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Preface

The present issue of *Theory and Practice of Second Language Acquisition* completes the fourth year of publishing this journal. It was founded in 2015, at a time when not many journals in applied linguistics (and specifically those focusing on second language acquisition) were available. It was established as a forum of discussion for Polish as well as foreign scholars. Indeed since then, every consecutive issue of the journal has welcomed contributions from many renowned researchers, such as Peter MacIntyre, David Singleton, Larissa Aronin, and Jean-Marc Dewaele, to name just a few. It is the journal's ambition to demonstrate new trends in SLA research, broadly understood, both worldwide and in Poland, focusing on theoretical discussion and practical solutions to problems based upon them. It is our aim not only to publish contributions from well-known and respected authors but also from young researches presenting fresh and innovative ideas. Thus, the journal hopes to become a venue for the exchange of ideas between well-established academics and those inspired by them. The journal presents issues ranging from purely linguistic and cognitively-oriented research on language acquisition processes to psycho- and sociolinguistic studies, always trying to feature the most recent developments in terms of topic choice as well as in the methodology of research they employ. It is crucial for the development of academic research that we offer this opportunity to share ideas in an effective and disseminated manner via journal publication, especially that we publish using an open access system and where the entire production process is executed online and the final product is available to everyone. The journal's standards and quality are guaranteed by the international Editorial Board of TAPSLA composed of well-known Polish and foreign experts on a wide range of second language acquisition problems. Updated information on the journal is available on the University of Silesia in Katowice Institute of English webpage at www.ija.us.edu.pl (via a special link) and on the journal webpage at www.journals.us.edu.pl/index.php/TAPSLA.

The present issue continues the topic from the previous one, which is that of language learning environment, broadly interpreted. It opens with an article by Sarah Mercer, Peter MacIntyre, Tammy Gregersen, and Kyle Talbot entitled "Positive Language Education: Combining Positive Education and Language Education," which is written from a positive psychology perspective as applied to education and discusses the notion of Positive Language Education (PLE). Here, the authors promote the idea that 21st-century education should not only focus on developing linguistic skills but also those which are more fundamental to our lives, that is, the skills of wellbeing, a major area in positive psychology. The model presented integrates the aims and development of linguistic and non-linguistic skills in the educational context as "the foundation for effective learning and a good life more generally." The article makes a considerable contribution to fast-growing research on positive psychology in SLA. The article is theoretical, but it makes a very strong claim for an empirically-based model of language education in different educational contexts. The following article by Katarzyna Budzińska "Positive Institutions: A Case Study" elaborates on a positive educational example in a practical way by presenting a profile of a language school which can be viewed as an enabling institution (a concept proposed by positive psychology). It follows the lines of Mercer et al.'s thinking on PLE presented in the earlier text. The author rightly emphasizes that out of the three major areas of interest in positive psychology studies: positive emotions, positive character traits, and positive/enabling institutions, it is the final one that has attracted the least attention so far. Thus, in her article, the main focus is on the analysis of a representative language school as the best example of its kind. As the author puts it, it is an institution "enabling success and promoting positive language learning environments or student well-being." In the next text, "The Classroom Learning Environment and Its Influence on Selected Aspects of Foreign Language Attainment—Insights from Students," Anna Michońska-Stadnik takes a different perspective on a foreign language learning context by focusing on students' perceptions of their environment. Expressing the belief that a modern language classroom has a facilitative role in developing autonomy, learner self-regulation and cooperation-enhanced motivation, the author discusses their views on the influences of some aspects of the classroom environment on their language learning process ("motivation, ability to self-assess, self-confidence, and attitudes to the target language and culture") expressed by learners in guided interviews. She concludes, on the basis of the interview data, that it is still the teacher that plays the most fundamental role in the above. The next article by Ana Aldekoa, "*Gure Ikastola en tres languages*: The Teaching and Learning of Trilingual Oral Expository Skills by Means of a Didactic Sequence," takes the reader into the world of multilingual classrooms, where the development of trilingual oral expository skills in Spanish L1, Basque L2, and English L3 students is presented in a trilingual didactic sequence. The analysis clearly

demonstrates that language alternation and integration during a lesson can result in the beneficial development of the three languages and thus, enhances students' multilingual competence. The article by Beata Webb and Alicia Vallero entitled "Developing Learning Environments for Blended and Online Learning" takes the reader to a modern language classroom where second language instruction makes use of modern technology by combining both the traditional face-to-face classroom teaching and possibilities online instruction offers. It presents the theoretical concepts, an innovative framework necessary for a successful implementation of language instruction at the university level as well as the students' assessment of this type of pedagogy. The Authors demonstrate how such teaching is done at one of Australian universities, the leading center for blended, online, and distance learning. The last article in this issue by Achilleas Kostoulas and Sarah Mercer is entitled "Reflections on Complexity: TESOL Researchers Reflect on Their Experiences." It presents the Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST), a fairly new theoretical framework in applied linguistics and demonstrates how researchers implement it in their practice of language teaching. The authors not only discuss the tenets of CDST but, more importantly, point out the challenges and promises of this new approach, as expressed in the narrative texts of researchers, experienced in implementing CDST in their work. They are fully aware of its benefits as well as of the difficulties that still need to be overcome. Nevertheless, they generally express an optimistic view to this new framework. The issue concludes with two book reviews. One of them is the review of the monograph by Katarzyna Ożańska-Ponikwia *Personality and Emotional Intelligence in Second Language Learning* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018), a must-read for all those interested in the affectivity dimension of language acquisition/learning processes (reviewed by Danuta Gabryś-Barker). The other review is of the book by Anna Borowska *Avialinguistics. The Study of Language for Aviation Purposes* (Peter Lang 2017), which presents a fairly new area of English for specific purpose (ESP) (reviewed by Adam Wojtaszek).

This issue offers theoretical reflections on positive psychology in education and complexity theory in teaching. It also proposes practical solutions to problems to be implemented in the foreign language classroom (positive institutions, translanguaging in language didactics). We hope that all types of readers—theorists and practical teachers—will find the articles inspirational. We would like to thank all the contributors to this volume and to invite other Polish and foreign academics to share their scholarly research with us by submitting their work to our journal, which is published by the prestigious Polish academic publisher, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego (University of Silesia Press).

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Articles

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Positive Language Education: Combining Positive Education and Language Education

Abstract

In this paper, we discuss the notion of Positive Language Education (PLE), which stems from a combination of Positive Education and Language Education. We suggest that there are good reasons for language educators to engage in enhancing 21st-century skills alongside the promotion of linguistic skills. One key set of 21st-century competences that would have academic and non-academic benefits are those which promote wellbeing. Wellbeing is indeed the foundation for effective learning and a good life more generally. Drawing on ideas from Content and Integrated Language Learning and Positive Education, PLE involves integrating non-linguistic and linguistic aims in sustainable ways which do not compromise the development of either skill set, or overburden educators. We believe that there are strong foundations on which to build a framework of PLE. Firstly, many language teachers already promote many wellbeing competences, in order to facilitate language learning. There is also a growing body of research on positive psychology (PP) in Second Language Acquisition on which further empirical work with PLE interventions can be developed. Building on the theoretical arguments put forward in this paper, we call for an empirically validated framework of PLE, which can be implemented in diverse cultural and linguistic settings.

Keywords: positive psychology, language education, wellbeing, PERMA

Introduction

In many ways, the purpose, aims, and processes of language education already stretch beyond narrowly defined linguistic competences. Most communicative competence models include some expression of socio-cultural competence in using the language appropriately to interact and promote positive relationships with others through the use of language. In order to do this, learners need to have some self-awareness, openness to others and tolerance. Very often students are expected to collaborate and work with others in order to complete various communicative tasks in language classrooms. In bilingual and multilingual contexts around the world, learners are encouraged to use their incipient skills in the community, to speak with others for authentic communicative purposes. It is widely acknowledged that language learning also essentially involves core issues of self and identity (De Costa & Norton, 2017; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). But have we thought, as a discipline, what effect all this might have on the learners' wellbeing? Cook (2013, p. 51) stresses that a multicompetence model of language teaching highlights that learning to use an L2 has numerous additional "internal mental side effects." In this paper, we propose that language educators consider the degree to which they may contribute to, and possible detract from, learners' sense of wellbeing through their practices and pedagogical goals.

Background

Albert Einstein once said that "Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school." This negativity toward schooling was reiterated in the responses of hundreds of parents in a 2009 study (Seligman, Ersnst, Gillham, Reivich, & Linkins, 2009) in which they were asked what it is they want for their children in life. Unsurprisingly, they typically reported qualities such as happiness, confidence, contentment, health, satisfaction, etc. In short, these are notions that would usually be considered components of well-being. When asked what they thought schools taught, they reported on accomplishment-related concepts such as achievement, thinking skills, literacy, maths, discipline, etc. While traditional subjects being taught in schools certainly have their value, the gap between the two lists and an examination of what is not being taught in schools suggest an over-emphasis in some education systems on making students suitable for the workplace and their future careers with little to no attention to their lives and wellbeing beyond this. Interestingly, there is

good reason to believe that attending to these socio-emotional dimensions of the whole person would in fact improve and enhance learning in traditional subjects and academic success (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca, & Malone, 2006; Sammons et al., 2007) as well as promote positive competences in the future workplace (Judge & Bono, 2001; Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001). In other words, wellbeing and positive psychology skills and traits are not only useful for people's lives outside of work but also in work and school (White, 2011).

