate level (Dörnyei, 1990), in my view, especially in a school situation. Therefore, I focused on this type of motivation in my questionnaire.

Another aspect of motivation is motivational intensity, which may be defined as the effort students put into studying, doing their classroom or homework assignments. It also includes their persistence in learning, so this is a continuous activity, a process, not a single action. It appears that there must be a strong correlation between motivational intensity and being a successful foreign language learner.

Certainly, a motivated learner is goal-oriented and shows a desire to learn the foreign language. This desire should manifest itself in their efforts to achieve the goal and a positive attitude towards learning itself. Let us see how those three aspects of motivation are interrelated when it comes to the subjects of this study. Figure 2 shows the results for subscale 2–students' motivation. The red bar represents the results of group D–unsuccessful students, the green one of successful students–group G.

MOTIVATION

□ G ⊠ D

Item Number	G	D
39	4,6047	4,2121
38	3,0233	2,7879
37	3,9767	3,7879
35	4,3721	3,6667
30	3,0000	2,5455
21	4,9535	4,6970
18	4,9535	4,3333
11	4,6047	3,7879
6	4,5814	4,0606
3	3,9767	3,9697
2	4,7442	4,3333
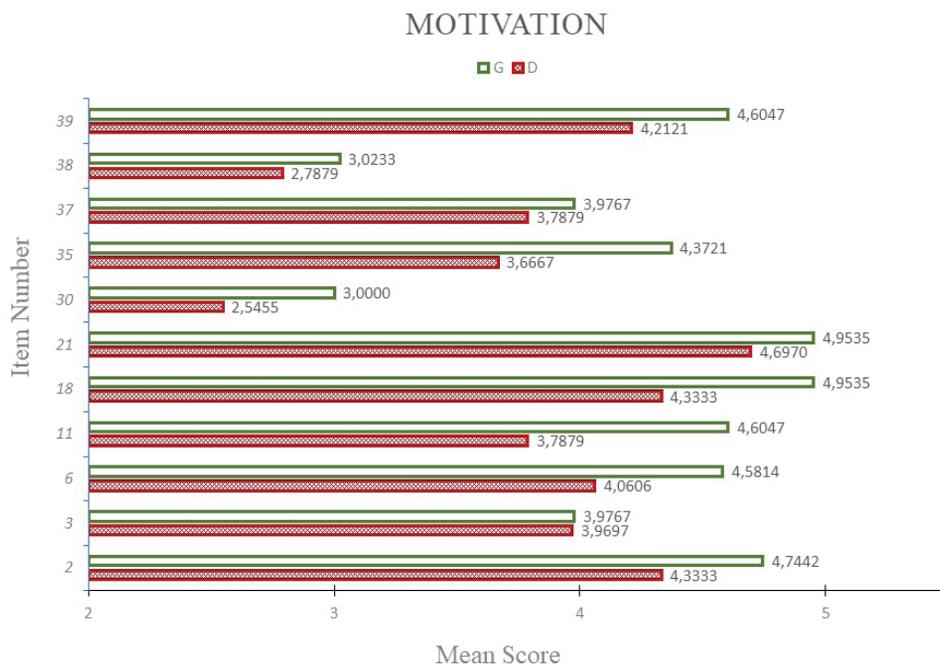
Mean Score

Figure 2. Students' motivation.

The mean values and standard deviation figures are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Overall mean scores and standard deviation for subscale 1: motivation

Group	Mean score	Standard deviation
D	3.93	0.90
G	4.25	0.73

There is some difference in the mean scores; still, we can say that motivation in both groups is high, in case of some items even very high, with the mean above 4 for both groups. Almost every participant (97%) wishes they were fluent in English; a great majority (88.5%) would like to understand the lyrics of English songs, and as many as 90.9% will not be satisfied with a low score (30%) in the basic Matura exam. Students acknowledge that English is beneficial for their future career and education. Although motivation in the successful group is stronger, the differences tend to be relatively small.

Theoretically, instrumental motivation connected with career planning should not be very relevant for high school students as most of them do not think about the distant future (Clement et al., 1994, cited in Dörnyei, 1994). Contrary to this assumption, as we can see in Table 3, the questionnaire results show that there were no participants who would even moderately disagree with the statement that English is essential for their future career.

Table 3

Studying English is important because it will be necessary to get a good job

Group	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	It's hard to say %	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
D	0	0	12.1	42.4	45.5
G	0	0	2.3	20.9	76.7

This could be a consequence of the acquiescence bias, which is a tendency to say yes when the participant is the so-called yeasayer who believes that the answer to a given question should be positive because it sounds correct (Dörnyei, 2003). Another explanation could be that the subjects simply repeated what they had heard from their parents and teachers. According to a study conducted in 2015 for Cambridge English Polska by Millward Brown among 600 parents, 86% of them consider English to be the school subject which is most important for their children's future, and 92% believe that knowledge of English will give their children an opportunity to get a good job. A superficial look at the job advertisement section in any newspaper supports this belief.

Thus, it is not surprising that even very young people, who probably do not have a clear vision of their career yet, appreciate the role English will play in their professional life. It should be emphasised at this point that the percentage of students who strongly agree with the statement that studying English is important because it will be necessary to get a good job is much higher among successful students.

The declaration that English is crucial for professional success does not exactly match the energy put into learning. Table 4 presents questionnaire results for the items connected with the time students spend learning English.

Table 4

I spend a lot of time learning English

Group	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	It's hard to say %	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
D	3.0	42.4	51.5	3.0	0
G	2.3	20.9	55.8	16.3	4.7

There are two items where the percentage drops, and they both concern motivational intensity—the effort which students put into attaining their goals. One could draw a conclusion that even though students in both groups realise the importance of English, very few of them spend a lot of time learning or do it systematically. Only 25.4% of the participants admit that they keep up to date with English by working on it regularly. It is clearly visible that hardly any students in the unsuccessful group spend a lot of time learning English (3%), whereas their number is slightly higher in the successful group (21%).

Subscale 2: Attitude

Since motivation and attitude are intertwined in the learning process, as positive attitudes increase and negative attitudes decrease motivation (Brown, 2000), it is not surprising that most students, irrespective of the group, have shown a positive attitude towards English, the average being above three. Researchers (Gardner, 1985; Morgan 1993; Noels et al., 2000; Dörnyei, 2005) emphasise that a positive attitude to the foreign language is crucial to language learning success; nevertheless, it does not seem to be the decisive factor. The data in Figure 3 reflect students' attitude towards the English language and towards learning English.
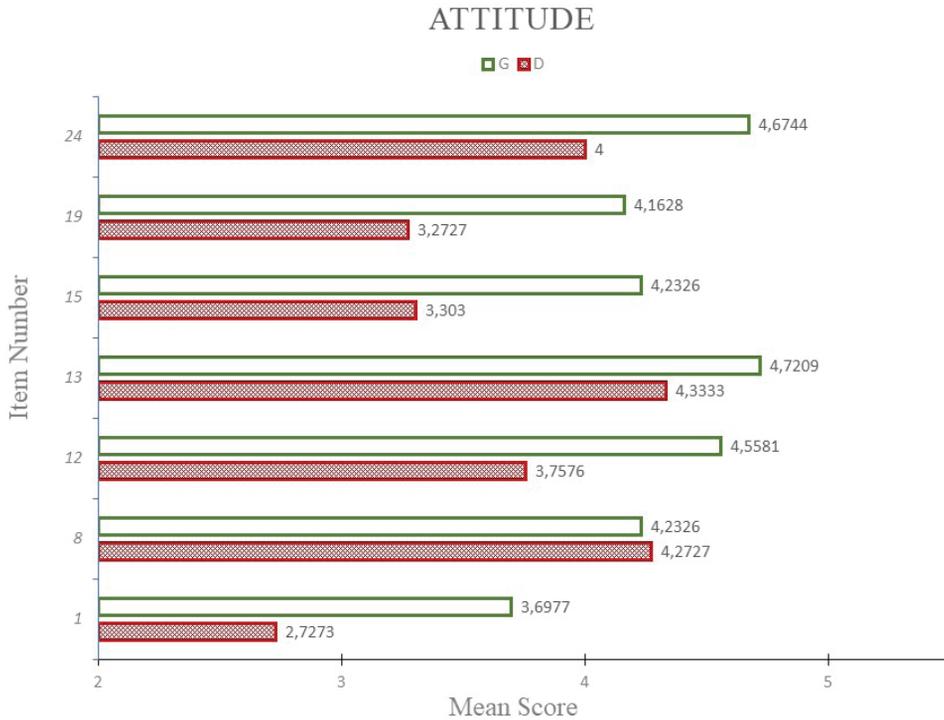
ATTITUDE

Figure 3. Students' attitude.

The mean values and standard deviation figures are presented in Table 5.

Table 5
Overall mean scores and standard deviation for subscale 2: attitude

Group	Mean score	Standard deviation
D	3.86	0.97
G	4.32	0.72

The mean scores of the two groups demonstrate that although learners in group G have a more positive attitude toward English and learning English (M = 4.32, SD = .72), the attitude of learners in group D is also positive (M = 3.86, SD = .97)

Most respondents in both groups (66.7% in group D and 88.3% in group G) declare that they like the sound of English. Participants in the successful group demonstrate a much higher degree of agreement with the statements concerning the attitude towards English, except for item number two. Even though the difference is a slight one, it is still worth noticing that more students in the

unsuccessful group (group D 84.9%, group G 83.4%) strongly disagree with the statement that they hate the English language. The differences between groups become more significant in the attitude towards learning English, which corresponds to the results concerning motivational intensity.

When it comes to declarations, both groups demonstrate a positive attitude towards learning English since 84.9% of subjects in group D and 95.4% in group G do not believe that learning English is a waste of time. Difficulties arise when theoretical declarations are supposed to be put into practice. Table 6 shows the results for item number 15: I like learning English.

Table 6
I like learning English

Group	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	It's hard to say %	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
D	9.1	6.1	39.4	36.4	9.1
G	0	0	11.6	53.5	34.9

The item-wise analysis of attitudes towards learning English indicates the absence of successful participants who do not like learning English, whereas in the unsuccessful group there are many who do not seem to have decided yet. Many participants (15.2%) in group D do not like learning English. Even though it may seem tempting to conclude that this is the reason behind their lack of success, I believe that any attempts to establish the cause and effect relationship between the fact that students do not like learning English and their low results may lead to the logical fallacy *post hoc ergo propter hoc*.

Subscale 3: Anxiety

Classroom anxiety is a complex concept that cannot be reduced to test anxiety, communication anxiety or fear of negative evaluation.

Although communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation provide useful conceptual building blocks for a description of foreign language anxiety, foreign language anxiety is not simply the combination of these fears transferred to foreign language learning. Rather, we conceive foreign language anxiety as a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process. (Horowitz, Horowitz, & Cope, 2012, p. 128)

According to MacIntyre and Charos (1996), who analysed the relations between affective variables and their impact on the frequency of second language communication, language anxiety has a negative impact on willingness to communicate and on perceived communicative competence. As we can see in Figure 4, anxiety is the first subscale where the red bars are higher, which means that unsuccessful students have a higher degree of classroom anxiety.
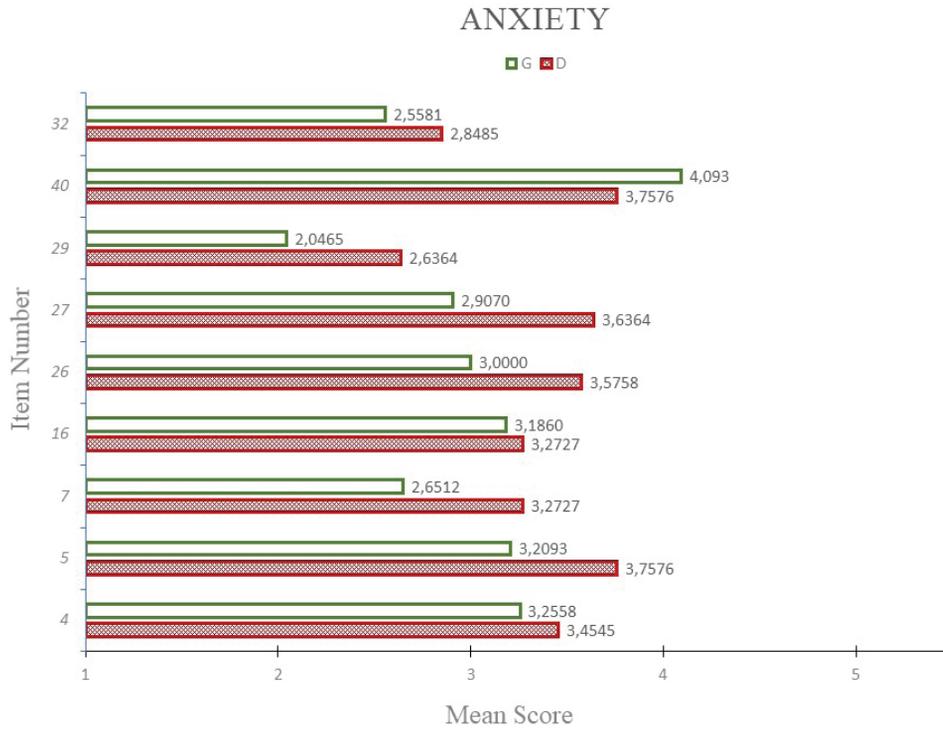
Figure 4. Students' classroom anxiety.