In this paper, we discuss the notion of Positive Language Education. We put forward three main arguments as to why wellbeing should be an approach *and* an outcome of education more broadly and language learning specifically. We argue that wellbeing is a key 21st-century life skill that should be promoted to help people of all ages manage contemporary life. Secondly, we believe that education should per se be a positive learning experience. Finally, we show how developing wellbeing skills and traits lead to positive learning outcomes. Focusing on language learning specifically, we suggest that the nature of language learning makes it ideally suited for integrating positive education values alongside linguistic competences. We consider how insights from CLIL could serve as a useful lens for reflecting on how wellbeing aims could be integrated with language learning aims in a range of forms from strong to weak in a sustainable way without leading to additional strain for language educators. We discuss existing challenges and consider the future direction for PLE as a potentially powerful positive force in the field of language learning and intercultural competence.

Twenty-first Century Life Skills

Throughout the history of education, debates have raged over the focus and purpose of education, and it is nothing new to find ourselves today critically questioning the purpose of education, and more specifically, the purpose of language education. In the title of his book, Guy Claxton (2008) asked the pertinent and fundamental question: *What's the Point of School?* He outlines the stress epidemic facing young people and argues this is exacerbated by schooling systems as they currently exist with their emphasis on standardized tests and mass education treating all learners the same. He suggests that, "in the thrall to content and qualifications, we have forgotten the deeper purpose of education. In the rush to make young people into successful exam passers, we have overlooked their deeper need to become successful *people*" (Claxton, 2008, p. ix. Italics in original). Instead, he goes on to explain that young people need to be equipped with skills to cope with life more generally.

But, what are such skills? Therein lies a fundamental question about what skills people need to be taught in school, the purpose of education, and what makes for a 'good' life. In the current educational debate, it is fashionable to discuss 21st-century skills. There are a diffuse number of definitions of what exactly is meant by such skills and which sub-competences each supposed skill has. Indeed, a range of frameworks and terms exist (see, e.g., ATC21S; Partnership for 21st-Century Skills (P21); OECD PISA Global Competence Framework; Project Zero; UNESCO four pillars of learning). Perhaps one key distinction across the frameworks is the extent to which the emphasis is on skills needed for the future workplace (typically digital literacies, creativity, critical thinking skills and collaboration skills) or on ways of living in society and as an individual (typically personal wellbeing, citizenship and social awareness). More typically, it is those skills associated with being successful workers in the future marketplace that tend to be the focus of many 21st-century skill frameworks. In contemporary language education, many of these 21st-century skills are increasingly being considered in course book design (see, e.g., Open Mind/Mind series by Macmillan; Think! by Cambridge University Press; Together by Oxford University Press). Gradually and very recently, 21st-century skills are beginning to appear alongside language education goals (see, e.g., Cambridge Framework for Life Competences).

Wellbeing as a Key Life Skill

One of the core life skills that has received comparatively little attention is teaching for wellbeing. However, we argue that in the 21st century, this is perhaps one of the main skills people need to manage their lives successfully. In education circles, concerns are growing about students' mental welfare, not only in schools, but also in other educational settings, especially at tertiary level. There is widespread acknowledgement in industrialised countries that large numbers of children and adolescents are reporting depression and anxiety, although scholars' explanations for the increase differ (see, e.g., Hidaka, 2012; Jane Costello, Erklani, & Angold, 2006; Mojtabai, Olfson, & Han, 2016; Skrove, Romundstad, & Indredavik, 2013). University students are recognised as being especially at risk (see, e.g., Eisenberg, Gollust, Golberstein, & Herner, 2007; Zivin, Eisenberg, Gollust, & Golberstein, 2009) with a tripling number of students dropping out of higher education due to mental health issues in recent years (HESA report 2017 in Guardian). According to the World Health Organisation report (2017), around 322 million people worldwide suffer from some form of depressive disorder and 264 million from some form of anxiety

disorder—and figures for both are increasing. In the UK alone, McManus, Bebbington, Jenkins, and Brugha (2014) report that one in six adults has some form of mental disorder. In his review of the prevalence of depression in industrialised countries, Hidaka (2012, p. 205) concludes with the alarming summary:

> Modern populations are increasingly overfed, malnourished, sedentary, sunlight-deficient, sleep-deprived, and socially-isolated. These changes in lifestyle each contribute to poor physical health and affect the incidence and treatment of depression.

In measuring the success of a country, Diener and Seligman (2004) argued that a country's policy decisions are based heavily on economic indicators yet, as they show, wealthy nations with high GDP are not necessarily happy nations (see also Adler & Seligman, 2016). This means that what makes a happy, successful society cannot only be measured in economic terms. Instead, Diener and Seligman (2004) argue that a country's success indicators should include a wellbeing index measuring key variables such as relative positive and negative emotions, purpose, meaning, optimism and trust, among others. Indeed, there are signs that international organisations and some countries are beginning to take note of the importance of non-economic factors as indicators for the state of a nation. In 2017, the world's first happiness report was published and presented at the UN (Helliwell, Layard, & Sachs, 2017). It highlighted the personal and social nature of wellbeing, the variation in wellbeing within countries, and the fact that work is a major factor affecting happiness. Concurring with a growing recognition of the importance of wellbeing for the functioning of societies, an OECD report in June 2016 (OECD, p. 3) states explicitly that one of its top priorities is to "[C]ontinue our efforts to build a new growth narrative that focuses on the well-being of people." Similarly, a UK government initiative has given equal weight to both physical and mental health (Aked, Marks, Cordon, & Thompson, 2008, p. 4). In the UK government white paper, *No Health without Mental Health*, it states:

> The Government recognises that our mental health is central to our quality of life, central to our economic success and interdependent with our success in improving education, training and employment outcomes and tackling some of the persistent problems that scar our society, from homelessness, violence and abuse, to drug use and crime. (p. 2)

Importantly, these developments also recognise that taking a reactive deficit approach alone to dealing with mental health is insufficient. Rather, there is also a need to proactively prevent problems arising and promote positive mental health as a way of being day-to-day, not just in response to crises. It

is clear that education has a potentially key role to play in such preventative approaches. Interestingly, this development reflects moves in the field of psychology to switch from a deficit position to one which acknowledges the need to understand, appreciate and support flourishing in people's lives (Seligman, 2011). As such, recent years have seen the emergence of Positive Psychology (PP) as one branch of the broader field. PP is concerned with the scientific study of the positive aspects of life, areas of growth, and characteristics of "optimal human functioning" (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). It is not meant to replace traditional areas of research but to complement them, ensuring more balanced coverage of human psychology. One of its main stated aims is to understand what makes people flourish and what contributes to the 'good life' (Seligman, 2011). It represents the academic foundation for investigating and promoting wellbeing as an educational goal and life skill. As Waters (2011, p. 76) states, "The emphasis of positive psychology on wellbeing, flourishing, character, meaning and virtue aligns strongly with the ethos of whole-student learning in 21st-century schooling."

Defining Wellbeing

So, what is meant by wellbeing? Leiter and Cooper (2017, p. 1) note how difficult it is to define, given the research community cannot even agree on whether to write the term with a hyphen or not. However, most scholars tend to agree that it is a multifaceted construct that includes an emotional dimension, attitudes, perceptions, and, in some cases, physical and mental health. One of the most widely used definitions is the term "subjective well-being" (SWB). Diener, Oishi, and Lucas (2009, p. 187) explain that SWB is a broad construct that refers essentially to "a person's cognitive and affective evaluations of his or her life as a whole." It is typically described as being comprised of life satisfaction, a relative lack of negative emotions and the presence of positive emotions (Kahneman, Diener & Schwartz, 1999). It is important to note here that this definition does not exclude negative emotions, which also have a key role to play in wellbeing, but, ideally, the ratio should be more positive than negative emotions overall. The assumption underlying definitions of SWB is that for the 'good life,' a person needs to like themselves and their lives (Diener et al., 2009). As a construct, this term has been utilised in a broad range of studies and has strong reliable measures and tools based on this definition (Diener et al., 2010; Eid & Diener, 2004; Goodman, Disabato, Kashdan, & Kauffman, 2017).

Another commonly used definition of wellbeing as a component of the 'good life' is offered by Seligman (2011) in his PERMA model. PERMA

refers to Positive Emotion, Engagement, Positive Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishment. It is interesting and perhaps important to note that Seligman made the deliberate decision to move from "authentic happiness theory" to "wellbeing theory" as a model and construct, in order to avoid the simplistic misapprehensions that are encumbered in the connotations of the word "happiness." As an approach, PERMA emphasises more the eudaimonic notion of wellbeing, which contrasts with the somewhat more hedonic notion of SWB. That said, a study by Goodman et al. (2017) comparing SWB and PERMA suggests the two constructs are capturing similar kinds of wellbeing. A strength of the PERMA model is its foregrounding of the social nature of wellbeing and how it is not merely situated in the perceptive frame of an individual but involves others in social communities and relationships. Although there are relatively few empirical tools designed explicitly to test the PERMA model, one example that has good reliability scores is the PERMA Profiler—Short Form, which is a 15-item measure of all the core elements: positive emotion, engagement, positive relationships, meaning, and achievement (Butler & Kern, 2016). More recently, a sixth dimension has theoretically been added to the PERMA model to create the PERMA-V model (Zhivotovskaya at the Flourishing Centre). "V" stands for "vitality" in the sense of physical wellbeing and makes an essential addition to the model uniting body and mind and highlighting the link between physical and mental wellbeing (Diener & Chan, 2011; Veenhoven, 2008; Xu & Roberts, 2010). However, there is an absence of empirical research incorporating this additional sixth element at present although the PERMA profiler does include some items on health (see, e.g., Butler & Kern, 2016). For our purposes, the presence of these theoretical models of wellbeing and related empirical tools (see Adler & Seligman, 2016) suggest that the field is in a position to measure wellbeing as an educational outcome and, therefore, measure, evaluate and assess the effectiveness of any interventions.

Can Wellbeing Be Enhanced through Interventions?

If wellbeing is proposed as a goal of education and we can define and measure this reliably, we also need to be sure that wellbeing is malleable and can be specifically targeted and enhanced in interventions in education. In fact, Layous and Lyubomirsky (2014) argue that the question is no longer whether wellbeing activities and interventions work, but rather how such interventions work and to what degree. Positive psychology interventions (PPIs) are defined by Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009, p. 467) as intentional programs, practices, treatment methods or activities "aimed at cultivating positive feelings, positive

behaviours, or positive cognitions." Duckworth, Steen, and Seligman (2005, p. 641) argue that PPIs are worthwhile for two reasons. Firstly, because they, by definition, "build pleasure, engagement, and meaning," and hence are defensible on their own. Second, they contend that "building positive emotion, engagement, and meaning may actually counter disorder itself." However, views on the second claim vary (see, e.g., Mongrain & Anselmo-Matthews, 2012). In their meta-analysis of 49 studies investigating positive psychology interventions (PPIs), Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009) conclude that:

> (t)he combined results of 49 studies revealed that PPIs do, in fact, significantly enhance WB [wellbeing], and the combined results of 25 studies showed that PPIs are also effective for treating depressive symptoms. The magnitude of these effects is medium-sized (mean r = .29 for WB, mean r = .31 for depression), indicating that not only do PPIs work, they work well. (p. 482)

In another meta-analysis of PPIs in 39 studies, Bolier et al. (2013, p. 1) also found that PPIs "can be effective in the enhancement of subjective well-being and psychological well-being, as well as in helping to reduce depressive symptoms." They also found that these effects were significant over time showing that effects are sustainable. However, there are some notable mediating variables. Lyubomirsky and Layous (2013) developed a model based on their analysis of theoretical and empirical studies to show that the effects of PPIs are mediated by features of the activities themselves (such as duration, dosage, and variety), the characteristics of the person (such as their motivation and effort), and how well the person and activity suit each other, known as 'person-activity fit.' A key factor affecting this is the cultural context of the individual as different cultures value different things (Lu & Gilmour, 2004). Naturally, the cultural appropriacy of any intervention is especially important to consider in the context of language education.

There are a wide range of possible PPIs that exist and Duckworth et al. (2005) suggest that there are at least over 100 possible suggested activities. However, not all have been empirically tested and/or found to have robust findings in affecting change. Yet, there are clear indications about the positive effects of specific interventions and these would seem to be the ones to build on initially for any planned intervention or series of activities to be integrated in language education (see Appendix A for a referenced list of empirically validated interventions).

Positive Education

Positive Education (PE) is defined as "the bringing together of the science of positive psychology with best practices teaching, to encourage and support schools and individuals to flourish" (Norrish, 2015, p. xxvii). Rather than addressing only negative factors in education, the PE approach is designed to actively build on positive factors to promote flourishing. As an educational approach, PE seeks to put wellbeing at the core of education alongside academic subjects without either being compromised by the other. It has its roots in humanistic educational approaches and connections to a range of other approaches including Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), holistic education, etc. Fundamentally, PE focuses on supporting academic growth through and alongside the promotion of learner wellbeing, and deliberately integrates good teaching principles with specific empirically validated approaches from positive psychology. The International Positive Education Network (IPEN) uses the double helix metaphor to explain how the DNA of education needs to have two intertwined strands of equal importance: Academics (fulfilment of intellectual potential) and Character and Wellbeing (development of character strengths and wellbeing). IPEN emphasizes that the "character plus academics" combination are complementary and mutually reinforcing, with character strengths and wellbeing contributing positively to academic achievement and vice versa. Indeed, research suggests this is the case. Noble, Wyatt, McGrath, Carbines, and Leone (2008, p. 14) conclude their wide-ranging evaluation and report on wellbeing initiatives in schools in Australia by concluding that, "efforts to improve the wellbeing of young people in schools are therefore important for maximising the likelihood that young people can benefit from their participation in schooling." Specifically, positive wellbeing is associated with an impressive range of psychological, social, and academic benefits (Gilman & Huebner, 2006; Quinn & Duckworth, 2007; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002). Further, research into positive emotions shows how this can broaden attention (Fredrickson, 1998; Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005; Rowe, Hirsh, & Anderson, 2007), lead to more creative thinking (Isen, Daubman, & Nowicki, 1987; Estrada, Isen, & Young, 1994), and foster more trusting relationships with people from other cultural groups (Cohn & Fredrickson, 2009; Fredrickson & Cohn, 2008; Fredrickson, 2013). In educational contexts, research shows specifically how students who experience positive emotions tend to earn higher grades (Pekrun, Goetz, Frenzel, Barchfeld, & Perry, 2011; Villavicencio & Bernardo, 2013), use learning strategies more effectively (King & Areepattamannil, 2014), and are more active participants in class activities (King, McInerney, Ganotice, & Villarosa, 2015; Pekrun et al., 2011). As Waters (2011, p. 77) explains, "Positive education also works on the precept that the skills and mindsets that promote positive emotions, posi-

tive relationships and character strengths also promote learning and academic success (Bernard & Walton, 2011)." Seligman et al. (2009, p. 295) conclude that wellbeing should be taught in schools, "as an antidote to depression, as a vehicle for increasing life satisfaction, and as an aid to better learning and more creative thinking."

Integrating wellbeing into educational approaches can be carried out along a continuum from strong to weak forms. In its weakest form, it could be doing an explicit individual task or a smaller project explicitly or simply raising awareness of the wellbeing impact of the approaches taken. At the other end of the spectrum, others discuss the potential of teaching wellbeing as a specific separate school subject (White, 2016), although there are concerns about how sustainable that is and what message about the significance of this it sends to learners if it separated from the core curriculum. The strongest forms would be whole school reform or nationwide curricular changes. For those who wish to introduce PE in some form, there are growing numbers of education-based interventions available as well as established wellbeing models on which to base programmes. One such example is the Positive Educational Practices (PEP) Framework proposed by Noble and McGrath (2008). It centres on five foundations that are closely linked to Seligman's PERMA model but also draws on other areas of psychology. The foundations are: social and emotional competency, positive emotions, positive relationships, engagement through strengths, and a sense of meaning and purpose.

Which form of PE is most appropriate for any given setting will depend on the contextual constraints, attitudes, and resources available. As such, how PE could be integrated cannot be prescribed and at this relatively early stage of our educational experiences with this approach, a number of questions remain to be clarified. For example, concerns which need to be addressed include the strength and/or limitations of empirical evidence for the lasting effectiveness of such programmes (Spence & Shortt, 2007), debates around the moral, political and interpretative discourse of wellbeing (Ecclestone, 2012; Ecclestone & Hayes, 2009a, b), and concerns that a focus on wellbeing distracts attention from the academic subjects at the heart of traditional educational approaches (Benninga, Berkowitz, Kuehn, & Smith, 2006). Essentially, for teachers to work with PE in their teaching, they must feel it is worthwhile, feel capable to incorporate it and have the sense that this is something they can integrate into their teaching in a sustainable way, rather than it being a burden as yet another additional add-on responsibility for the educator to find time and become responsible for. All of these are legitimate concerns which must be solved for wellbeing to earn its place alongside academics in all educational levels and teacher development programmes would have a key role to play.

Positive Language Education

We believe that wellbeing is not only a justifiable and legitimate aim for education alongside academics, but a highly necessary aim in the context of 21st-century life skills. Now we consider why we think language education specifically is an ideal context within which to develop wellbeing competences. As stated at the outset, language education typically aims for more than narrowly defined linguistic competence and it often involves many aspects of the individual and their psychologies. Indeed, learning a language can be thought of as a way in itself of enhancing wellbeing (see also notions of the 'Healthy Linguistic Diet,' Bak & Mehmedbegovic, 2017).