The mean values and standard deviation figures are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Overall mean scores and standard deviation for subscale 3: anxiety

Group	Mean score	Standard deviation
D	3.35	1.32
G	2.98	1.13

The data presented above show a relatively high standard deviation for both unsuccessful (SD = 1.32) and successful (SD = 1.13) learners, which

highlights anxiety to be the most inconsistent subscale. The mean score of 3.35 shows that unsuccessful students have a relatively high level of classroom anxiety.

The item-wise analysis demonstrates that both groups have a high degree of understanding why other students feel nervous about speaking English in class. The biggest differences between successful and unsuccessful students concern getting nervous while speaking English during classes. In the item "I get nervous when I am speaking in my English class," the discrepancy reaches 35.6%, the results for group D and G being 72.8% and 37.2% respectively. It is worth mentioning that classroom anxiety is low (with the mean below 3) in the item: "I get anxious that other students will laugh at me when I speak English." The results for this element are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

I am anxious that the other students in class will laugh at me when I speak English

Group	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	It's hard to say %	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
D	27.3	27.3	12.1	21.2	12.1
G	34.9	41.9	11.6	7.0	4.7

Interestingly, the majority of participants in both groups (group D: 54.6%, group G: 76.8%) disagree with the statement that they are afraid that other students will laugh at them when they speak English. Still, the number of those who agree with this statement is much higher in the unsuccessful group (33.3% vs. 11.7%). Considering that the level of anxiety in the unsuccessful group is generally high, with the mean above the average level, there must be reasons other than their colleagues' negative reaction that contribute to this state of affairs. Perhaps it is the teacher's reaction that they fear. The fact that they are not afraid of being ridiculed by their peers does not mean that they are not afraid of the teacher's negative comments or a bad grade. Another reason could be that group D participants are aware of their deficiencies. Their reluctance to speak may be a consequence of insufficient knowledge of English. On the other hand, it might be a question of not being used to speaking English. Perhaps Polish (the students' mother tongue) was the only language of communication during their English lessons in middle school and, eventually, they will get used to new circumstances and their anxiety will lower.

Subscale 4: Students' Dissatisfaction

The items in the last subscale, under the heading of students' dissatisfaction, the results of which are presented in Figure 5, aimed at answering the question whether students consider the level of their English class too high and whether they are disappointed with it or not.
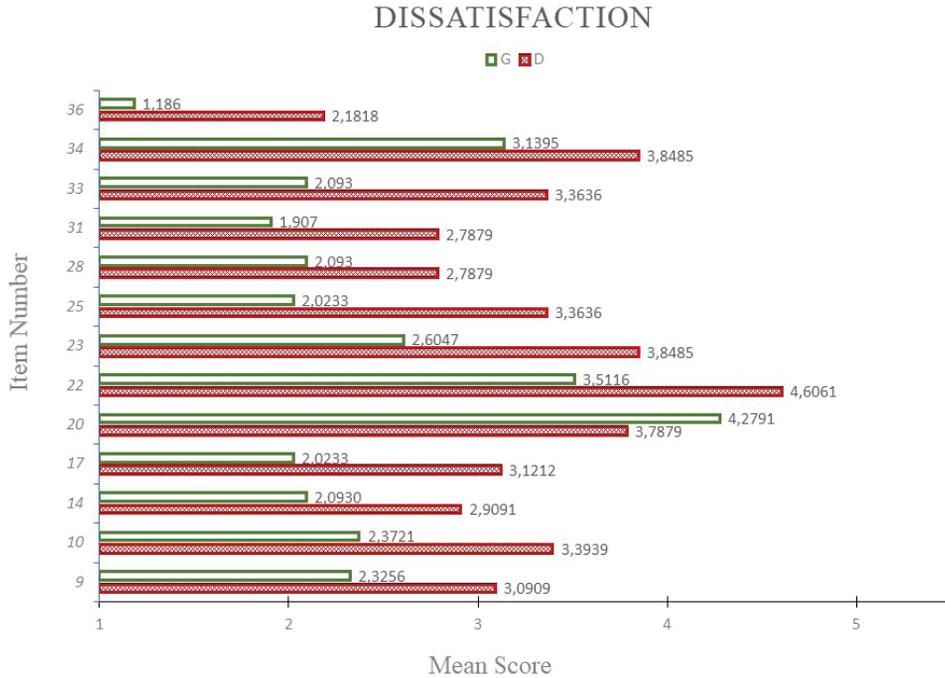
DISSATISFACTION

Figure 5. Students' dissatisfaction.

The mean values and standard deviation figures are presented in Table 9.

Table 9
Overall mean scores and standard deviation for subscale 4: dissatisfaction

Group	Mean score	Standard deviation
D	3.31	1.11
G	2.43	0.99

The mean score of 3.31 (SD = 1.11) in the unsuccessful group shows that learners appear to be dissatisfied with their English lessons. The difference between mean scores for both groups is the most significant. When it comes to particular items, 45.5% of unsuccessful students admit that they would rather

their English course-book were easier. As many as 66.7% of them agree with the statement that they tend to give up and not pay attention when they do not understand their English teacher's explanation of something. One statement in this subscale was exceptional. It concerned students' expectations: more participants in group G (88.3%) than in group D (75.7%) expected that they would get good grades. As we can see, students in both groups were quite optimistic with regard to their future performance.

The remaining items in this subscale show visible differences. The item-wise analysis illustrates that unsuccessful students feel that their level of English is lower than the level of other students in the group. It is also worth noticing that a vast majority of unsuccessful students are fully aware of their need to revise basic structures. There is a noticeable discrepancy between the groups. The discrepancy is even bigger for the item concerning problems with basic structures (Table 10).

Table 10

I know I have problems with basic structures

Group	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	It's hard to say %	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
D	0	24.2	33.3	24.2	18.2
G	51.2	11.6	20.9	16.3	0

More than half of participants in group G strongly disagree with the statement that they have problems with basic structures, whereas there were no such responses in the unsuccessful group. In view of those results a question arises. What inhibits unsuccessful students from informing their teachers that they could use a few hours devoted to the revision of basic structures? Each teacher is obligated to conduct some extra lessons. My experience shows that very few students participate in them, and those who do are the ones who want to take part in language competitions or better prepare for the extended Matura exam. It would require further investigation to find out the reasons behind unsuccessful learners' reluctance to participate in those lessons, despite the fact that they are conscious of their shortcomings.

Summary of the Findings

- Students' motivation in both group D and group G was high: 3.93 and 4.25, respectively.

- Both groups demonstrated a positive attitude towards the English language and learning English with the mean values of 3.86 (group D) and 4.32 (group G).
- Students' poor performance was not a result of their lack of motivation or their negative attitude toward English.
- Anxiety and dissatisfaction with the English course varied across the two investigated groups.
- Learners whose performance was poor demonstrated a higher level of anxiety and dissatisfaction with their English lessons. The mean value of anxiety was 3.35 in group D and 2.98 in group G, whereas the mean value of dissatisfaction was 3.31 in group D and 2.43 in group G.

Conclusion

The limitations of the present study must be borne in mind. The participants were students of one school – the purposive strategy of survey sampling was used (Nunan, 1992). The study was restricted to investigating only attitude, motivation, anxiety, and students' dissatisfaction. As far as course evaluation is concerned, teacher assessment was deliberately omitted. Although we regularly mark our students' performance, Polish high school teachers are not accustomed to any kind of appraisal, especially if it were an appraisal made by their students. Besides, the head teacher's permission to investigate this aspect was not granted. Another limitation is that the only variable in this action research was students' results, so it would be hard to generalise the findings. Nevertheless, it seems that they might contribute to limiting the number of unsuccessful students in the school where the survey was conducted.

The most significant observation is that unsuccessful students, despite their positive attitude towards English and relatively high motivation, seem to be dissatisfied with their English class level, and show a higher degree of classroom anxiety than their colleagues with better results. In other words, it is not their motivation or attitude that should be worked upon. The teachers' efforts must focus on lowering learners' anxiety, and meeting their specific needs to increase their satisfaction with the English lessons.

In order to, at least partially, alleviate the problem, teachers should take into account end-of-middle school exam results and immediately offer freshmen whose results were low some remedial classes devoted to the revision of basic structures in order that learners have a chance to make up for their shortcomings from the very beginning of the school year. Simultaneously, they will become aware of the fact that their level of English is lower than the level of

other learners. These classes shall be conducted regularly to increase students' motivational intensity, which appears to be a key factor in foreign language learning. I dare suggest that the classes be imposed on first-year high school students with low exam results to make sure that they participate in them and, consequently, benefit from them.

I would also recommend that the division into groups be a cross-class division to minimise level discrepancies among members of the same group and, in consequence, to lower the anxiety of some students. It must be borne in mind, however, that this solution might pose a real challenge because it is difficult to implement. It could complicate preparing the timetable and would require tremendous effort on the part of the person responsible for this task. It remains an open question whether it will be considered worthwhile by school authorities.

Apart from that, the teachers should do their utmost to utilise the high motivation and positive attitude of the weaker students. They should be encouraged to take active part in the lesson in order that they can break the language barrier. Rather than wait for them to volunteer, the teacher could involve them in group or pair work, where English is the language of communication. If other students offer their help and the teacher praises the weaker students readily for any progress they make, their self-confidence is bound to increase.

Should the above recommendations be introduced, the first semester grades will indicate whether they have fulfilled their role. Better grades may suggest that the same solutions could be tested in other schools that face the same problem. Should the first semester grades not improve, it seems reasonable to expand the scope of the study to seek other factors that influence students' performance, apart from the ones included in the questionnaire.

Similar questionnaires should become part of teaching practice. They could be an invaluable source of knowledge, not only about our students' motivation and attitude, but also about their expectations concerning the content and form of their English lessons. It might be worthwhile to employ action research, which is a continuous activity, to improve the teaching/learning process. I believe that action research, although time and effort-consuming, might be interesting from teachers' and teachers-to-be perspective. Pre-service teachers and practising teachers should be encouraged to conduct this type of research as it will definitely transform them from passive into active participants of the teaching process. I am aware that Polish teachers are overloaded with work, the amount of paperwork they have to deal with surpasses all expectations and additional duties discourage even the most passionate ones; nevertheless,

(a) many, if not most, language teachers would like to gain a more thorough understanding of the teaching and learning process as well as the various classroom events; (b) one main purpose of applied linguistics research is

to provide answers to questions that concern these issues; and (c) currently there is a wide gap between teachers and researchers in most countries, which needs to be bridged. (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 193)

This paper is just an attempt to bridge that gap and to encourage teachers to act.

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Joanna Masoń-Budzyń

Neue Schule, dieselbe Routine? Eine unter den Schülern der ersten Oberschulklasse mit schwachen Schulleistungen durchgeführte Umfrage

Z u s a m m e n f a s s u n g

Die Aktionsforschung ist eins der Werkzeuge, die ein nachdenklicher Lehrer zur Verfügung hat, wenn er bemüht ist, spezifische Probleme in seiner täglichen Arbeit zu lösen. Der gegenwärtige Aufsatz handelt von der in einer allgemeinbildenden Oberschule durchgeführten Forschung, deren Ziel war es, manche Gründe der schwachen Schulleistungen im Englischunterricht von den Schülern der ersten Klasse zu ergründen. Obwohl die Schüler in der neuen Schule den einzelnen Sprachgruppen aufgrund des Leistungstestes eingestuft

wurden, beobachtete man, dass schlechte Noten nach dem ersten Semester in starker positiver Wechselbeziehung zu schwachen Leistungen des Testes für Gymnasiasten standen. Es wurde eine Umfrage gemacht, in der die befragten Schüler ihre Motivation, Einstellung und Angst vor Unterricht beurteilen sollten. Sie bewerteten auch ihre Kompetenzen im Vergleich mit anderen Gruppenmitgliedern. Im vorliegenden Text werden die Ergebnisse der Umfrage präsentiert und die Vorschläge für die Lehrer angedeutet, wie diese manche Bildungsbarrieren den Schülern in ihrer neuen Schule zu bewältigen helfen können.

Adapted Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (Polish and English Version)

Table 11

Questionnaire Items

No.	Polish Version	English Version
1	Uczenie się angielskiego jest naprawdę pasjonujące.	Learning English is really great.
2	Uczenie się angielskiego jest ważne, ponieważ angielski jest konieczny, by dostać dobrą pracę.	Studying English is important because it will be necessary to get a good job.
3	Dobry wynik na maturze z angielskiego pozwoli dostać mi się na wymarzone studia.	A good English Matura exam result will allow me to get into my dream university.
4	Uczniowie, którzy twierdzą, że stresują się na angielskim, po prostu szukają wymówek.	Students who claim they get nervous in English classes are just making excuses.
5	Chętnie zgłaszam się do odpowiedzi na angielskim.	I eagerly volunteer answers in my English class.
6	Uczenie się angielskiego jest ważne, ponieważ będzie mi on potrzebny w przyszłej pracy.	Studying English is important because I will need it for my career.
7	Nie odczuwam niepokoju, kiedy odpowiadam na lekcji angielskiego.	I don't get anxious when I have to answer a question in my English class.
8	Nienawidzę języka angielskiego (chodzi o sam język, nie lekcje).	I hate the English language.
9	Mój poziom angielskiego jest niższy niż pozostałych osób w grupie.	My level of English is lower than the level of other students in my group.
10	Wolałbym, żeby podręcznik do angielskiego był łatwiejszy.	I would rather my English course book were easier.
11	Zależy mi na uzyskaniu wysokiego wyniku (powyżej 90%) z matury podstawowej z angielskiego.	I really want to get a high score (above 90%) in the basic Matura exam.
12	Podoba mi się brzmienie języka angielskiego.	I like the sound of English.
13	Uczenie się angielskiego to strata czasu.	Learning English is a waste of time.
14	Ćwiczenia, które robimy na angielskim są dla mnie za trudne.	The exercises we do in our English class are too difficult for me.
15	Lubię uczyć się angielskiego.	I like learning English.
16	Wstydzę się zgłaszać do odpowiedzi na lekcji angielskiego.	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in our English class.
17	Mój podręcznik do angielskiego jest za trudny.	My English course book is too difficult.
18	Wystarczy mi 30% z matury podstawowej z angielskiego.	30% in the basic Matura exam will be enough for me.