A specific population worth mentioning in this regard are refugees and migrants who are learning a language. There is an expectation that such populations are likely to be at greater risk of psychological problems and difficulties (Fazel, Wheeler, & Danesh, 2005; Nielsen et al., 2008). As such, it is possible they would benefit even more from a dual strand approach to language learning that incorporates a wellbeing life skills perspective when approached in culturally sensitive ways. In a study by the British Council and UNHCR, Capstick and Delaney (2016) show how languages used by the refugees helped them build resilience at individual, family and community levels. They suggest that language is a factor in strengthening resilience and is a factor in preventing conflict and strengthening communities. They argue that the use of languages has "a central role to play in helping refugees to address the effects of loss, displacement and trauma" (Capstick & Delaney, 2016, p. 7) by providing them with a voice to share their stories. They suggest that through various activities and forms of play and storytelling using the "safe space of a second or third language" (Capstick & Delaney, 2016, p. 7), people can be supported in making sense of their experiences and expressing their feelings. Very much in line with what is being proposed in this article, they suggest that "psychosocial interventions do not always need to be seen as separate interventions to language learning" (Capstick & Delaney, 2016, p. 7).

An obvious model for the dual strand approach proposed by IPEN can be found in the areas of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). The definition of CLIL offered by Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2010) explains the dual focus aims of the approach:

> Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language. That is, in the teaching and learning process, there is a focus not only on content, and not only on language.

> Each is interwoven, even if the emphasis is greater on one or the other at a given time. (p. 1)

In this way, a CLIL framework could offer a useful lens for reflecting on how to work through the language with a content focus on wellbeing and elements of PP in ways stretching from strong to weak forms, as with CLIL. At present, the key difference is that the content of wellbeing is rarely, if ever, part of the curriculum—in contrast to CLIL which is traditionally used for content subjects already anchored in the curriculum. Typically, language educators use language to reflect on and discuss various topic areas and themes. By working on those topics and issues, language skills are developed and further promoted. Language-in-use is in fact the key tenet of the communicative approach. This suggests that language could also be used to teach competences at the heart of PE such as hope, gratitude, growth, positivity, kindness, optimism, tolerance, empathy, meaning, etc. alongside the development of language skills.

It is worth noting that nobody is suggesting that language teachers become "surrogate psychologists" (Craig, 2009, p. 1), and some teachers may feel that promoting wellbeing does not fall in their remit, responsibilities, or range of competences. However, many language educators already work on promoting positive individual and social characteristics (such as motivation, positive identities, sense of confidence, growth mindsets, empathy, positive relationships, etc.), in order to facilitate and promote language learning, thereby supporting learners in their broader lives. Yet, even in countries where wellbeing and health are considered within the professional remit of teachers, there is evidence that their training in this regard is at best patchy with reasons given such as a lack of time and a prevailing belief that wellbeing and health are low priorities in education (see, e.g., Dewhirst et al., 2014). However, for language educators to incorporate language and wellbeing aims consciously and effectively, they would need proper support and training.

Foundations for PLE in SLA to Date

To date, there are very few explicit programmes which exist to combine language learning and wellbeing aims. One that we are aware of is a project by Strambi, Luzeckyj, and Rubino (2017) at two universities in Australia to develop a curriculum incorporating PP, Transition Pedagogy, and CLIL principles to promote wellbeing in students transitioning to university and the teaching of Italian. There are also several course book series aiming at combining language learning with the development of 21st-century life skills although they

differ in their conceptualisations and where the relative emphasis lies (see, e.g., Open Mind/Mind series by Macmillan; Think! by Cambridge University Press; Together by Oxford University Press). However, the field has seen an explosion of interest in positive psychology (PP), which forms the foundations of PE in line with the contemporary zeitgeist of language education where there is an increasing focus on the learner as a whole person (MacIntyre, 2016). Humanistic work in SLA is being revisited from a contemporary lens (Arnold & Murphey, 2013; MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014) with emotions no longer being 'shunned' as the poor cousin of cognition (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015).

In terms of PP interventions specifically in SLA, work has begun with students and pre-service teachers to integrate language or pedagogical learning alongside wellbeing development. Although the focus of this article has been on language education, the same arguments can equally be applied to language teacher development. Language teachers too have a critical need for wellbeing. This is especially important given the high rates of burnout among teachers (Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010) and the fact that we know that teachers with high levels of wellbeing are simply better, more effective teachers (Duckworth, Quinn, & Seligman 2009; Sammons et al., 2007). Importantly, it suggests that there may be potential for PPIs in the context of teacher development (pre-service and in-service) explicitly incorporating wellbeing aims alongside other professional development goals to prepare language teachers for the rest of their careers. For example, Gregersen, MacIntyre, and Meza (2016) have examined individualized PPIs, integrated into a conversation partners program and report evidence of increased wellbeing scores over-and-above the benefits of participating in the regular programme. Hiver (2016) also focused on the wellbeing of the language teacher. His investigation on novice teacher resiliency generated data that suggested that the early career teachers who were prepared for the variability of the emotional peaks and valleys that are naturally inherent in classroom practice ended up with greater hope and hardiness than those who were ill-prepared in this regard.

Similar to PPIs focused on language teachers, second language researchers have also been actively pursuing empirical data on PPIs with language learners. For example, working from the position of "self" studies, Lake (2016) offered pedagogically applicable findings suggesting that positive L2 learner identities are important for learners to flourish. Flourishing in the language classroom may also be partly achieved through flow which is best achieved, according to Czimmermann and Piniel (2016), when there exists an advantageous blend of task difficulty and focused engagement. This combination, according to their quantitative evidence, is more likely to result in greater L2 learner control. Also with a focus on the impact of PPIs in learner development, Gregersen, MacIntyre, Finegan, Talbot, and Claman (2014) gathered evidence suggesting that emotional intelligence plays an important role in the success of specific

PPIs like "three good things," "savoring," and "learned optimism." Furthermore, using music as a PPI, Murphey (2014; 2016) followed learners' advancement of wellbeing as a process (rather than an end-state) and demonstrated that learners-as-teachers can also spread positivity to others outside the classroom in their own social networks. These examples of just some of the ways in which PP is gaining a place in SLA research provide promising foundations within SLA on which to build an integrated approach of PLE substantiated with empirical evidence. While wellbeing aims may vary according to age as well as cultural contexts, the development of a coherent framework of competences and curricular designed with an integration of wellbeing competences alongside language education goals for both learners and teachers would seem to be vital next steps.

Conclusions

In this paper, we have suggested there are good reasons for language educators to engage in enhancing 21st-century skills alongside the promotion of linguistic skills. We suggest that one key 21st-century skill that would have academic and non-academic benefits would be to focus on developing the competences, which promote wellbeing. Following the double helix metaphor, the non-linguistic and linguistic aims can be interwoven in practice in sustainable ways which do not compromise the development of either skill set, or overburden educators. We have suggested that many language teachers already promote many of these competences in order to facilitate language learning. However, a concern is that this is often done in an ad hoc way with no training or explicit support, guidelines or practical frameworks. As such, training is needed at in-service and pre-service levels to support teachers in understanding what wellbeing is and how it can be fostered for both themselves and their learners. We need to work towards a framework of Positive Language Education that can be empirically validated and further developed, and which can be practically implemented in diverse cultural and linguistic settings without prescriptivism and in sustainable ways. The wellbeing of learners and teachers should not be considered an optional extra but is a fundamental foundation of the skill sets both need to cope in their personal and professional lives in the future. The language learning context is ideally positioned to facilitate the learning of wellbeing through language use and learning. The question is whether this is especially 'positive' language education, or simply what good language education ought to be anyway.

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Positiver Sprachunterricht: Kombination von positiver Einstellung zum Unterricht mit Sprachunterricht

Zusammenfassung

Der Beitrag schildert die Methode der positiven Einstellung zum Sprachunterricht (PLE von engl. *Positive Language Education*), die auf einer Kombination von positivem Unterricht mit Sprachunterricht beruht. Seine Verfasser argumentieren, dass sich die Sprachlehrerinnen für Entfaltung gegenwärtiger Kompetenzen, darunter auch Sprachkompetenzen, einsetzen sollen. Eine solcher Kompetenzen ist das dem effektiven Fremdsprachenunterricht zugrunde liegende Wohlbefinden. Sich die Ideen positiven und integrierten Unterrichts zunutze machend integriert PLE auf ausgewogene Weise sprachliche und außersprachliche Zwecke. Den Verfassern zufolge gibt es relevante Grundlagen, PLE auszubauen. Zum einen sind schon heutzutage zahlreiche Fremdsprachenlehrerinnen im Stande, verschiedene außersprachliche Kompetenzen bei ihren Schülerninnen zu entwickeln. Zum anderen befassen sich wissenschaftliche Forschungen immer häufiger mit dem Thema Positiver Psychologie beim Fremdspracherwerben. Im vorliegenden Beitrag werden theoretische Argumente dafür angeführt, dass es notwendig wäre, empirische Forschungen im PLE- Modell zu verschiedenen Sprachen und deren spezifischen Kulturmerkmalen durchzuführen.

Schlüsselwörter: Positive Psychologie, Unterricht, Wohlbefinden, PERMA, gegenwärtige Kompetenzen

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Positive Institutions: A Case Study

Abstract

Positive psychology was founded on three main pillars: positive emotions, positive character traits associated with good living and positive institutions that create conditions for students to flourish (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Nevertheless, the research in psychology so far has been concentrating on positive emotions and character strengths. Enabling institutions have been the least well studied of the three pillars. A salient additional perspective, as MacIntyre and Mercer (2014) propound, would be to concentrate on the context in which students can experience enjoyment and flourish in foreign language learning. I try to fill the niche by analyzing a language school in the further education context in Poland which seems to be a positive institution. I base my study around the two criteria: enabling success and promoting positive language learning environments or student wellbeing. The language school is analyzed from three different angles: physical, pedagogical and psychological by means of an ethnographical research method and participant observation. The study is carried out in order to answer the research question: Can the school be labeled as a positive institution? The results demonstrate that the institution enables success as well as provides a positive learning environment and thus could be regarded as positive. The study is hoped to have contributed to positive psychology research by demonstrating what it means to be a positive institution in practice.

Keywords: SLA; positive psychology; wellbeing; positive institutions; further education

Introduction

Positive institutions have been defined as "enabling institutions," "organizational structures that enable success and promote positive language learning environments," as well as "institutions that enable people to flourish" (MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014, pp. 154, 165). Investigating positive institutions reflects the current interest of second language acquisition (SLA) researchers

in positive psychology (PP). As MacIntyre and Mercer (2014, p. 154) state, PP is "the empirical study of how people thrive and flourish; it is the study of the ordinary human strengths and virtues that make life good." In short, positive psychology aims to improve the quality of people's lives by helping them to experience positive emotions, become more engaged, and appreciate the value of life and its moments. In addition, the goal of PP is to increase virtues such as resilience, happiness or optimism.

Positive institutions are one of the three main pillars of positive psychology together with positive emotions and positive individual characteristics. Compared with the other two pillars there has been little research carried out in this field so far. The present study of an institution is hoped to have filled this gap. The author investigates a language school in the further education context in Poland from the physical, pedagogical, and psychological angle. The study aims at answering the following research question: Can the institution studied be labelled as a positive one?

Literature Review

Positive psychology is relevant to second language acquisition owing to the practical, human, and social aspects of language learning. Recently, Lake (2013) applied PP concepts in his study of Japanese students. His research results showed a correlation between positive psychology inspired actions and increased effort, self-efficacy, and exam scores. Nevertheless, the recognition of the affective aspects of language learning and the assumption that affect is as important as cognition goes back to the humanistic movement in language teaching of the 1970s and 1980s. The importance of enhancing individual students experiences of language learning and its beneficial effect on second language (L2) acquisition has been highlighted, for example, by Stevick (1990) before modern positive psychology originated, or more recently by MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012). This has been primarily achieved by helping learners develop and sustain their motivation, perseverance, resilience, and most of all positive emotions, which are essential in the long process of attainment of a foreign language. Researchers have also been emphasizing the significance of positive classroom atmosphere and the rapport between the teacher and the learners as well as among the learners (Gabryś-Barker, 2016; Budzińska, 2015; Arnold, 2011; Turula, 2006; Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003). The studies of classroom climate (Byrne, Hattie, & Fraser, 1986; Gillen, Wright, & Spink, 2011; Gabryś-Barker, 2016) have demonstrated that the physical aspect of school en-

vironment contributes to learning and achievement as well as peer or instructor/student relationship.

Nevertheless, it seems that the most prominent contribution from positive psychology to SLA has been Fredrickson's (2001, 2013) broaden-and-build theory looking at the nature and function of positive and negative emotions (MacIntyre, 2016). Fredrickson (2001) notices that action tendencies triggered by negative emotions are strikingly different from those produced by positive emotions such as joy, interest, contentment, pride or love. While negative emotions tend to narrow an individual's field of attention and predispose specific actions (e.g., anxiety often leads to avoidance behavior), the function of positive emotions is to broaden and build. Broadening is related to a wider field of vision, being able to absorb more information or notice more things. Building means that the role of positive emotions is to create personal or intellectual resources that can help people cope with negative events or emotions which an individual may encounter in the future.

The broaden and build theory also suggests that positive emotions can contribute to an upward spiral toward improved subsequent, emotional wellbeing or a virtuous cycle in other words (Mercer, 2015). As Fredrickson (2013, p. 3) recently stated, "feeling good does not simply sit side by side with optimal functioning as an indicator of flourishing; feeling good drives optimal function by building the enduring personal resources upon which people draw to navigate life's journey with greater success."

Positive psychology was founded on three main pillars: (1) positive emotions, (2) positive character traits associated with good living and (3) positive institutions that create conditions for students to flourish (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Nonetheless, the research in psychology so far has been concentrating on positive emotions and character strengths. Enabling institutions have been the least well studied of the three pillars. A salient additional perspective, as MacIntyre and Mercer (2014) propound, would be to concentrate on the context in which students can experience enjoyment and flourish in foreign language learning. The social turn in SLA means that the field is taking seriously the contexts in which language learning takes place. MacIntyre and Mercer (2014) observe that conducting studies of positive institutions has been the weakest link for PP. In a similar vein, Gabryś-Barker (2015, p. 156) emphasizes that "studying school as an enabling institution becomes one of important dimensions of present-day research, especially with the advent of positive psychology in a language learning and teaching context."

Even though positive institutions as such have not been sufficiently studied so far, there is some literature regarding *positive education* based on positive psychology (Green, Oades, & Robinson, 2011). What is more, a number of educational institutions worldwide follow this new pedagogical approach. Positive education, defined as "education for both traditional skills and for happiness"

(Seligman, Gillham, Reivich, Linkins, & Ernst 2009, p. 293), or "applied positive psychology in education" (Green et al., 2011, p. 1) aims to "promote flourishing and positive mental health within the school community" (Norrish, Williams, O'Connor, & Robinson, 2013, p. 148).

In Australia, positive psychology principles have been applied to many schools curricula as a reaction to overwhelming statistics concerning mental health problems in young people as well as a high suicide rate (Malczewska-Webb, 2016, pp. 196–197). In 2008, Professor Martin Seligman designed a whole school positive education program for Geelong Grammar School (GGS) in Victoria, which has proved successful in combating anxiety and depression. The program objective was to promote psychological wellbeing of students since the sole focus on academic excellence has been found to insufficiently prepare young people for real life (Green et al., 2011).

The present article can be seen as contributing to the existing research in conducting a pioneer study in the positive institutions area where the research is scarce. Not only does the present work explore the unexplored pillar of positive psychology but it also looks into its realisation in the field of SLA. The author of this paper investigates a language school, and assesses whether it can be labeled as positive.

Further Education Context versus State Schools

In Poland languages are generally taught in two types of context: state schools and further education. The present study looks at a private language school, which represents a further education context, which plays a very important role in Polish foreign language education. Owing to the general belief that state school tuition is not at a satisfactory level, further education typically serves as complementation of state schools.

A salient difference between the two contexts is the estimated student progress. According to the core curriculum students achieve level B1 (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) after 12 years of state school foreign language (FL) education, whereas in the further education context, they can achieve the same level in three or four years. Mixed level classes seem to be another significant weakness. What is more, state school pedagogical approaches tend to be less effective mainly due to the lack of teacher development program. Consequently, further education instructors are usually more professional, that is, enhancing the quality of service (Evans, 2008; Hoyle, 1974, 2001).

In addition, studying in state schools is obligatory, while in further education it is voluntary, which is likely to increase student motivation. As Deci

and Ryan (1980) observe, evaluations, competition, deadlines, social pressure, surveillance and other motivators popular at schools diminish intrinsic motivation, whereas when people experience choice about acting and no external pressure, they can maintain it. In a similar vein, Chaffee, Noels, and Mceown (2014, p. 356) point out:

> Factors that cause students to feel controlled have been shown to negatively affect motivation (e.g., Deci, Eghrari, Patrick, & Leone, 1994). In light of this finding, the fact that language study is often compulsory at North American and European schools, as is the study of English as a foreign language EFL) in many Asian countries, is potentially problematic.

What is more, students in the further education context may find their learning experience more enjoyable thanks to customer treatment caused by tuition fees. Additionally, lack of examinations in this context results in a more relaxed attitude to grades.

The Institution Studied

The institution is one of 23 language schools accredited by PASE which is the main accreditation body in Poland. Schools accredited by PASE have to meet high standards in such facets as teacher qualifications, quality of teaching, teacher training, professionalism of management, studying conditions, teaching resources and the credibility of advertising materials. The institution offers courses at ten levels of advancement from beginner to post-proficiency. Learners are placed on the basis of a written and oral test in order to tailor the tuition to the student proficiency level.

The school has a professional development program: yearly lesson observations conducted by professional teacher trainers, regular peer observations as well as teacher-training sessions. Moreover, teachers are supposed to attend at least one conference or external teacher training event every year. Consequently, the instructors are up to date with the current methodology and are able to use a variety of appealing teaching techniques, many of which include interactive exercises involving technology. Furthermore, the members of staff are highly qualified and either hold an MA degree in English or a certificate or a diploma in English language teaching to adults (Cambridge CELTA or DELTA). In addition, among the instructors there are teacher trainers, Cambridge English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) examiners and course book writers.