19	Uważam, że uczenie się angielskiego jest nudne.	I think that learning English is dull.
20	Rozpoczynając naukę w liceum liczyłem/ liczyłam na to, że będę miał/miała dobre oceny z angielskiego.	When I came to this school I expected to have good grades in English.
21	Chciałbym/Chciałabym mówić biegle po angielsku.	I wish I were fluent in English.
22	Byłoby mi łatwiej, gdybyśmy poświęcili więcej czasu na powtarzanie podstaw.	It would be much easier for me if we devoted more time to the revision of basic structures.
23	Kiedy nie rozumiem, gdy nauczyciel angielskiego wyjaśnia coś na lekcji, wyłączam się.	I tend to give up and not pay attention when I don't understand my English teacher's explanation of something.
24	Angielski jest bardzo ważną częścią programu nauczania.	English is a very important part of the school programme.
25	Wiem, że nie opanowałem podstaw angielskiego.	I know I have problems with basic structures.
26	Nigdy nie czuję się pewnie odpowiadając po angielsku podczas lekcji angielskiego.	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in our English class.
27	Stresuję się mówiąc po angielsku podczas lekcji.	I get nervous when I am speaking in my English class.
28	Ćwiczenia z podręcznika są dla mnie zrozumiałe.	I understand the exercises in my course book.
29	Boję się, że inni uczniowie będą się ze mnie śmiali, gdy będę mówić po angielsku.	I am anxious that the other students in class will laugh at me when I speak English.
30	Poświęcam dużo czasu na naukę angielskiego.	I spend a lot of time learning English.
31	Poziom podręcznika mi odpowiada.	The level of my English course book is right for me.
32	Martwi mnie, że inni uczniowie w mojej grupie są lepsi z angielskiego niż ja.	It worries me that other students in my group are better at English.
33	Angielski jest jednym z moich ulubionych przedmiotów.	English is one of my favourite subjects.
34	Moja motywacja do nauki była silniejsza na początku roku.	My motivation was stronger at the beginning of the school year.
35	Uczę się angielskiego tylko po to, żeby zdać maturę.	I learn English only to pass the Matura exam.
36	Czasem marzę o możliwości zrezygnowania z nauki angielskiego.	I sometimes daydream about dropping English.
37	Nie uczę się angielskiego w domu.	I don't learn English at home.
38	Systematycznie uczę się angielskiego.	I keep up to date with English by working on it almost every day.

| 39 | Chciałbym/chciałabym rozumieć teksty angielskich piosenek. | I would like to understand the lyrics of English songs. |
| 40 | Nie rozumiem, dlaczego inni uczniowie stresują się, gdy mają mówić po angielsku na lekcji. | I don't understand why other students feel nervous about speaking English in class. |

Adapted Attitude/Motivation Test Battery Key

Table 12

Test Key

No.	Category	Subscale
1	Positively Keyed	Attitude
2	Positively Keyed	Motivation
3	Positively Keyed	Motivation
4	Negatively Keyed	Anxiety
5	Negatively Keyed	Anxiety
6	Positively Keyed	Motivation
7	Negatively Keyed	Anxiety
8	Negatively Keyed	Attitude
9	Positively Keyed	Dissatisfaction
10	Positively Keyed	Dissatisfaction
11	Positively Keyed	Motivation
12	Positively Keyed	Attitude
13	Negatively Keyed	Attitude
14	Positively Keyed	Dissatisfaction
15	Positively Keyed	Attitude
16	Positively Keyed	Anxiety
17	Positively Keyed	Dissatisfaction
18	Negatively Keyed	Motivation
19	Negatively Keyed	Attitude
20	Positively Keyed	Dissatisfaction
21	Positively Keyed	Motivation
22	Positively Keyed	Dissatisfaction
23	Positively Keyed	Dissatisfaction
24	Positively Keyed	Attitude
25	Positively Keyed	Dissatisfaction
26	Positively Keyed	Anxiety
27	Positively Keyed	Anxiety
28	Negatively Keyed	Dissatisfaction
29	Positively Keyed	Anxiety
30	Positively Keyed	Motivation
31	Negatively Keyed	Dissatisfaction
32	Positively Keyed	Anxiety
33	Negatively Keyed	Dissatisfaction
34	Positively Keyed	Dissatisfaction
35	Negatively Keyed	Motivation
36	Positively Keyed	Dissatisfaction
37	Negatively Keyed	Motivation
38	Positively Keyed	Motivation
39	Positively Keyed	Motivation
40	Negatively Keyed	Anxiety

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Rethink Your Old Teaching Methods: Designing a Pronunciation Course for Adolescent Polish Learners of English

Abstract

Numerous studies (e.g., Lipińska, 2014; Majer, 2002; Nowacka, 2003; Sobkowiak, 2002; Szpyra-Kozłowska et al., 2002; Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2008; Waniek-Klimczak, 2002; Wrembel, 2002) have shown that although teaching L2 pronunciation is included in university curricula, it is at the same time virtually absent at lower stages of education. Moreover, it has been noticed that teaching phonetics to younger learners is advisable and may be really effective (e.g., Lipińska, 2017c; Nixon & Tomlinson, 2005). Undoubtedly, there are a lot of books and courses written by and for Polish learners of English, but they are dedicated to adults (e.g., Porzuczek et al., 2013; Sawala et al., 2011) or dedicated to international users (e.g., Baker, 2006; Hancock, 2008; Hewings, 2010). But the materials and methods used while working with adult learners and university students are no longer applicable if one wants to teach phonetics in a different environment and create an attractive and efficient course for children or young teenagers, since, as for example Komorowska (2011) notices, each foreign language course has to be characterized by realistic goals and appropriate methods and components.

The aim of this paper is to present various methods and materials which can be success-fully applied while teaching English pronunciation to 11–13-year-olds. They have been imple-mented in three groups consisting of such L2 learners, and their usefulness and effectiveness have been proven by studies on both speech production and perception (e.g., Lipińska, 2017d).

Keywords: foreign language learning, pronunciation teaching, teaching materials

Introduction

Gilbert and Levis (2001, p. 506) once remarked that pronunciation is "a field that has been notoriously data poor and anecdote rich." And even though it may

seem to be a slight exaggeration, one has to be aware of the fact that teaching and researching L2 pronunciation has been neglected and underestimated for many years, and the situation has not changed until recent decades when a growing number of studies devoted to this topic could finally be observed. However, despite this noticeable growth in research, numerous scholars continue finding some areas of phonetic studies which require further and more detailed exploration (see, e.g., Schwartz et al., 2014). It may turn out to be crucial in the case of education, as well as foreign language teaching and learning, where results obtained from various studies are surprisingly seldom applied in practice.

Teaching L2 Pronunciation in Polish Schools

Undoubtedly, the status of L2 pronunciation teaching in Polish schools illustrates the aforementioned problem best. The interest in it started to grow in the early 1990s when more and more researchers from various academic institutions in Poland began to examine this matter. The studies have continued until now and their results have never been too optimistic. What has been proven is the fact that any pronunciation training is still virtually non-existent during foreign/second language classes at all educational levels lower than the academic one, and if any elements of phonetics are incorporated into language classes, they are of doubtful quality (e.g., Porzuczek, 2002; Szpyra-Kozłowska et al., 2002; Majer, 2002; Wysocka, 2003). What is also important, most L2 learners frequently claim to be dissatisfied with their own pronunciation skills and they are even more critical while assessing their current and former L2 teachers' pronunciation in English (for details see, e.g., Lipińska, 2014; Lipińska, 2017a; Majer, 2002; Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2003; Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2008; Szpyra-Kozłowska et al., 2002). Exactly the same situation has been observed for other languages, such as French (e.g., Deprez, 2008; Kotuła, 2015). It is especially worrying in the case of L2 teachers who (theoretically) should speak a given foreign language fluently since they serve as models for their students, also (or even above all) with regard to pronunciation (Waniek-Klimczak, 2006). Some interesting information could be found in Szpyra-Kozłowska's (2008) study. In her paper, she replicated and also contrasted her two previous pieces of research in which she first had analyzed a level of English classes in numerous Polish high schools, and second—assessed the level of the competence of English teachers from the same schools. The results of both studies demonstrated that in all schools where the research had taken place, there was no single class devoted to English pronunciation. Furthermore, only very few lessons contained single

elements of any pronunciation training. Besides, students from those schools highlighted that their teachers did not pay any attention to learners' pronunciation in L2, rarely corrected it, claimed that pronunciation was not an important part of language learning and frequently used a faulty pseudo-phonetic transcription (e.g., transcribing the word *a nurse* by teachers as *"e ners"*). What is more, also the teachers' pronunciation was described by their students as "full of errors" (for instance, it included incorrect vowel length, final devoicing of obstruents and similar easily detectable errors). Hence, one can easily draw a conclusion that low phonetic competence of foreign language teachers, as well as the lack of any classes devoted to second language pronunciation training do contribute to L2 learners' low phonetic competence in their target language. The question arises as to what causes this reluctance towards phonetic training. For instance, Baran-Łucarz (2006) attempted to find the explanation as to why pronunciation is neglected in foreign language teaching in Poland. Having interviewed numerous L2 teachers, the researcher noticed that they offer a lot of excuses. For example, they state that there are no resources that could be used in teaching L2 phonetics, that learners are not interested in it at all (a few researchers have been provided with quite the opposite opinions—see, e.g., Kotuła, 2015; Lipińska, 2015), that teaching pronunciation is fatiguing and that there are other, more important aspects of language that need to be taught. The last opinion seems to be shared by many foreign language teachers and has been proven in Szpyra-Kozłowska's (2008) study in which the author found out that most teachers find teaching grammar and vocabulary much more vital than phonodydactics.

Some researchers attribute this situation to the more and more popular approach of "being just communicative" in an L2. This kind of attitude towards using an L2 has recently become favored by many language learners (and teachers). It has been suggested that L2 teachers ought to focus a lot on conversation skills, and avoid too much instruction in any other skills such as grammar, as they will be learnt anyway and by the way. Moreover, this attitude might be perceived as a consequence of a relatively low priority of pronunciation skills in various language examinations such as Polish Matura (the upper-secondary school leaving exam), American TOEFL and Cambridge ESOL examinations (Waniek-Klimczak & Dłutek, 2003; Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2003). It has to be noticed that general communication skills are regarded as the most significant and desirable ones in all of the exams mentioned above (Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2008).

Correct L2 Pronunciation: Still Necessary

Although the situation described in the previous section has continued for many years, it seems rather peculiar since it is very easy to notice that if anyone wants to communicate successfully in any language (native or foreign), they simply have to acquire (or learn) correct pronunciation patterns of this particular tongue (e.g., Komorowska, 2011). Among the most vital abilities here one ought to highlight understanding other speakers and being understood by other language users. To put it simple, in order to communicate successfully, an individual must develop speech which is intelligible enough to convey the intended message (see, e.g., Littlewood, 1994; Tarone, 1978; Beebe, 1984). It has been explained clearly by Gajewska (2011), who pointed out that inability to distinguish between foreign phonemes and incapability of reading and pronouncing newly acquired foreign words influence negatively the whole process of second/foreign language learning. Moreover, the author was even more intransigent in her opinion and claimed that a language learner with fossilized incorrect pronunciation is a learner to whom a lot of harm had been done by teachers. What is especially important according to her and what cannot ever be ignored is the learners' ability to perceive and produce those segmental contrasts which do not appear in one's mother tongue. Kotuła (2015) stated further that proper phonetic training should not be difficult to design and apply in practice because researchers, teachers, and instructors are mostly familiar with the most recurrent and persistent pronunciation difficulties encountered by L2 learners from particular countries.

On the other hand, language learners relatively often present the opinion that they do not really need correct pronunciation in their target language as they are not going to communicate with any native speakers of this language, but only with other non-native users because, for example, English is an international language. Here some polemics is needed indeed as, like a lot of scholars have remarked, the ability to speak a language correctly is crucial not only in the communication with native speakers of it, but also with those prospective other non-native users. The explanation for this claim is not surprising. Since most non-native users of a particular language do not come from the same country and do not share the same language background, that is, their mother tongues and their phonetic systems are different, their pronunciation must be in consequence influenced by completely unlike interlingual factors that create an impression of a so-called foreign accent which often makes the utterances unintelligible and thus hinders successful communication (Littlewood, 1994; Setter & Jenkins, 2005). But what is worth noticing is the fact that even those scholars who advocate teaching and learning English as Lingua Franca and who claim that some degree of foreign-accentedness does not impair communica-

tion still find some features of L2 pronunciation which have to be taught (such as some phoneme contrasts) and some L1-influences (e.g., L1 stress patterns) which need to be removed from L2 learners' speech in order to preserve effective communication and comfortable intelligibility (see, e.g., Jenkins, 2000). This is why no foreign/second language classes can be devoid of at least some pronunciation training.