As far as the physical aspect is concerned, the building is relatively new, well kept, with all necessary facilities, a library and a self-study area in the lobby. The classrooms are attractive, spacious without being too big, equipped with comfortable furniture, computers, smart boards and overhead projectors. What is of particular importance is that a circular seating arrangement is used in every classroom. As Falout (2014, p. 287) states, this kind of seating arrangement helps to create a sense of belonging within the classroom community, which in turn facilitates learning, has a positive effect on student emotions and wellbeing. Small student number per class seems to be another characteristic of the institution. According to the school policy the number must not exceed 12 learners. In practice, many classes consist of five to seven students, which is likely to lead to greater learner engagement as well as to create a friendlier, homely atmosphere, which may also have an impact on student feeling of contentment.

The Current Research

Since I was an instructor in the institution I was analysing I used an ethnographical research method and participant observation. In this type of method "a researcher takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routines and their culture" (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2001, p. 1).

The study was of qualitative nature, looking at both teachers and students. An analysis of an educational institution cannot be complete without the instructors' voice. As Mercer, Oberdorfer, and Saleem (2016, p. 224) have observed, "the well-being of both teachers and learners are intricately connected." Similarly, Day and Gu (2010, p. 36) propound that teacher professional well-being is essential in their ability to teach. As teachers' positive feelings about an institution they are working for seem to have a positive effect on student contentment, it is absolutely vital that a study of an educational institution includes both learner and instructor insight.

Participants

The participants were studying English at an Intermediate level. The total number was forty-one: eighteen males and twenty-three females. Most of the students were Polish, however, three of them were foreigners: from Ukraine, Moldova, and China. The average age was twenty-three. Fifteen participants

were teenagers under eighteen. Nevertheless, middle school students were not mixed with adults since the school divides students into groups according to age as well as levels. There were four groups altogether. The class size ranged from eight to twelve learners. In addition to the students, all the fifteen teachers took part in the study.

Instruments

In order to obtain the data two main research instruments were utilized: student journals and teacher narratives. On top of that I used naturalistic observation of the students and teachers and my own judgment to verify the data.

Student journals, also referred to as diaries or learner autobiographies (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 176) were the instrument for obtaining data from the learners. According to Mackey and Gass, since carefully tailored questions can elicit learners' reports about their internal processes and thoughts, journals are often used to gather data for qualitative studies. The journals, which examined various issues related to the institution where the participants were studying English, were the key instrument used in the study. Apart from expressing their opinions on the context where the language tuition took place, the students compared this institution to state schools, where the respondents have also studied English or other foreign languages. Moreover, the participants were asked whether they considered themselves anxious FL learners and if so whether their anxiety level decreased as the course progressed.

Journal writing was divided into five entries. Each time the respondents received two or three open questions and were asked to write a narrative of up to one paragraph in answer to each question. The questions were both in Polish and English and the students had the choice of using either Polish or English to answer them. This way the participants were able to practise their English while they were providing data for the research. This also proved useful for the informants who were not native speakers of Polish. When presenting excerpts from student narratives in the results section, those written in English and containing errors are marked with an asterisk (*).

The following questions were included in the journals:

1. Why did you decide to study at this school?
2. Do you find studying at this school any different from studying at a state school? If so, what is the difference?
3. Which school do you prefer? Why?
4. Where do you think you can achieve better results? Why?
5. Do you feel less anxious now than you did at the beginning of the course? Why?/Why not?

6. Are there any aspects of the class that make you feel anxious (e.g., classroom atmosphere, your relationship with the teacher or other students, the pace of the lesson)?
7. Is studying at this school less stressful than at a state school? Why?
8. Do you think there are differences between this school and state schools as far as the following aspects are concerned? Can you describe them?
   a) The premises, classrooms, furniture, equipment, technology,
   b) The teachers and teaching (professionalism, attitude to students, requirements, stress level, severity, helpfulness, preparation, lesson quality, etc.),
   c) School policy (grades, tests, promotion to a higher level, evaluation for public speaking),
   d) Lesson/course enjoyment/satisfaction.
10. Are you satisfied with the course?

Teacher narratives had a similar form to student journals with the difference that the teachers only wrote them once in response to the following questions:

1. Do you think the school is a positive place for teachers to work for? Why?
2. When you teach do you try to reduce student language anxiety? How?
3. Do you use positive evaluation?
4. Do you attempt to create a friendly atmosphere in the classroom? If yes, how?
5. What do you think of the physical aspect of the institution? Is it positive? Why?
6. Do teachers at this institution ensure studying results in learning and if so how?

Analysis

After the data had been gathered, the content analysis was carried out. To analyse the data, a grounded theory approach was taken (Charmaz, 2006). As Charmaz (2006, p. 181) explains, the approach allows systematic but flexible data analysis to formulate theories "grounded in the data themselves." According to grounded theory, data collected is analysed for repeated ideas that are tagged with codes. Codes are subsequently grouped into categories that may give rise to new theories. I read the narratives looking for themes or categories (Norton, 2009. p. 124), which in this study were the positive features of the institution. Once all of the categories were identified, I went over the journals again, assigning units of analysis to categories, that is, coding. Norton (2009, p. 124) defines a unit as "a single discrete concept, thought or idea, which might be expressed in a single word, a phrase, sentence or even a paragraph or two." In the present study units of analysis were students' answers to the questions I prepared for the journal. While coding I transferred participant names together

with units of analysis, which subsequently I changed into numbers to protect informant confidentiality.

Results

The data analysis has enabled me to identify three main themes: physical aspect of the institution, pedagogical approaches, and psychological consequences. Under the physical aspect theme, there are three categories: the premises, the classrooms, and the equipment. Pedagogical approaches include numerous categories such as: perceived progress, teaching techniques, lesson content, clarity, activation of a new language, revision, opportunities to speak, language of instruction, evaluation, atmosphere nurturing and an individual approach to learners. The psychological consequences theme comprises enjoyment and language anxiety level.

The results are presented in accordance with the themes and categories that have emerged. Extracts from student narratives are included to illustrate each theme. The examples of what the learners said are selected samples of reoccurring opinions. Despite giving a wide range of illustrations of their feeling, the overall impression seems to be shared by all of the informants. There does not appear to be a difference of opinions resulting from student age. There have not been any negative journal entries, however, three participants are equally satisfied with state schools and this institution and feel they benefit from attending their English classes in both contexts.

Physical Structure of the Institution

Most of the participants consider the physical aspect of the institution superior to state schools and highlight the fact that it looks more attractive, is cleaner and more modern. The students also point out that classrooms are smaller and cozier, the furniture is more comfortable, the technology is more advanced and better applied. They particularly praise interactive smart boards and the fact that they are utilized in various, appealing ways. In addition, the participants believe they benefit greatly from the educational platform where they can find each lesson materials, information about homework or vocabulary items. Thanks to this facility they can also easily contact the instructor. The student impressions of the physical aspect of the institution are reflected in the following quotations:

The main difference between the physical structure of this school and state schools is that this one is better equipped and the technology is better utilized. (s. 12)

At this school, the classrooms are way nicer than in state schools. They are cleaner and more modern. What's more, the equipment and technology is much better. (s. 10)

The classrooms at this school are smaller and cosier than in state schools. The furniture is more comfortable. Another difference is technology – interactive boards and the overhead projectors are used very often, a lot more than at state schools. Besides, Moodle platform is used – the educational platform with all lesson materials. It is very helpful. (s. 8)

Positive Pedagogical Approaches

The participants reflect extremely approvingly on the institution pedagogical approaches. They value the fact that the institution enables successful language learning and cares about student wellbeing at the same time, which would suggest that the school meets positive institution criteria.

Pedagogical approaches that facilitate learning. All of the participants feel they are making progress in their English studies, which indicates that pedagogical approaches employed by its instructors are conducive to learning. The following responses were given in answer to the question: Where do you think you can achieve better results? Why?

Definitely at this school. I have learnt more here than I did in my previous years at state school. (s. 11)

*I prefer this school. As I remember my English lessons at a state school were quite boring and rather participating in private lessons/ courses help me in learning English.** (s. 9)

The participants give numerous examples of pedagogical approaches adopted by the institution that may be conducive to FL acquisition. Firstly, the students believe that activating new language and regular revision contribute greatly to learning. Secondly, they find the lessons appealing thanks to a wide range of activities, techniques and materials as well as relevant topics. The students also praise the institution for the clarity of instruction and explanations, which are a much better standard than at state schools. The respondents frequently point out that the teachers are professional and better prepared than at state schools.

We learn vocabulary through revision. At state schools we memorized lists of words. I can achieve better results here because I practise the new language. Grammar rules are explained in a clear way. (s. 25)

*This school is different because at state school lessons were boring and mostly only grammar, and here we have conversations, also grammar but not so often, short video films, so the lessons are interesting.** (s. 15)

At this school there are different methods of learning, more practice, more possibilities to use language. I prefer it. (s. 9)

Studying at this school is better than at state schools because the lessons are clear and the topics are more interesting. (s. 4)

A considerable amount of speaking practice and employing L2 as the language of instruction also seem to be highly appreciated. The participants recurrently highlight that the classes allow them to develop fluency thanks to numerous games and other speaking activities.

I definitely prefer studying a foreign language in the further education context because I have more opportunities to talk. (s. 13)

I prefer further education context. One can achieve better results here owing to the fact that the classes are conducted in English. (s. 2)

Pedagogical approaches promoting student wellbeing. Apart from enabling success, a positive institution should promote student happiness. Participant narratives demonstrate that the teachers at this institution use pedagogical approaches that contribute to student wellbeing. The respondents point out that they feel more relaxed here than at state schools because of positive evaluation. Primarily, there seems to be very little anxiety related to passing a year, since it is based on coursework as well as the final test and all tests including the final one can be retaken. The participants also feel more relaxed because the grades are given less importance. Another difference between the two contexts is that the learners are not evaluated for speaking in front of others. The following excerpts from the student narratives illustrate the participant favourable views of the evaluation approaches used by the institution.

We have regular tests, but without major consequences in the event of an unsatisfactory result. (s. 8)

Studying in the further education context is less stressful than studying at a state school. If I don't pass the final test, nothing will happen, I will not have to repeat a year. I will just have to roll up my sleeves and revise material. (s. 1)

Studying in the further education context I don't feel the constant pressure of grades. (s. 32)

What is more, student narratives indicate that the pedagogical approaches aim at reducing test anxiety. The most important one is thorough test preparation realized through regular revision, familiarizing learners with test types and informing them precisely what material will be tested. What is more, unlike in state schools, all of the tests are announced.

Tests reflect what we have done in class. (s. 12)

Tests at this school are less stressful than in state schools. (s. 1)

At this school there is a friendly approach to all methods of testing, which improves their quality. (s. 13)

Positive classroom atmosphere is an essential facet contributing to student wellbeing. The participants emphasize the stress-free atmosphere of the institution, which they feel is conducive to learning. They also say that the instructors put more weight on creating a positive learning environment than state school teachers. One of the informants described the atmosphere at the institution as "family." She highlighted the fact that during lessons it is possible to talk about personal matters, student life, etc. The respondents also value the opportunity to express their thoughts. Moreover, humor was indicated as an aspect leading to student contentment. In addition, the sample point out that unlike in many state schools, the learning environment is supportive, there is no criticism, ridicule or competition among learners.

The atmosphere is really cool! Everybody can express their opinions. (s. 32)

I prefer the further education context, where the atmosphere is pleasant. I don't mean that at state schools there's some kind of terror – NO! The point is that here we don't just stick to the lesson topic but we also talk about how we feel and our 'problems.' I think one can achieve better results studying in a language school where there's 'family' atmosphere. We talk about different stories from our life and we laugh at them. (s. 14)

*At this institution – more friendly atmosphere. A good atmosphere is important, because it makes our learning easier.** (s. 9)

Positive teacher-student relations have been brought up as another aspect constituting a positive atmosphere at the institution. The instructors are perceived as partners or facilitators, while in state schools they appear to be less approachable.

*At this institution there aren't teacher-student relations (as with school).** (s. 17)

At this school the attitude towards students is more positive and friendly. (s. 14)

Additionally, the participants seem contented because they feel they are treated as individuals rather than a mass and their needs are addressed. The sample highlights the fact that the content of the course is tailored to their expectations and that teachers are always willing to explain points not understood by students, which is not always the case in state schools. The respondents also point out that the instructors are interested in them as individuals and remember facts about their personal lives.

Studying here differs greatly from studying in state schools. One of the main differences is that the course reflects student interests (for example more listening and less grammar). (s. 11)

*Studying here is different in many aspects from state schools, but mostly adapting form of lesson with personal needs of students and (if there is something that is not clear) not rushing the material. At this school there is no pressure to understand everything right away – there is always a revision and more time on lessons to explain everything.** (s. 39)

The difference between this school and state schools is that the instructor is very involved in the classes and pays a lot of attention to each individual student. One can definitely achieve better results in the further education context because of the instructor's individual approach to learners. (s. 35)

Positive Psychological Consequences

The fact that the institution promotes student wellbeing has been manifested by the participant positive psychological consequences of studying in this context such as low level language anxiety and enjoyment.

Low level language anxiety. Low level language anxiety seems to be a common feature of the participants, which is a salient factor contributing to their wellbeing. Most of the sample reveal that they feel at ease, are not afraid to speak and willingly come to classes. What is more, they believe that lack of stress helps them to benefit more from the instruction.

> *I can't act under stress. I believe that thanks to a lack of anxiety I can learn more. This school is far less stress-provoking than state ones.* (s. 32)

> *Here the stress level is low. We can laugh and joke.* (s. 19)

> *Studying at this school is far less stressful than at state schools. At state schools, there are students who try to draw everybody's attention by commenting on other people's mistakes aloud.* (s. 14)

The learners are not usually very anxious when they come to study at this school largely because it is their own decision. It is vitally important, however, that the instruction does not seem to increase their apprehension. In contrast, the institution appears to put students at ease.

> *I feel much better than at the beginning. The classroom atmosphere is great and I think it is because the teacher is friendly and helpfull.** (s. 17)

> *Now I know the teacher and the colleges from the group, and I feel more relax than at the beginning. I know that I can talk everything even when I'm telling wrong ☺** (s. 15)

> *I feel better than I began of the course, because I am better student. I like learning English and I feel really good at the lessons.** (s. 14)

Enjoyment. Enjoyment seems to be another psychological consequence of studying at the institution. In order to assess it the participants were requested to answer the question: *Are you satisfied with the course?* In answer to the question they either said they were highly satisfied or satisfied with their English instruction. Some of their comments are presented below:

I'm very satisfied with all the courses I've been attending at this institution. (s. 9)

10/10. (s. 28)

My level of satisfaction is high due to the enhanced quality of instruction, in particular the interactive and friendly approach of teachers. (s. 13)

I'm pleased with the course. The level is high and the lessons are not boring. (s. 2)

Apart from answering this specific question about the course satisfaction, enjoyment is generally apparent in all of the student narratives.

Teacher Narratives Results

All of the teachers seem to be satisfied with working for the institution regardless of their nationality. Their narratives clearly reflect what the students think of the school's pedagogical approaches. The instructors believe that the fact that teaching results in learning is not a coincidence, but their conscious effort. When planning their lessons, they include ample target language activation and revision in order to ensure that learning takes place in the classroom.

To ensure that my teaching results in learning we all do peer testing and other forms of informal testing to find out what students really know. We also do a lot of recycling and revision, formative assessment—(at least some aspects—to get students reflect on their progress and aspects that need improving). (t. 5)

I always want to make sure that my teaching results in learning. I believe that a lot of learning happens in the classroom. I use a lot of activation and revision. (t. 1)

Not only do the instructors focus on student language acquisition but also on creating a positive learning environment. The teachers aim at reducing student language anxiety through encouragement, praise, using learners' first names, smiling, including small talk, humor, treating learners as individuals, demonstrating genuine interest in student comments and referring to them in the future. What is more, they avoid nominating students to speak in front of the whole class without preparation. The instructors also make sure that the learners work with different partners all the time, which enables them to get to

know one another and consequently facilitates community building and creating a positive learning environment.

I create positive learning environment by humour and smiles. I encourage students as much as possible and put failure in a nice way. (t. 9)

I try to work on the rapport between the students right from the beginning of the course. I make sure that students get to know one another by using ice-breaking, mingling activities. It is important that everybody gets the chance to speak to everybody. (t. 12)

I try to make the atmosphere relaxed and fun. I chat with my students before and after classes. I offer help as much as I can. (t. 5)

I use pairwork activities for students to practise what they are going to say in public, I try to show them that they know more than they think they do. I praise my students a lot. I use a lot of scaffolding to help them succeed. (t. 6)

Low-stress evaluation seems to be another positive feature of the institution. The teachers believe that their evaluation is done in a student-friendly manner. Firstly, in their opinion results given as a percentage, not as grades, always appear more positive. Moreover, peer testing is commonly used at the institution, which is far less stressful than conventional testing. Additionally, the instructors think that the fact that students can retake every element of coursework makes the evaluation more positive. Another method is treating errors as a developmental tool rather than failure. What is more, some teachers reveal that they pay a lot of attention to reducing test anxiety:

I try to make testing conditions as stress-free as possible by behaving in a reassuring manner, monitoring and helping with task understanding, speaking with a soft voice and even playing some background music. I also allow students as much time as they need to complete their test in order to minimise pressure. Moreover, in order to reduce test anxiety, the learners are familiarised with the test format and contents and provided with ample opportunities for revision. I also make sure that my tests find out what students know and not what they don't know. (t. 3)

I reduce my student test anxiety by explaining precisely the contents of the test, so everybody knows what to expect. I also give my student extra time, if necessary. Besides, I give my students lots of advice on self-study

methods, which I believe has a positive effect on reducing their language anxiety. (t. 15)

I think my evaluation is positive: I praise my students a lot, I think I am enthusiastic about their language achievements, I get my students to set individual goals they want to achieve. (t. 5)

I often repeat that mistakes are important/milestones in learning, that mistakes are inevitable, that we learn when we make mistakes. (t. 6)

In addition, the teachers unanimously state that the school is a positive workplace. Several respondents say that this institution is the best in their experience so far. They highly praise the atmosphere, which is both supportive and conducive to self-development. A good relationship with the director of studies has also been brought up in the teacher narratives. What is more, the instructors say they benefit greatly from working with experienced, motivated colleagues as well as high quality teacher-training sessions and regular teacher and peer-observations. Moreover, they find it pleasurable to work with small groups of motivated students, since small class size makes it easier for the instructors to put innovative techniques into practice. In addition, the teachers speak highly of the constantly updated resources and seem satisfied with their salaries. The instructors generally say that the physical aspect of the institution is adequate. They praise the fact that the school is a small, professional looking building equipped with up-to-date technology.