Factors to Be Considered While Teaching L2 Pronunciation

There are a lot of teachers who claim that intensive language training should start as early as possible (Nikolov & Curtain, 2000). This view is usually connected with the Critical Period Hypothesis proposed by Lennenberg in 1967. It has to be mentioned that at the beginning, Lennenberg's theory was developed only with regard to the process of first language acquisition. The author claimed that there is a critical period when humans are sensitive enough to acquire a language which starts around the age of two and lasts until a child reaches the age of puberty. According to the theory, after this period the acquisition of one's mother tongue becomes basically impossible. Another matter which Lennenberg pointed out was the opinion that language function is gradually lateralized in the left brain hemisphere. He highlighted that it was this process that explained the existence of a critical/sensitive period for the emergence and establishment of a language (e.g., Lennenberg, 1967; Puppel, 1996). With the gradual growth of the popularity of the Critical Period Hypothesis, some scholars decided to extend the theories included in it to the process of second language acquisition. And thus the central hypothesis for L2 appeared. It stated that if the critical period is a real phenomenon, learning the second language after puberty must in consequence be much more demanding and complicated than before it (cf. Puppel, 1996). A number of researchers decided to test this hypothesis, but what was striking, the results obtained in those studies showed that the measurable differences between various aspects of L2 acquisition before and after the age of puberty were not as significant as they had been expected to be. Nonetheless, one aspect was crucial: in not all, but quite a few cases, the earlier the subjects started learning an L2, the better pronunciation in it they achieved (see, e.g., Krashen, 1975; Ervin-Tripp, 1974; Klein, 1986; Millington, 2011; Oh et al., 2011).

This situation certainly needs some explanation. The reasons for such results may be different. To start with, the situation might have resulted from the process of fossilization of interlanguage phonology. Some scholars and researchers even state that fossilization of L2 phonology is preordained when

older learners, that is, adolescents and adults, start to learn an L2 (e.g., Wysocka, 2007). Sometimes one may have an impression that there are as many opinions on this matter as many researchers. While some of them (e.g., Scovel, 1969; Demirezen, 2010; Gumbaridze, 2012) still claim that no adult will ever be able to achieve native-like pronunciation in their L2, others state that although it may not be easy, it is still possible for adult language users to learn it, and there were cases when adults did achieve perfect pronunciation in their target language (TL; Tarone, 1978). Especially recent, acoustic research provides the evidence that correct pronunciation in an L2 is perfectly achievable if appropriate training is applied (see, e.g., Rojczyk, 2010a; Rojczyk, 2010b; Lipińska, 2013a; Lipińska, 2013b). What is more, Porzuczek and Rojczyk (2010) remarked that the latest studies (e.g., Burns et al., 2007; Hoonhorst et al., 2009; Rivera-Gaxiola et al., 2005) suggest that the contrary to the Critical Period Hypothesis and its assumptions, human capability of learning new, foreign sounds is not limited, impaired or lost after the age of puberty and that language learners are able to master L2 pronunciation at an advanced level even as adults. Quite a few recent studies also showed that incorrect fossilized pronunciation can be rehabilitated and improved (e.g., Acton, 1984; Demirezen, 2009). This is why one may ask the following question here: what is then the most probable reason for phonological fossilization still observed in some language learners? There are several plausible explanations for this situation. To begin with, there is a highly physiological approach to the aforementioned process. It is widely known that some human muscles and nerves practice the same set of pronunciation habits and movements for years and thus undergo a process of atrophy while they get older. This kind of a situation results in purely physiological problems in acquiring new pronunciation patterns as the articulators are "stiff" to a large extent (Tarone, 1978). Other proposed interpretations are of more psychological nature. For instance, Guiora et al. (1972) and Neufeld (1978) are in favor of the affective argument and highlight the adult learners' potential lack of empathy with the native speakers and the culture of their TL or even possible negative attitude towards the language, speakers and culture. Krashen (1977), on the other hand, maintains that fossilization is tightly connected with the critical period in SLA, which is the one after puberty, when an individual tends to begin to *learn* language consciously rather than *acquire* it as children usually do.

Having taken the aforementioned arguments into consideration, more and more foreign language teachers are in favor of the "the earlier, the better" rule. They know that although teaching an L2 and its phonetic system at any age is possible, it is much easier and faster to teach correct pronunciation from the very beginning of L2 instruction than to correct fossilized pronunciation errors at later stages (e.g., Baker, 1996; Nixon & Tomlinson, 2005). Over a hundred years ago, Otto Jespersen was probably the first to officially state that

"The very first lesson in a foreign language ought to be devoted to initiating pupils into the world of sounds […]" (Jespersen, 1904, p. 145). What he added was the fact that no technical vocabulary or boring theory must be included in that first lesson and that pronunciation training can be interesting to young learners as it "contains nothing that they cannot understand, and nothing that is not useful for them […] so that this dreadful phonetical science is not so terribly far beyond the horizon of ordinary children after all" (Jespersen, 1904, pp. 152–153). Also Gonet (2004) shares the same opinion. He criticized the fact that young L2 teachers from Poland frequently claim that teaching foreign pronunciation ought to start no sooner than at the secondary school. He highlighted that such thinking is wrong in the light of the physiological, psychological, and social constraints, as well as learners' abilities and this kind of training ought to start much earlier. It also needs to be added that while young children are simply able to *acquire* correct pronunciation in their L2 thanks to the appropriate input—for example by listening to stories, songs, nursery rhymes or by playing games, teenage learners who are above thirteen years of age are already much more conscious learners (Nixon & Tomlinson, 2005) and they are really able to start *learning* pronunciation in the same way like they are instructed in L2 grammar or vocabulary.

The Issues Relevant to Teaching Materials
Applied in L2 Pronunciation Training

As has already been mentioned, Baran-Łucarz (2006) noticed that language teachers have numerous excuses for not teaching L2 pronunciation and, for instance, they claim that there are no resources that could be used to teach phonetics. Actually, a lot of studies have proven something just the opposite. Moreover, there are quite a few manuals how to teach pronunciation which provide L2 teachers not only with the necessary know-how, but also with numerous ready-to-use full scenarios of classes and copious activities and exercises (e.g., Kelly, 2000; Laroy, 2004; Nixon & Tomlinson, 2005; Porzuczek & Rojczyk, in press). With regard to pronunciation courses and manuals, they can be divided into two categories. First of all, there are copious publications written by native speakers of English and designed for international language learners (e.g., Baker, 2006; Gilbert, 2012; Hancock, 2008; Hewings, 2010; Marks, 2013; Ponsonby, 1988; Roach, 2013). On the other hand, one can find volumes and programs written by and for non-native users/learners of English (e.g., Arabski, 1987; Bałutowa, 1965; Porzuczek et al., 2013; Reszkiewicz, 1981; Sawala et al., 2011 for Polish learners of English). Both these categories have

their advantages and drawbacks. While many teachers prefer courses written by native speakers of English justifying their choice on the grounds that native speakers of a particular language know it and its nuances best, they have to agree that it is impossible for one course to take into consideration all possible difficulties encountered by all potential learners who come from various countries and represent various L1s. And as Kotuła (2015) notices, language teachers are usually familiar with the most frequent pronunciation difficulties and mistakes displayed by L2 learners from their own countries. This is why textbooks and programs written and designed by non-native speakers of English can be tailor-made for particular groups of language learners and they may include appropriate L1-vs.-L2 comparisons, more exercises on problematic areas of phonetics and phonology, as well as lucid explanations regarding L2 production.

However, even the best course designed for a particular group of language users and based on requirements connected to learners' L1 may sometimes be insufficient. Learning and teaching practical phonetics necessitates patience, regular practice and a really individual approach to a learner. Having done exercises from a chosen textbook, it is worth turning to additional methods and resources which can help improve one's perception and production in an L2 (Porzuczek & Rojczyk, 2010).

Numerous scholars provide copious solutions to the aforementioned problem and nowadays, more and more new attractive methods of teaching L2 pronunciation are suggested. Apart from countless textbooks and courses which are designed to teach either British or American English pronunciation to learners form all over the world, one can find additional resource books with interesting pronunciation activities, games or quizzes (e.g., Nixon & Tomlinson, 2005; Vaughan-Rees, 2011). Also numerous technological aids are widely available and make phonetics classes more interesting to learners who could be bored by only traditional listen-and-repeat activities.

Among the new, helpful devices one can mention, for example, the use of the Learner Response System, so-called clickers (Baran-Łucarz et al., 2015; Cardoso, 2011). The studies showed that L2 learners were more relaxed during the classes where the clickers were used, they participated in the tasks actively and were very positive towards the new system.

Nowacka (2015) advocates using authentic materials retrieved from the Internet. Following Sobkowiak's (2003) remark that the use of original recordings can boost L2 learners' metaphonetic competence, in her paper she presented a variety of resources available online, grouped in five categories (designed for training segmental features, suprasegmental features, prosody, the spelling-to-sound correspondence and other accent-related issues). The results of the practical examination proved that a course in English phonetics and phonology supplemented with those materials was much more interesting

and convincing for the learners, enabled discussing numerous phonetic issues, stimulated phonetic discussion and pronunciation awareness. Also other researchers (e.g., Celce-Murcia et al., 1996; Rashtchi, 2011; Steinbrich, 2014; Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2015) suggested using authentic resources such as podcasts, cartoons, slogans or billboards in order to make pronunciation courses more realistic and appealing, as well as to make language learners more responsible for their own pronunciation and to enhance their receptive and productive skills.

Sundberg and Cardoso (2015) described another useful tool—a mobile application helping L2 learners improve their pronunciation in a target language with the use of pop music. As, according to Murphey (1992), the speech rate in English pop songs is approximately half of the rate in regular speech and because the music and lyrics are repetitive, pop music gets stuck in listeners' heads, which may be useful in language learning. The application itself is a base of various songs chosen according to particular criteria, such as vocabulary, genre, country of origin, etc., and divided into proficiency levels (basing on vocabulary level). Thanks to that, language learners can choose appropriate songs for their language fluency. The application allows for listening to music, following the lyrics, singing along and repetition of particular phrases that might be problematic for the users. The application needs now more testing, but the authors are optimistic and foresee that potential users should like it and the game-like approach to learning it offers.

Kotuła (2015) advocates using various free online programs and tools to improve virtually all aspects of L2 pronunciation, especially because they can be used not only in the classroom but also at home. In his study he focused on resources improving learners' pronunciation in French, but their equivalents can be found and applied for other languages as well. He described programs which concentrate on learning spelling-pronunciation relation, IPA, orthoepic competence, connected speech, elision, stress and intonation, segmental phonetics, tongue-twisters and many more. This suggests that the options of practicing L2 pronunciation are countless. Moreover, the researcher recommends watching short films available online and prepared by French teachers in which they explain complexities of French pronunciation.

Also Porzuczek and Rojczyk (2010) discuss numerous programs available on the Internet which help improve learners' pronunciation—this time in L2-English. They include exercises on sentence stress, tonic, intonation contours, nuclear syllables, phonemic transcription, vowel recognition, and acoustic properties of vowels. What is more, the researchers advise language teachers to use the Praat speech analysis software (Boersma, 2001) in order to assess and analyze learners' speech in an L2. Both segmental and suprasegmental features of a speech signal can be analyzed this way and compared to model speech. A teacher may thus explain learners' pronunciation errors and suggest solutions.

Rojczyk (2011) suggests using speech analysis software to help improve the VOT parameter produced by Polish learners of English. VOT is completely different in the two languages and Polish users of English find it particularly problematic to produce sufficient aspiration in English voiceless plosives and to refrain from pre-voicing in voiced plosives. Those aspects need to be extensively trained but learners often do not know whether their production is moving towards the native model. This is why the researcher describes how the Praat package (Boersma, 2001) and the spectrographic analysis can be practically applied in self-controlled foreign pronunciation training.

How to Design
a Pronunciation Course for Young Teenagers?

As for example Komorowska (2011) notices, each foreign language course has to be characterized by realistic goals, as well as appropriate methods and components. This is why teaching materials which are suitable for adults and young adults are completely inapt for young teenagers who have different learning capabilities, interests, etc. Many studies show that L2 pronunciation is not taught at schools at all (e.g., Kotuła, 2015; Lipińska, 2014; Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2003; Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2008) and that foreign language teachers claim that textbooks designed to teach English to teenagers do not include any elements of phonetic training (e.g., Lipińska, 2017b). Actually, it turns out not to be true as for example Lipińska (2017b) analyzed in her paper ten textbooks designed to teach English to 4th, 5th, and 6th grades of primary school in Poland and all of them included exercises on pronunciation training, in five out of ten titles the International Phonetic Alphabet was used and all the phonetic exercises were accompanied by audio recordings. What is more, the author described additional materials that could be used to teach English pronunciation to 10–14-year-olds. Nevertheless, a pronunciation course for young teenagers needs to be redesigned and cannot be copied from the academic one.

Classes Design

Classes designed for young teenagers have to be mainly determined by the age of such learners. 11–14-year-olds enter the age of puberty and hence share a lot of characteristics with both children and older teenagers. Their speech organs are still very adaptable and thus they are able to acquire correct pronunciation in their L2 at a native-like level, but they actually start to learn

skills rather than acquire them. It has both advantages and disadvantages as a lot can be now explained to those learners but the foreign language learning process becomes less natural and less similar to L1 acquisition. What is more, their spontaneity decreases slowly and since teenagers are very image-conscious, they develop anxiety to speak a foreign language when they know that they may make a mistake and their peers may laugh at them. Finally, their concentration spans are still relatively short in comparison to adult learners, which makes carrying longer classes (especially focused on one topic or skill) virtually impossible (e.g., Arabski, 1996; Harmer, 2006; Komorowska, 2011; Scrivener, 2011).

Having taken the aforementioned facts into consideration, pronunciation classes for young teenagers have to be well thought-off. To begin with, they cannot last as long as similar classes for adults. Not only academic 90 minutes, but even bare 45 minutes (like at school) of pronunciation exercises may be tiresome. It is better to incorporate shorter tasks more regularly, into practically every meeting with those learners. One or two interesting exercises can be really effective and will not put the teenagers off learning and practicing phonetics. Secondly, the topic and the range of vocabulary practiced during such pronunciation modules must be compatible with the material used to develop other skills, as well as interesting and accessible for adolescent learners. Thirdly, pronunciation classes for young teenagers have to be varied, dynamic, and interactive. Various tools ought to be used not only to enable both production and perception development, but also to engage different senses, to activate various parts of a brain and to provide teenage learners with entertainment necessary both to facilitate the process of learning and to create a positive association between phonetics and having fun. Last but not least, one cannot forget about the appropriate and varied teaching materials which can be used to teach L2 pronunciation young teenagers.

Materials and Resources

In contrast with popular opinions that there are very few phonetic recourses for children and teenagers available, one can find abundance of books, websites, and tools. Those suitable for 11–14-year-olds will be described briefly below.

General English Textbooks. As Lipińska (2017b) notices, nowadays practically all textbooks written for young teenagers include some elements of pronunciation training. Naturally, the amount of such training and the types of exercises vary greatly from one book to another. In some cases they are just listen-and-repeat tasks, in other cases they are more creative. One can find rhymes, chants, tongue twisters or poems, but also simple lists of words or

short sentences to repeat. In most books only segmental features are exercised (i.e., vowels and consonants), but there are also titles which comprise practice on suprasegmetal phonetics (for instance sentence stress or intonation). The latter option is much better as it helps adolescent learners acquire natural, non-accented speech in their L2. Unfortunately, very few textbooks include the IPA symbols in either explanations or exercises. It is rather unprofitable as children and young teenagers can easily learn the IPA (e.g., in the form of games, encrypted messages, etc.) and the ability to read phonetic transcription is very useful in language learning (e.g., even while looking up new words in a dictionary). What is very helpful is the fact that in all cases pronunciation exercises are accompanied by audio recordings. They are sometimes included only in a class CD used by a teacher, but also be found on a learner's CD or CD-ROM. This solution provides teenage learners with a correct, native model of L2 pronunciation. What is more, it is very convenient for language teachers since they do not have to read stimuli themselves, especially if they are not sure if their own pronunciation is perfectly correct.

This is why it is advisable to use pronunciation exercises included in GE textbooks for young teenagers during L2 phonetics classes. One can use such exercises included not only in the leading textbook, but also use some elements from similar publications. They are usually funny, accessible for the target group of learners, ready for use and accompanied by appropriate audio files. They can also serve as a good introduction to the topic and can be extended by some similar tasks either copied from books or prepared by the teachers themselves.

Primary Pronunciation Box. Designed for children and younger teenagers, this photocopiable resource book by Caroline Nixon and Michael Tomlinson provides a teacher with over sixty various activities and exercises (rhymes, chants, poems, puzzles, and games) which can be used in the classroom. The character and variability of activities make learning (and teaching) pronunciation really enjoyable. What is important is the fact that the book is divided into parts, according to learners' age, so teachers do not need to be afraid that some activities or exercises might be too difficult for a particular group of pupils. Another advantage is that each section/activity is accompanied by a clear, step-by-step lesson plan. It aims at explaining how to set the activity up and carry it out in the classroom, which is particularly useful for teachers who are not phoneticians or who are not very experienced but still would like to include some elements of phonetic training in their school curriculum. An audio CD is also included and it provides learners with correct, model pronunciation, as well as enables doing the exercises and activities. It is very convenient for a teacher as they do not have to read anything on their own, especially if they are not sure whether their own pronunciation in English is entirely correct. What is important for younger learners is the fact that all the worksheets are

accompanied by pictures which make learning more enjoyable and may be for instance colored later. The greatest advantage of the book is the fact that the activities can be slotted into any course since the book itself is not designed as a component of any particular course or series.

"Phonetics Focus." Available at http://cambridgeenglishonline.com /Phonetics_Focus/, this website is full of not only various and attractive activities which can be done individually or team-vs.-team, but it also contains printable flashcards with IPA symbols accompanied by simple pictures. Thanks to it, materials downloaded from *Phonetics Focus* may be first used to explain the theory, present a discussed sound in isolation, provide examples of use and later they can be used during revisions, quizzes, and games. The interactive activities are best done with the use of an interactive whiteboard. It enables playing games together, dividing learners into competing teams, etc. This kind of training is really enjoyed by younger teenagers, especially if they can win a game and earn positive grades or small prizes.


Figure 1. Sample pronunciation games from http://cambridgeenglishonline.com /Phonetics_Focus/.

Figure 2. A sample printable pronunciation flashcard from http://cambridg-eenglishonline.com/Phonetics_Focus/.

"ESL Tower: Pronunciation." Another website containing plenty of pro-nunciation games is ESL Tower, available at http://eslgamesworld.com/members /games/pronunciation/index.html. It can be mainly used for group activities and team-vs.-team games. One of the most popular games on this webpage is Phonetic Vowel Quiz where the subjects are presented with the IPA version of a word and are asked to write an orthographic form of it. For each correctly spelled word a teacher can award a point and after a 10-word round the scores may be compared and one of the teams should win and get a small prize. The attractive form of a game helps young teenagers quickly learn and memorize the IPA symbols, as well as revise vocabulary.

Interactive Voice Recorders. While such tools as for example Praat (Boersma, 2001) are very useful, professional, and effective (e.g., Rojczyk, 2011), they are more suitable for adult learners than for young teenagers. Recording such learners in laboratory conditions would be too stressful and thus virtu-ally impossible. Moreover, Praat's interface is too difficult and old-fashioned for teenagers. Modern downloadable or online voice recorders based on easy, familiar words seem to be a much better solution for younger learners. Students can use them not only in the classroom, but also at home. Recording one's own voice is advisable in order to control one's pronunciation, check the potential
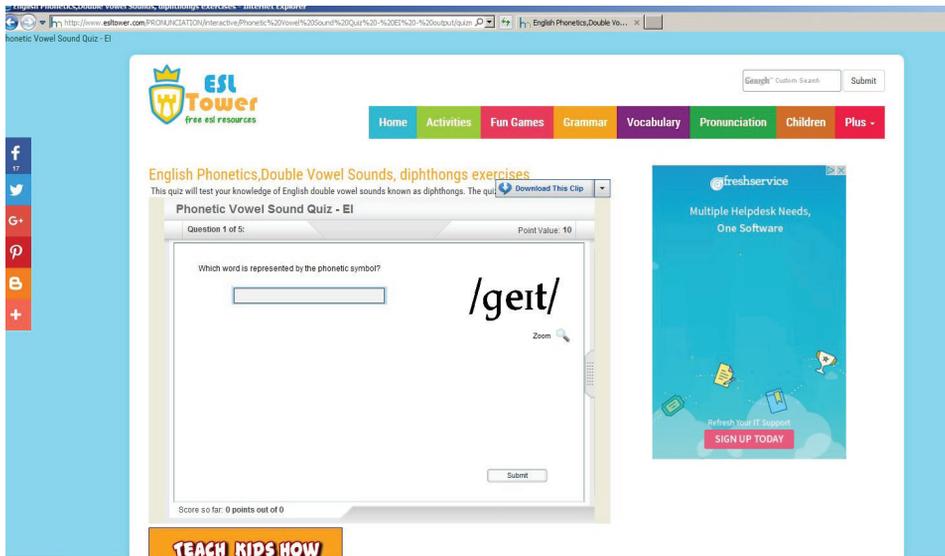
Figure 3. Phonetic Vowel Quiz for a diphthong /eɪ/ from http://eslgamesworld. com/members/games/pronunciation/index.html.
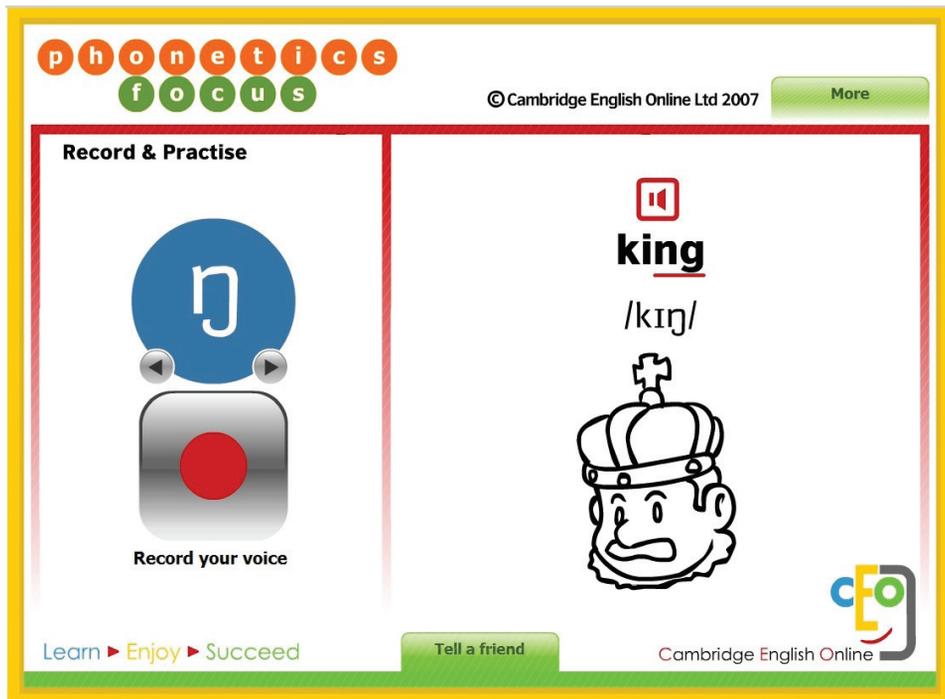
Figure 4. An interactive downloadable voice recorder with a listen-and-repeat function, retrieved from http://cambridgeenglishonline.com/Phonetics_Focus/.

mistakes and correct them. The obtained recordings are also very helpful to the teacher who can observe their students' gradual progress. However, the possibility to use those tools at home has an undeniable advantage—learners can try recording their utterances when no-one disturbs them and when no-one laughs if they happen to make a mistake. This is why a teacher should not only use voice recorders in a classroom, but also encourage their students to work with them at home.

Teachers' Own Resources. Finally, as most teachers prepare a lot of materials, handouts, and exercises on their own, it is relatively easy to create such attractions for young teenagers learning L2 pronunciation. They may develop speech perception, production or the ability to use the IPA. Those handouts can be not only educational but they might also provide students with a lot of entertainment. It is possible to create mazes, crosswords, puzzles or labyrinths. Below one can find a couple of proposals tested by the author and her students.

"Encrypted messages" constitute the first category of the aforementioned exercises. Having taught the basics of the IPA, the teacher can prepare simple (and gradually—more and more complicated) messages. It is enough to print them in the phonetic transcription form on small pieces of paper. They may be used as hints in such games as "Detectives," "Treasure Hunt," etc. They can also be used as commands that have to be carried out by the students in the classroom (they may draw such commands hidden in plastic shells for themselves or for their group mates). Naturally, before they perform any activities, L2 learners have to read the encrypted message out loud.
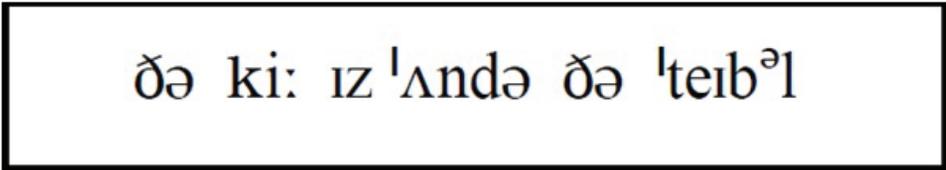
ðə ki: ɪz ˈʌndə ðə ˈteɪbᵊl

Figure 5. "An encrypted message"—the author's own pronunciation task for young teenagers.

"Secret coding" is more complicated and requires more work and a better command of the IPA. This kind of activity is widely used in textbooks and activity books for children and teenagers. However, there is only a simplest version of it. Every task is accompanied by a key/legend which provides language learners with the symbol-letter relation. In the phonetic version of secret coding, the legend consists of the symbol-IPA relation. Teenage learners need to use the symbols to transcribe the message first, then read the transcription and finally write the text in the orthographic form. Such task may be used just for fun, or it can be treated as a sort of competition—for example, the first team to transcribe and write the spelling of the text wins.

ŋ	æ	ə	ɔ	ɒ	θ	ʒ	ʃ	ʌ	ð
♥	*	♣	♦	♠	→	←	☺	☼	♪

♪♣   ▲*▶   ♫●   □—*▲

Figure 6. "Secret coding"—the author's own pronunciation task for young teenagers.

The final proposal here is the "Maze." There may be various versions of this task; however, one of the simplest and most educational at the same time is presented below. In one table a teacher puts numerous words containing the same letter, but realized by various sounds. A group of words has to share that sound. The learners have to find the way out through the "maze." First of all, they learn correct pronunciation of a few words. Moreover, this tasks raises their awareness that the same letter may be read differently and that there is no simple spelling-pronunciation relation. Figures 7 and 8 show a maze where language learners are asked to find words in which the letter "a" corresponds to the "ash" vowel (Figure 7–an empty "maze" and Figure 8–a solved task).

cat	salt	hall	India	Poland
bat	catch	chair	Arkansas	bald
call	match	lack	angel	restaurant
ball	aunt	mad	Jessica	car
Pakistan	Barbara	bad	pack	bar
sauce	canary	table	flat	fasten
Maria	giraffe	marble	lamp	favourite
Sally	tall	maple	sat	black

a = /æ/

Figure 7. "The maze"—the author's own pronunciation task for young teenagers.

cat	salt	hall	India	Poland
bat	catch	chair	Arkansas	bald
call	match	lack	angel	restaurant
ball	aunt	mad	Jessica	car
Pakistan	Barbara	bad	pack	bar
sauce	canary	table	flat	fasten
Maria	giraffe	marble	lamp	favourite
Sally	tall	maple	sat	black

$$a = /æ/$$

Figure 8. "The maze"—the author's own pronunciation task for young teenagers (solved).

Naturally, the possibilities of preparing creative and attractive pronunciation tasks for teenage learners are practically countless and every teacher can invent something interesting. The proposals described above are just examples and ought to be treated as inspiration, not a completed list.

Summary

In conclusion, there are multiple ways of teaching L2 pronunciation to young teenagers efficiently. Since they are still braver and more open to novelties than adults, as well as they love playing and having fun, pronunciation training can be slipped into their classes in the form of games, quizzes, and competitions. Moreover, it can be also taught just like any other skill since young teenagers are old enough to start learning a language consciously. What must not be forgotten is the fact that a course in phonetics designed for young teenagers must be different than the one created for late teenagers and young adults. First of all, the materials, methods, and vocabulary used must be adjusted to the target learners so that they are attractive and comprehensible. What is more, pronunciation classes cannot be too long and ought to be connected with the topics discussed during other (e.g., grammar or vocabulary) modules being taught at a particular moment during the foreign language course. Finally,

the teacher should apply a global approach to the training and concentrate on speech production, perception, and spelling-sound correspondence at the same time.

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Dorota Lipińska

Überlegen wir unsere bisherige Lehrmethoden. Die Entwicklung des Aussprachelehrgangs für Englisch lernende polnische Teenager

Zusammenfassung

Zahlreiche Forschungen (z.B.: Lipińska, 2014; Majer, 2002; Nowacka, 2003; Szpyra-Kołowska u.a., 2002; Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2008; Waniek-Klimczak, 2002; Wrembel, 2002) haben folgendes nachgewiesen: obwohl die Aussprache in universitären Lehrplänen berücksichtigt ist, wird sie auf niedrigeren Bildungsstufen immer noch nicht unterrichtet. Es ließ sich erkennen, dass nicht nur die Phonetik den jüngeren Schülern beigebracht werden soll, sondern dass dieser Unterricht äußerst effektiv sein kann (z.B.: Lipińska, 2017; Nixon u. Tomlinson, 2005). Die Buchhandlungen haben ohne Zweifel im Angebot mehrere Lehrwerke für fremde Aussprache oder auch ganze Aussprachelehrgänge in der Zweitsprache, die von Polen für Polen geschaffen wurden (z.B.: Porzuczek u.a., 2013; Sawala u.a., 2011) als auch die für internationale Sprachbenutzer geschriebenen Lehrwerke (z.B.: Baker, 2006; Hancock, 2008; Hewings, 2010), die aber den eine Fremdsprache lernenden Erwachsenen gewidmet sind. Wie man weiß, eignen sich die bei der Arbeit mit Erwachsenen oder Studenten gebrauchten Lehrmaterialien und Methoden nicht zur Arbeit mit Kindern und Teenager. Die letztgenannten brauchen zwar verlockende und altersgemäße Lehrmethoden und Übungen, denn jeder Fremdsprachelehrgang muss, so Komorowska (2011), durch realistische Zwecke und richtig angepasste Methoden und Bildungselemente gekennzeichnet sein.

Der vorliegende Beitrag bezweckt, verschiedene Methoden und Lehrmaterialien darzustellen, die bei der Didaktik der Aussprache im Englischen als Zweitsprache in den Gruppen von 11-13 jährigen Schülern verwendet werden können. Diese wurden schon in drei solchen Gruppen getestet und deren Effizienz wurde sowohl hinsichtlich der Sprachproduktion als auch Sprachperzeption in den Gruppen von jüngeren Teenager nachgewiesen (z.B.: Lipińska, 2017).

Schlüsselwörter: Fremdsprachenunterricht, Ausspracheunterricht, Lehrmaterialien für Fremdsprachenunterricht

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Pronunciation Learning Environment: EFL Students' Cognitions of In-class and Out-of-class Factors Affecting Pronunciation Acquisition

Abstract

The way a foreign language (L2) learner perceives his or her educational environment may affect their processes of L2 acquisition. The aim of the study presented in this paper is to explore English as a foreign language (EFL) students' perceptions of their teachers' pronunciation, in-class and outside-class factors regarding pronunciation acquisition, such as pronunciation activities, recordings, focus on form, peer pronunciation, listening to music, to mention a few. A group of 89 participants responded to a survey, via which the data necessary to respond to the following three research questions was collected. How do EFL learners perceive their teachers' pronunciation? What is the relationship between EFL learners' perceived level of their L2 teachers' pronunciation and perceived L2 teachers' classroom language use? What factors, in the view of L2 learners, contribute to their pronunciation acquisition? The results indicate that there are significant differences in the perception of teachers' pronunciation at different educational levels. Also, in L2 pronunciation learning the EFL students report the following factors as moderately important: L2 teachers' pronunciation, in-class L2 use, pronunciation error correction, and in-class and out-of-class exposure to multimedia that provide access to a broad range of L2 pronunciation varieties.

Keywords: educational environment, EFL learners' perceptions/cognitions, EFL teachers' pronunciation, in-class and out-of-class factors affecting pronunciation acquisition

Introduction

The way a learner perceives his or her proximal educational environment may shape the learning paths (Dörnyei, 2005) and foreign language (L2) learning outcomes (Williams & Burden, 1997). More specifically, if a language

learner is exposed to such factors, for instance, as an appropriate model of a language, clear instructions and effective error correction, and if these factors are compatible with the individual's expectations, the learning processes may accelerate. However, the reverse situation may transpire if a learning environment does not fulfill the anticipated standards. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to attend to students' cognitions regarding their learning environment in order to establish the best possible conditions for learning. The aim of this paper is to place in the limelight these environmental factors that students of English as a foreign language (EFL) perceive as conducive to their L2 pronunciation learning. For this purpose, the outcomes of research into L2 learners' perceptions of a number of in- and out-of-class factors regarding pronunciation acquisition are presented and discussed below. These results may provide an insight into a better understanding of the perceived environmental factors affecting pronunciation acquisition. They may also tap into the design of student-oriented pronunciation teaching approaches.

A foreign language learning environment may be understood as a formal and informal setting which is beneficial to learning a foreign language, entailing material and non-material resources as well as "the relationships created […] in the course of interaction among all learning process participants" (Stukalina, 2010, p. 347). This definition comprises socio-psychological, socio-cultural, pedagogical, and physical dimensions (Saglam & Sali, 2013). The first aspect involves all types of in-class student-student and student-teacher interactions and out-of-class student-interlocutor communications that are shaped by individuals' personalities and learner differences. The second one focuses on culture factors that moderate L2 learning processes (Entwistle et al., 2003). Pedagogical dimension comprises, among other factors, the role of a teacher and learners' perceptions of a teaching performance. Finally, the physical dimensions embrace, for instance, lecture rooms, classrooms, curricula, teaching materials, equipment, and aids (Stukalina, 2010). The educational environment, therefore, is a complex system of diverse constituents interplaying dynamically with one another and affecting the efficiency of an L2 learning process.

Learners are good witnesses of their own learning, and they are able to deliver reliable and valid feedback concerning their perceived efficiency of various components of an educational environment (Centra, 2003). As Culver (2010) indicates "given their role as participant observers in classrooms, students are in an excellent position to provide feedback regarding classroom teaching and overall performance of an instructor" (p. 334). Therefore, although L2 pronunciation acquisition has been thoroughly researched from a number of perspectives, such as age (cf. Birdsong & Molis, 2001; Colatoni, Steele, & Escudero, 2015; Johnson & Newport, 1989), cross-linguistic influence (cf. Święciński, 2013), motivation (cf. Bongaerts et al., 1997; Moyer, 1999), exposure to a target language (cf. Rogerson-Revell, 2011), explicit instruction

(cf. Celce-Murcia et al., 2010; Wrembel, 2004), to mention a few, scholars' interest in learners' cognitions of pronunciation learning processes has recently gained more popularity (e.g., Aufderhaar, 2004; Derwing & Rossiter, 2002; Ma, 2012). This paper aims to augment the trend of exploiting learners' perspectives associated with foreign language (L2) pronunciation learning, taking place in their educational environments.

Selected Factors Affecting L2 Pronunciation Learning

There have been many attempts to categorize factors affecting L2 pronunciation (cf. Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). Following Zhang's (2009) taxonomy, these factors may be roughly divided into internal and external. The former derives from learners' characteristics that entail biological (age), cognitive (aptitude, leaning style, strategies), and psychological (motivation, identity, beliefs, affective factors) aspects. The external factors are those that are influenced by the educational environment, and they are conditioned by sociocultural (amount of exposure) and pedagogical (instruction, teacher's competence) dimensions. These factors play a major role in the research described below. Therefore, there is a need to scrutinize them more thoroughly. First, more attention is given to the role of the amount of exposure to L2 in pronunciation learning. Next, the focus is shifted towards the value of a classroom instruction and a teacher.

The more the learner is exposed to L2, the better his or her L2 pronunciation attainment. This claim is shared, for instance, by Rogerson-Revell (2011), who asserts that the amount of exposure to the target language is one of the critical factors in L2 pronunciation acquisition. Be it in the target language country or not, the exposure entails an L2 learner's contact with native and non-native target language speakers, as well as a range of multimedia channels. However, a mere exposure without noticing and discriminating subtle contrasts between L1 and L2 sound systems might lead to unsatisfactory results. Additionally, age seems to be a moderating variable, because the older the learners are, the more automatized their articulatory movements for producing L1 sounds become. In consequence, "even advanced speakers find it difficult to acquire new gestural scores for L2 phonemes" (Kormos, 2006, p. xxvi). Therefore, several scholars, for instance Celce-Murcia et al. (2010), opt for early immersion instructional programs as optimal instances of an L2 exposure. In other words, because of their greater articulatory plasticity, and perhaps many other socio-psychological factors (cf. Dalton & Seildhofer, 1994), children may benefit most from an optimal exposure to L2 pronunciation in their educational environments.

The second external factor affecting pronunciation learning selected for the present analysis is pronunciation instruction. Since the beginning of the new millennium, there has been an increase in research investigating the effectiveness of explicit pronunciation teaching (cf. Saito, 2012), entailing focused instruction, the application of metalinguistic training (Macdonald, Yule, & Powers, 1994; Stasiak & Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2003; Wrembel, 2004), and various focus on form (FonF) teaching techniques, such as and focus tasks with or without corrective feedback (Lan & Wu, 2013; Saito, 2011). This movement has been a reaction to meaning-focused instruction dominant in the Communicative Language Teaching approach that disregarded the formal aspect of language learning (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). Lan and Wu (2013) explain that

> FonF instruction is a method of L2 instruction focusing on both linguistic forms and communication. It is an alternative to focus on meaning instruction of the school of Natural Approach […], which prohibits direct grammar teaching and promotes natural input of L2 texts and listening materials only. (p. 30)

There is a bulk of empirical studies providing evidence for positive effects of explicit pronunciation instruction in the acquisition of various pronunciation aspects. For example, Wrembel (2004) conducted a quasi-experiment, in which she measured the relationship between L2 pronunciation attainment and phonological training. The experimental group outperformed the control group in such production tests as reading lists of words and reading a dialogue. In another quasi-experiment, Stasiak and Szpyra-Kozłowska (2003) aimed to determine the effectiveness of two different approaches to pronunciation teaching: pronunciation taught through imitation/drilling and pronunciation taught through phonetic instruction. Although the authors did not find significant differences in the pronunciation attainment between these two groups, they noticed improvements in the participants' pronunciation of several segmental features, for instance word-final velar nasal, dental fricatives and the pronunciation of individual words, compared with the control group that had not received any pronunciation treatment. Similarly, Saito's (2011) research results confirmed the effectiveness of pronunciation instruction. In his quasi-experiment only the participants assigned to the group taught through explicit phonetic instruction and repetitive practice improved their pronunciation performance in the sentence reading tasks. The classroom application of explicit pronunciation teaching, following FonF instruction, however, has not gained its momentum yet.

The role of a language teacher in an L2 learner's pronunciation acquisition cannot be overlooked, particularly, in the foreign language educational environment where the exposure to the target language is limited. In these contexts, L2 teachers function as major pronunciation models and sources of input for their

students (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). Their behaviors, including their language and instruction, tap into learners' motivation which may subsequently empower learners' pronunciation (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010) and overall language learning processes (Sutcliff, 2011; Rockoff, 2004). This has been confirmed in several studies investigating learners' perceptions. For example, teachers' command of the target language, including L2 pronunciation, was the most important factor for L2 high school students in Korea (Park & Lee, 2006), Israel (Brosh, 1996), and Iran (Moradi & Sabeti, 2014). Teachers' language proficiency was the second most important factor for L2 university students in Korea (Barnes & Lock, 2013). Also for Arabic speakers their teachers' knowledge and experiences associated with L2 language acquisition were perceived as crucial (Sakurai, 2012). These research results should be sufficient enough for L2 teachers to attribute proper prominence to their L2 pronunciation because "ignoring students' pronunciation needs is an abrogation of professional responsibility" (Morley, 1991, p. 489).

The external environmental factors discussed above—that is, exposure to L2 pronunciation, elements of pronunciation instruction and L2 teachers' pronunciation—may be encountered either inside or outside the classroom. Exposure to L2 pronunciation is operationalized in the present study as EFL teachers' classroom use, peers' pronunciation, in-class listening to the recordings, out-of-class contacts with the target language native speakers, extracurricular classes, visiting English speaking countries, listening and watching authentic texts outside the classroom. The elements of pronunciation instruction have been limited here to pronunciation error correction and general in-class pronunciation practice. In the study, teachers' pronunciation has been approached from the global perspective, in which L2 learners apply holistic evaluation "invaluable in assessing the overall impression" (Szpyra-Kozłowska et al., 2004, p. 139). Generally, the aforementioned environmental factors, interplaying with pronunciation acquisition, form the core structure of the current study, in which the participants are requested to respond to how they perceive and evaluate several aspects occurring in their pronunciation learning processes. Although these judgments are subjective, they generate the data reflecting individuals' cognitions which constitute a preliminary diagnosis of the educational environment associated with pronunciation learning.

Method

The aim of the empirical study is to investigate EFL students' perceptions of their teachers' pronunciation, teaching behaviors and other in- and out-of-

class factors contributing to their pronunciation attainment. For this purpose, the following three research questions have been formulated:
1. How do L2 learners perceive their teachers' pronunciation?
2. What is the relationship between the L2 learners' perceived level of their L2 teachers' pronunciation and perceived L2 teachers' classroom language use?
3. What factors, in the view of L2 learners, contribute to their pronunciation acquisition?

Participants

The participants were 89 individuals in their first year of English Philology and English in Public Communication at Opole University, Poland. There were more female (F = 69) than male (M = 20) students. Their age ranged between 18 and 25, with the mean of 20. They declared 12 years as the average length of English language learning experience. As many as 33 participants reported at least one week of stay in English-speaking countries. More precisely, one respondent spent ten years in Scotland; five students lived in English-speaking countries between six months and two years; 16 individuals declared a six-month stay in the target language environment, and 11 of them reported a visit of up to three weeks. As the exposure to the target language is a crucial factor in pronunciation attainment, as discussed above, the respondents were asked to declare how many English language lessons they had weekly either at school or in extra-curricular activities. Only 64 of them marked that they had attended out-of-school courses with an average of 1.05 hour per week for 2.9 years. The mean values for the number of lessons at school differed, depending on an educational stage: 2.2 hours per week in the lower primary school, 3.06 hours in the upper primary school, 3.7 hours in junior high school, and 4.2 hours in high school.

Instrument

The instrument used in the study was a survey consisting of three parts (Appendix 1). The first one provided biodata, including age, gender, average length of English language learning experience, length of stay in English-speaking countries, extracurricular classes (frequency, length in years), and the number of hours of English at school (lower primary, upper primary, junior high

school, high school). The second part referred to the respondents' perception of their English language teachers' pronunciation (items 13–18), for example, How do you evaluate your primary school teachers' English pronunciation? The answers were supposed to be marked on a 5-point Likert scale from 1–very poor English pronunciation to 5–excellent, almost native-like English pronunciation. There was an option to evaluate separately the pronunciation of three different primary school teachers, three junior high school and three high school teachers. This part of the survey also contained the question regarding teachers' use of English in the classroom: How much time on average did the teacher speak English in your English lesson at primary school? The responses were also provided on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1–a teacher always or almost always used L1, 2–a teacher used mostly L1 but introduced single expressions and words in L2, 3–a teacher used both L1 and L2 in a more or less balanced manner, 4–a teacher used mostly L2 but occasionally explained difficulties in L1, 5–a teacher used always or almost always L2). Finally, the third part included items referring to in- and out-of-class factors affecting English pronunciation. The first group comprised of teachers' pronunciation, pronunciation practice in class, teacher error correction, listening to recordings in class, peers' pronunciation and one open item *other in-class factors*, which provided the respondents an opportunity to add their own in-class aspect perceived as important for L2 pronunciation acquisition. The following items designated the out-of-class factors: extracurricular classes, contact with native speakers of English, stay in an English-speaking country, listening to music outside the classroom, watching original films/TV outside the classroom, listening to other recordings (e.g., audiobooks) outside the classroom, and other out-of-class factors. The last item was an open question created for the participants to complete with the aspect or aspects that had not been enumerated earlier though perceived as important for their pronunciation learning. In this part, the individuals were to report the extent to which these factors had affected their English pronunciation on a 5-point Likert scale from 1–not at all to 5–to a large extent.

Procedure

The study was conducted through a pen-and-paper survey distributed and collected in December 2016. At that time, the participants had already been familiarized with some basic phonetic and phonological concepts regarding pronunciation resulting from their participation in the obligatory university courses. However, the content of the survey, formulated in Polish for a greater clarity,

was general enough and did not require specialized knowledge. The average amount of time spent on completing the survey was 30 minutes. Although the respondents were encouraged to ask for clarification if necessary, there were no instances thereof. The data was later analyzed with basic descriptive statistics. A t-test for dependent samples and the Pearson-product moment correlation were used for further calculations.

Results

For the purposes of finding the answer to the first research question regarding the evaluation of EFL teachers' pronunciation, first, the mean values (Mean) and the standard deviations (SD) were computed for three groups of teachers: primary school, junior high school, and high school. Later a t-test was applied in order to determine any significant differences in the participants' evaluations between three pairs of teacher types: primary and junior high school teachers, junior high and high school teachers, and primary and high school teachers. As Table 1 shows, primary school teachers' pronunciation viewed by EFL individuals reached the lowest mean value (Mean = 3.15, SD = 1.05) in the three groups of teachers. Junior high school teachers' pronunciation was evaluated slightly higher (Mean = 3.63, SD = 1.04), and high school teachers' pronunciation was perceived as the best, with the mean value of 3.8 (SD = 1.03). The results of a t-test displayed statistically significant differences in the perception of primary and junior high school teachers' pronunciation, as well as in the pronunciation of primary and high school teachers. In other words, the participants perceived primary school teachers' pronunciation as significantly worse than that of both junior high and high school teachers.

Table 1.
Perceived EFL teachers' pronunciation

EFL teachers' pronunciation		Mean	SD	t	df	p
1st pair of teachers	Primary School	3.15	1.05			
	Junior High School	3.63	1.04	−4.16	88	.000
2nd pair of teachers	Junior High School	3.63	1.04			
	High School	3.80	1.03	−1.17	88	.243
3rd pair of teachers	Primary School	3.15	1.05			
	High School	3.80	1.03	−4.66	88	.000

Perceived teachers' in-class use of English was measured as a factor contributing to the target language exposure. The results of basic descriptive statistics showed an interesting tendency of the perceived EFL teachers' use of the target language. On average, primary school teachers were reported to use mostly L1 during their lessons (Mean = 2.12, SD = 1.02). Junior high school teachers (Mean = 2.96, SD = 1.01) used more L2 than primary school teachers, whereas high school teachers belonged to the group that scored the highest mean value (Mean = 3.62, SD = .98) for the target language use in class. The correlation between teachers' L2 use in the classroom and perceived teachers' pronunciation was computed in order to provide the answer to the second research question on the relationship between the L2 learners' perceived levels of L2 teachers' pronunciation and teachers' classroom language use. The values of correlation coefficients indicated strong positive relationships, presented in Table 2. Interestingly, the higher the level of the perceived teacher's pronunciation was detected, the more L2, in the view of the participants, the teacher used in the classroom. Moreover, the strength of this relationship reflected the tendency observed earlier in the case of the scores for teachers' pronunciation that increased with educational levels represented by those teachers. The correlation coefficients reached higher and higher values for every consecutive educational stage, so that in the group of high school teachers the relationship between pronunciation and L2 use was the strongest. This might indicate that the participant's responses were fairly consistent.

Table 2.

Correlation coefficients (r) between the perceived levels of teachers' pronunciation and L2 teachers' classroom language use

	Teachers' classroom language use		
Correlation coefficient r	Primary School	Junior High School	High School
Primary School	.41*		
Junior High School		.44*	
High School			.52*

*p < .05

The analysis of the data regarding the perception of factors affecting pronunciation acquisition refers to the third research question. As presented in Table 3, out of six in-class factors included in the instrument, three were perceived as moderately affecting the target language pronunciation learning: pronunciation error correction (Mean = 3.3, SD = 1.26), teacher's pronunciation (Mean = 3.18, SD = 1.25) and in-class listening to the recordings (Mean = 3.11, SD = 1.09). Their values were slightly above the average. The means calculated

for peers' pronunciation (Mean = 2.18, SD = 1.04) and in-class pronunciation practice (Mean = 2.84, SD = 1.27) were below the average, which means that neither of them was perceived as important or very important for pronunciation acquisition. Other in-class factors enumerated by the respondents, such as reading, pronunciation games, paying attention to pronunciation, repetition after a teacher, were perceived as marginally important for L2 pronunciation learning.

Table 3.

Means and standard deviations (SD) for the perception of in-class and out-of-class factors affecting pronunciation acquisition

IN-CLASS FACTORS	Mean	SD
Pronunciation error correction	3.30	1.26
Teachers' pronunciation	3.18	1.25
In-class listening to the recordings	3.11	1.09
In-class pronunciation practice	2.84	1.27
Peers' pronunciation	2.18	1.04
Other in-class factors	1.32	.93
OUT-OF-CLASS FACTORS		
Watching films/TV in English	4.27	1.01
Listening to music	4.19	.91
Listening to recordings (e.g., audiobooks)	3.69	1.28
Contacts with native speakers	3.28	1.57
Extracurricular activities	3.04	1.61
Visiting/staying in English speaking countries	3.01	1.66
Other out-of-class factors	1.71	1.44

Higher values were obtained in the analysis of the out-of-class factors. EFL learners declare that watching films or TV in English (Mean = 4.27, SD = 1.01) and listening to music (Mean = 4.19, SD = .91) are two most influential factors affecting their pronunciation learning. Listening to the recordings (Mean = 3.69, SD = 1.28), contact with native English speakers (Mean = 3.28, SD = 1.57), extracurricular activities (Mean = 3.04, SD = 1.61) and visits to English speaking countries (Mean = 3.01, SD = 1.66) were also perceived as valuable, but not as much as the previous factors. In an open-ended item regarding other out-of-class factors, the individuals enumerated online chatting, computer games, L2 speaking and using L2 for fun. None of those items though were perceived as highly influential in pronunciation learning. Generally, the out-of-

class factors were perceived as affecting the individuals' pronunciation more than the in-class items.

Discussion

The investigation into the cognition of selected in- and out-of-class aspects of pronunciation learning environment revealed a few interesting issues. Firstly, the findings confirmed the significant role of an EFL teacher as a model for a target language pronunciation. Secondly, a strong relationship was found between the perceived teachers' pronunciation and their L2 use. Finally, several factors affecting L2 pronunciation acquisition were inspected from the perspective of a learner, and the outcomes indicated clear hierarchy of the factors perceived as conducive to pronunciation learning.

In a foreign language learning context, where contacts with an authentic language and interactions with native L2 speakers are limited, a teacher usually performs a crucial role in the process of acquiring all aspects of an L2. The instructor is often the first foreign language model to the learners. Therefore, in order to serve this purpose his or her psychological, social, and linguistic, including phonological, expertise is most desirable. For instance, the way a teacher pronounces L2 sounds and how he or she organizes pronunciation practice may have an impact on learners' pronunciation, particularly at an initial stage of their L2 learning when the individuals are still unable to exploit the language in an autonomous manner, and their L2 learning environment is restricted to in-class learning. Moreover, an L2 teacher, being a vital element of an educational environment, undergoes the processes of students' evaluation (Brosh, 1996; Moradi & Sabeti, 2014; Park & Lee, 2006).

In the present study, focusing on teachers' one characteristic feature—pronunciation, the EFL learners perceived primary school teachers' enunciation as significantly worse than that of junior high and high school teachers. This phenomenon might have at least two directions of interpretation. The first refers to EFL school teachers' level of L2 proficiency used for professional purposes. It may be speculated that higher educational stages are more linguistically demanding, so that non-native EFL teachers conducting lessons at those stages constantly need to either improve or sustain their L2 proficiency level, including pronunciation abilities. Primary school teachers, however, may be tempted to adjust their L2 language to the age of pupils by excessive simplification of linguistic and phonetic forms. The second interpretation is less optimistic because it implies a deficient state of primary school teachers' pronunciation level that calls for urgent and immediate improvement. If this is the case, in-

adequate teachers' pronunciation may cause inadvertent, difficult to eradicate pronunciation inaccuracies among young learners exposed to a distorted model of L2 pronunciation. Needless to say, being exposed to correct pronunciation is particularly important for young learners because they primarily acquire L2 through listening and speaking (Szpotowicz & Szulc-Kurpaska, 2009). However, research into the perceived pronunciation competence conducted among teachers (e.g., Henderson et al., 2012; Szyszka, 2016) did not confirm the outcomes generated from the students. Regardless of educational level, teachers evaluated their pronunciation as good. These dissimilar cognitions on L2 teachers' pronunciation deriving from students' and teachers' perspectives constitute an interesting area for further investigations. Nevertheless, the results of the present study refer to the perceived, not actual, teachers' pronuncia-tion, and they need to be supported with further research before generalizable conclusions are proposed. Definitely, in the opinions of EFL learners, primary school teachers' pronunciation is significantly worse than that of other teachers.

The findings regarding the perceived in-class target language exposure, in this study an EFL teacher's use of L2, indicates an interesting relationship. As viewed by the participants, the higher the level of teacher pronunciation, the more the teacher exposes learners to the target language in the classroom. This strong significant positive correlation refers to teachers working in all types of schools. This may imply that teachers who are more confident about their L2 pronunciation use more L2 in the classroom. However, the directionality of this relationship cannot be stated. Therefore, the results may also be understood as meaning that more frequent L2 classroom use may result in better pronuncia-tion. Intriguing as it is, this relationship requires more in-depth scrutiny.

Out-of-class environmental factors were perceived to exert more influ-ence on pronunciation acquisition than the in-class aspects. Particularly, the exposure to the target language audio and audio-visual media was valuable for the EFL learners' pronunciation acquisition. This may direct teachers' atten-tion to the gravity of the in-class actions encouraging learners to exploit the target language outside the classroom. In the new millennium, the ubiquitous access to multimedia provides unprecedented opportunities for L2 teachers to motivate their learners and to activate out-of-class exposure to various models of pronunciation through multimedia, which may result in greater sensitivity and awareness of this language aspect. Never before has an L2 learner been exposed to so many accents and pronunciation varieties provided through so many types of audio, audio-visual, and social media with the use of such little effort. This is an L2 teacher's responsibility to guide his or her student to use this opportunity.

Although the access to multimedia is mostly inexpensive and easy to reach for an L2 learner, visits to a target language country may occur costly and unaffordable to an average L2 learner. This may explain the responses of

the participants who, on average, indicated contacts with native speakers and visiting the target language countries as averagely important for their pronunciation acquisition. However, the interpretation of these data should consider high standard deviations, indicating large distribution of the responses within a group. For example, on the one hand, if students do not have access to the target language native speakers, they may not perceive this factor as significant for their L2 pronunciation, and they select a low value for this item. On the other hand, those who have an opportunity to interact with people from English-speaking countries may distinguish this factor as important for L2 pronunciation acquisition.

In the study, from among the in-class factors affecting L2 pronunciation, three attract the attention: pronunciation error correction, teachers' pronunciation and in-class listening to recordings. They are placed on top of the list of most influential in-class factors perceived by the individuals taking part in the research. The first—error correction—and its role in second and foreign language learning have been the subject of interest of several scholars, who generally confirm that both L2 learners and teachers perceive error correction as valuable (cf. Pawlak, 2014, p. 80). The findings of the present study, which go in line with the previous research, should only encourage teachers to approach in-class pronunciation corrective feedback more enthusiastically. The second aspect—teachers' pronunciation—was reported to be somewhat influential in L2 pronunciation acquisition. This outcome, however, should not discourage teachers from using intelligible pronunciation while teaching. On the contrary, even if this factor had been perceived as minimally important, it is the responsibility of the teacher to provide a good model and follow the maxim: *Primum non nocere*. Finally, the last selected factor—in-class listening to recordings–is appreciated by L2 learners probably because it functions as an opportunity to be exposed to a number of native-speaker pronunciation varieties.

Conclusion

The main aim of the study was to investigate EFL learners' perceptions regarding selected educational environmental factors associated with the target language pronunciation acquisition. The findings direct the attention towards the value of L2 teachers' pronunciation, in-class L2 use, error correction, and in-class and out-of-class exposure to multimedia that provide access to a broad range of L2 pronunciation varieties. Firstly, teachers need to be aware of the impact of their pronunciation on L2 learners, and of the factors that L2 learners find influential on their pronunciation, such as pronunciation error correction

and native-speaker pronunciation accessed through a variety of multimedia. Secondly and interestingly enough, the results revealed that students perceive teachers' pronunciation in relationship with the amount of L2 they use in the classroom: the better pronunciation, the more L2 a teacher uses in a lesson. Thirdly, bearing in mind that a pronunciation learning process can be limited by many factors, sometimes very distant from an individual's ability or motivation, for instance, an economic strain preventing visits to L2 speaking countries, an L2 teacher should promote pronunciation learning through available, motivating and easily accessed multimedia.

The outcomes, however, need to be viewed with caution because of some weaknesses of the study. The participants were asked to report their perceptions based on the recalling of past memories that are easily affected by the factor of time (Craik, 2017). Therefore, their responses regarding their school teachers' pronunciation based on their past impressions might be far from accurate. Apart from the shortcomings of human memory, the individuals might have been tempted to deploy face-saving strategies when providing the answers because they all attended the courses conducted by the researcher. Nevertheless, the participants were informed of the purpose and confidentiality of the study. Obviously, a larger sample might generate more generalizable data. Therefore, this study should be treated as a preliminary stage leading to a more in-depth analysis of the educational environment entailing pronunciation learning.

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Magdalena Szyszka

Das Milieu für Aussprachelernen: die Wahrnehmung vom Einfluss der schulischen und außerschulischen Faktoren auf die Ausspracheerwerbung bei den Englisch als Zweitsprache Lernenden

Zusammenfassung

Die Art und Weise auf welche das Bildungsmilieu von einem eine Fremdsprache lernenden Schüler wahrgenommen wird, kann den ganzen Prozess der Fremdspracherwerbung beeinflussen. Im gegenwärtigen Aufsatz wollte die Verfasserin erforschen, wie die Englisch als Zweitsprache lernenden Schüler die Aussprache der Englischlehrer und die ihre Aussprache

bewirkenden schulischen und außerschulischen Faktoren (wie z.B.: Ausspracheübungen in der Klasse, Aufnahmen, Formbeachtung, Aussprache der anderen Schüler, Musikhören) betrachten. Die 89 Schüler zählende Gruppe sollte einen Fragebogen ausfüllen und drei Forschungsfragen beantworten: Wie betrachten die Schüler die Aussprache ihrer Englischlehrer? Was für ein Zusammenhang, wennschon, besteht zwischen der wahrgenommenen Beurteilung der Aussprache der Lehrer und deren Fremdsprachgebrauch im Unterricht? Welche Faktoren (den Schülermeinungen zufolge) beeinflussen ihre Ausspracheerwerbung? Die Forschungsergebnisse lassen statistisch relevante Unterschiede in der Wahrnehmung der Aussprache bei den auf unterschiedlichen Bildungsstufen unterrichtenden Lehrern erkennen. Die Beurteilung der Lehreraussprache korreliert positiv mit dem Fremdsprachgebrauch des Lehrers im Unterricht. Ansonsten messen die Schüler den folgenden Faktoren Gewicht bei, welche ihrer Meinung nach nur in geringem Maße den Ausspracheerwerb beeinflussen: Aussprache des Lehrers, Fremdsprachgebrauch im Unterricht, Berichtigung der Aussprachefehler, Kontakt mit der Sprache und verschiedenen Aussprachearten über die sowohl in der Schule als auch außerhalb der Schule ausgenutzten Medien.

Schlüsselwörter: Bildungsmilieu, Perzeption der Schüler, Aussprache des Lehrers, die Ausspracheerwerbung begünstigende schulische und außerschulische Faktoren

Pronunciation learning environment:
In-class and out-of-class factors affecting pronunciation acquisition

The main aim of this survey is to investigate your perceptions of some selected in-class and out-of-class factors related to pronunciation learning. Your anonymous responses will be used only for the purposes of the study, and they will not affect your course mark. Therefore, please, provide sincere and credible answers. If you find any of the survey items unclear, please, report it immediately.

- Biodata.

  Complete or mark the correct answer.
  - Age: …
  - Gender: …
  - How long have you been learning English? … (in years)
  - How long did you stay in (an) English-speaking country/ies? … (in weeks, months or years)
  - Which country? …
  - Have you attended extracurricular English activities (outside your regular school)?
                    YES   NO
  - What type of activities were there?
  A. group   B. individual   C. other: …
  - How many times in a week did you attend them? …
  - How long did you attend them? … (in years)
  - What was the mother tongue of your teacher?
  A. Polish   B. American   C. other: …
  - How many English lessons per week did you have in your regular school?
    - Primary school: grades I–III
      A. 1–2 hours   B. 3–4 hours   C. more than 4 hours
    - Primary school: grades IV–VI
      A. 1–2 hours   B. 3–4 hours   C. more than 4 hours
    - Junior high school: grades I–III
      A. 1–2 hours   B. 3–4 hours   C. more than 4 hours
    - High school: grades I–III
      A. 1–2 hours   B. 3–4 hours   C. more than 4 hours

- EFL teacher pronunciation. Circle the correct answers.

  - How do you perceive your primary school (PS) EFL teacher's pronunciation?
    Pronunciation competence scale: 1—very poor, almost unintelligible, 2—poor, with strong L1 features, 3—average, but generally intelligible, 4—good, intelligible, with few L1 and a lot of L2 features, 5—very good, almost native-like or native-like.
    PS teacher 1:   1   2   3   4   5
    PS teacher 2:   1   2   3   4   5
    PS teacher 3:   1   2   3   4   5
  - How do you perceive your junior high school (JHS) EFL teacher's pronunciation?
    JHS teacher 1:   1   2   3   4   5
    JHS teacher 2:   1   2   3   4   5
    JHS teacher 3:   1   2   3   4   5

- How do you perceive your high school (HS) EFL teacher's pronunciation?

HS teacher 1:	1	2	3	4	5
HS teacher 2:	1	2	3	4	5
HS teacher 3:	1	2	3	4	5

- How much time in a 45-minute lesson did your teachers use English (L2)?
  Mark on the scale: 1—never, 2—rarely, 3—sometimes, 4—very often, 5—always or almost always.

PS teacher 1:	1	2	3	4	5
PS teacher 2:	1	2	3	4	5
PS teacher 3:	1	2	3	4	5
JHS teacher 1:	1	2	3	4	5
JHS teacher 2:	1	2	3	4	5
JHS teacher 3:	1	2	3	4	5
HS teacher 1:	1	2	3	4	5
HS teacher 2:	1	2	3	4	5
HS teacher 3:	1	2	3	4	5

- In-class and out-of-class factors regarding English pronunciation acquisition.

  To what extent have the following factors affected your English pronunciation?
  Mark on the scale: 1—not at all, 2—slightly, 3—moderately, 4—very, 5—extremely

• Teachers' pronunciation	1	2	3	4	5
• Practicing pronunciation in the classroom	1	2	3	4	5
• Pronunciation error correction by the teacher	1	2	3	4	5
• Listening to the recordings in the classroom	1	2	3	4	5
• Peers' pronunciation	1	2	3	4	5
• Other in-class factors: …	1	2	3	4	5
• Extracurricular activities	1	2	3	4	5
• Out-of-class contacts with native speakers	1	2	3	4	5
• Visiting an English-speaking country	1	2	3	4	5
• Listening to music outside the classroom	1	2	3	4	5
• Listening to audiobooks outside the classroom	1	2	3	4	5
• Watching films/TV outside the classroom	1	2	3	4	5
• Other out-of-class factors: …	1	2	3	4	5

STYLE GUIDE FOR AUTHORS

Authors are requested to submit manuscripts formatted in APA style (*American Psychological Association*, 6th ed.).

All manuscripts must include an abstract in English (maximum of 250 words). After the abstract please provide keywords.

Main text: 12 Times New Roman
Long citations (more than 40 words): 10 Times New Roman, indent by 1 tab either side, one empty line above and below, no quotation marks.

1.5 spacing

APA headings

Level	Format
1	**Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Headings**
2	**Left-aligned, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading**
3	**Indented, boldface, lowercase heading with a period.** Begin body text after the period.
4	***Indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase heading with a period.*** Begin body text after the period.
5	*Indented, italicized, lowercase heading with a period.* Begin body text after the period.

In-text citations (examples):

Author's name and date in brackets:
The experience of critical incidents and effective reflection upon them allows teachers to control their classroom actions more consciously and create critical events (CE's), which were described earlier as intended, planned and controlled (Woods, 1993).
Woods (1993) believes that critical events are structured and occur in well-defined staged of conceptualization . . .

Two authors:
(Ballantyne & Packer, 1995)
As Ballantyne and Packer (1995) demonstrate …

Three authors:
(Barker, Callahan, & Ferreira, 2009)

Subsequent use:
(Barker et al., 2009)

Six authors or more:
Lorenz et al. (1998) argued…
(Lorenz et al., 1998)

Authors whose last names are the same:
(D. Francis, 1985; H. Francis, 2004)

Online sources (unpaginated), provide paragraph or section title instead:
(Peterson & Clark, 1978, para. 4)
(Moss, Springer, & Dehr, 2008, Discussion section, para. 1)

No author, provide shortened title:
("Primary Teachers Talking", 2007)
(*Reflective Practice*, 2005, pp. 12–25)

Secondary citations:
Smith (as cited in Maxx & Meyer, 2000) noted that "there is . . . ."

Citation within citation:
As it has been noted that "there is no relevance . . . (Smith, 2005)" (Maxx & Meyer, 2000, p. 129).

& vs. and:
As Smithson and Stones (1999) demonstrated. . .
. . . as has been shown (Smithson & Stones, 1999) . . .

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Goldberg, A. (2006). *Constructions at work*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Book, two authors and more:
Jarvis, S., & Pavlenko, A. (2008). *Crosslinguistic influence in language cognition*. London: Routledge.

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