For me, this is the best working environment I've ever worked in – my personal space is respected and my preferences as for selecting the level of teaching considered prior to giving me classes before each academic year begins. The building is by and large OK. Other teachers are competent, friendly and helpful when there's an emergency. (t. 2)

The school is definitely a positive place for teachers to work for. You can develop yourself thanks to contact with experienced teachers, workshops, training. We have a wide range of supplementary materials available. Besides, there's peer-motivation here. Everybody makes an effort, takes the job very seriously. (t. 13)

The institution is certainly a positive place for teachers to work for. The atmosphere is very friendly. The place is promoting self-development. I really like peer-motivation and training. I benefit a lot from it. I am very impressed with our constantly updated resource library and the fact that

everything is bought when requested. I enjoy working with small groups of highly motivated students. (t. 10)

Yes, this is a positive workplace thanks to a friendly atmosphere, a good rapport between the management and teachers. There is a lot of scope for professional development, well equipped classrooms and adequate salaries. It's the best place I've worked in. (t. 5)

Discussion

The present study looks into the under-researched positive psychology pillar, that is, positive institutions, which makes it pioneer research in the field. As MacIntyre and Mercer (2014) propose, after exploring positive emotions and individual characteristics, the next step is to focus on the institutions in which students can experience enjoyment and flourish in foreign language learning. The aim of the research was to explore the understudied field and investigate a language school in a further education context in order to assess whether its students experience enjoyment and are given opportunities for success and thus, the institution could be labeled as positive (MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014).

Looking at the institution from three different angles: physical, pedagogical and psychological as well as from both the students' and the instructors' point of view has presented us with a comprehensive picture which demonstrates that the institution could be referred to as positive.

The study results reveal positive psychological consequences of being educated in the institution, which, as Stevick (1990) and other representatives of the humanistic movement in language teaching propound, is likely to be conducive to L2 acquisition. Additionally, the participants positive emotions contribute to language learning owing to broadening the students' perspective and "opening" them "to absorb the language" (MacIntyre & Gregersen (2012, p. 193). What is more, their positive emotions will be invaluable in the long process of L2 attainment.

In addition, a positive classroom climate seems to be a salient feature of the institution, which, as Gabryś-Barker (2016, p. 156) states, "plays a role not only in fostering foreign language learning, but also in personal development and the well-being of teachers and learners." The classroom atmosphere and the rapport between the teacher and the learners as well as the learners are perceived by the participants as positive, which enhances their educational experiences and facilitates flourishing in language learning.

What is more, the most prominent contribution from positive psychology to SLA, that is, broaden-and-build theory is realized at the institution. Even though the physical aspect of the institution is just adequate, the school is extraordinary thanks to contented, professional, dedicated teachers who obviously care about students success as language learners as well as their emotional wellbeing. Consequently, the institution generates an upward spiral. The learners coming to study at the school tend to be motivated and do not normally suffer from anxiety. Thus, the institution does not reduce negativity, but focuses on expanding positivity. Learners entering the school with a positive attitude enter a positive virtuous cycle (Fredrickson, 2013, p. 3; Mercer, 2015), which in turn, may help them build intellectual resources.

Although the findings are insightful, the study is not free from limitations. First of all, the results could have been slightly affected by the fact that the diaries were not anonymous. There is a possibility that the learners might have wanted to please their instructor by providing answers they thought were expected of them. Another potential consequence of the journals' not being anonymous was fear of losing face and therefore not revealing the details the learners regarded as embarrassing. Some of the informants may not have wanted to admit being anxious, which they could have considered a weakness.

In addition, the fact that the participants reported on themselves could be considered a limitation due to a possible lack of objectivity. Moreover, some of the respondents were very young, 13 years old. At this age, with relatively little life experience, people may not be accurate judges of themselves. In addition, some of the answers may not have been reliable due to the fact that some informants might have reported what they believed should have been reported (McKay, 2006, p. 36). Nevertheless, as a participant observer I verified this possible lack of objectivity by looking at the student classroom performance on a regular basis.

The value of the selected type of research, however, greatly outweighs this limitation. Thanks to adopting an ethnographical approach and participant observation, the process of teaching remained almost uninterrupted, the study was conducted in natural classroom conditions, without the intrusion of using extra stressors, for example, video cameras, special equipment such as halter heart monitors, or visitors handing out questionnaires. Therefore, the learners did not go through unpleasant or abnormal experiences for the sake of data collection.

What is more, the participant comments helped me to understand which of my pedagogical approaches are perceived as positive by students. Consequently, I was able to tailor my way of teaching to my students' needs. In other words, students' thoughts, feelings and impressions showed me how to improve their wellbeing, which, as Oxford (2016, p. 21) states is what the positive psychology is all about.

Conclusion

The present study has demonstrated what it means in practice to be a positive institution in the SLA field and how the criterion of enabling success in foreign language acquisition while promoting student wellbeing can be realized. It is hoped that other foreign language teaching contexts that lack some of the positive aspects incorporate the positive institution features described in the present article, which would contribute to the growth in number of contexts where foreign languages can be acquired in line with positive psychology.

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Katarzyna Budzińska

Positive Institutionen – Fallstudie

Zusammenfassung

Positive Psychologie stützt sich auf drei Hauptelementen: positiven Emotionen, positiven Charakterzügen und positiven Institutionen. Untersuchungen auf dem Gebiet waren bisher auf positive Emotionen und positive Charakterzüge fokussiert. Institutionen, in denen die Schüler Freude und zudem Erfolge haben waren kaum erforscht. Um diese Lücke zu erfüllen untersucht die Verfasserin die Tätigkeit der im außerschulischen System fungierenden Sprachschule in Polen. Bei der Untersuchung wurden zwei Kriterien angewandt: den Schülern einen Erfolg beim Fremdsprachenunterricht zu ermöglichen und positive, das Wohlbefinden der Schüler begünstigende Atmosphäre zu schaffen. Die Sprachschule wurde unter physischem, methodischem und psychologischem Blickwinkel mittels ethnografischer Methode und teilnehmender Beobachtung untersucht. Die Untersuchung sollte die Frage beantworten, ob diese Schule den Bedingungen einer positiven Institution entspricht. Den Forschungsergebnissen zufolge ermöglicht die zu untersuchte Einrichtung den Schülern Erfolg im Fremdsprachenunterricht und schafft bildungsfreundliches Umfeld, so dass sie als eine positive Institution betrachtet werden kann. Hoffentlich wird diese Studie dazu beitragen, die genannte Lücke auf dem Gebiet der positiven Psychologie zu erfüllen und praktische Bedeutung positiver Institution aufzuzeigen.

Schlüsselwörter: Zweitspracherwerb, positive Psychologie, Wohlbefinden, positive Institutionen, außerschulischer Unterricht

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The Classroom Learning Environment and Its Influence on Selected Aspects of Foreign Language Attainment—Insights from Students

Abstract

The twenty-first-century learning environment, the classroom in particular, is believed to create conditions for a language learner to engage in autonomous and cooperative learning activities. It is also believed to develop and sustain motivation, to foster self-regulation and—last but not least—to facilitate the learning process. The learning environment is composed of the learner, other students, the teacher and the physical environment, that is, the furniture and equipment. The research presents students' opinions concerning the positive and negative influences of selected aspects of the classroom environment on their language learning process, motivation, ability to self-assess, self-confidence and attitudes to the target language and culture. As seen from data analysis, it is the teachers whose knowledge, behaviors, and attitudes appear to have the biggest influence on students' learning process. The opinions are collected from students' written guided interviews and may become an inspiration for teacher educators at the university level.

Keywords: learning environment, classroom environment, students' opinions, foreign language learning process, attitudes to learning, target language culture

Introduction

When it comes to the relationship between the learning environment and an individual learner, researchers often argue about the degree and direction of adaptation. The debate concentrates on whether it should be the environment that adapts to the learner or the learner who should adapt to the environment, as

well as to what extent. However, in twenty-first-century education, the question could perhaps be formulated differently, for example "How can the learning environment influence the learner and in what possible ways can the learner shape the environment?" (Lippman, 2010). In this regard, there appears to be some progress from the idea of adaptation to that of influence or shaping, as the former entails submission whereas the latter accepts change without submission.

The inspiration for this paper came from a comment made by an undergraduate student about her school teacher's influence on her pronunciation and how she personally discovered the nature of fossilised errors. Thus, the paper focuses on the classroom environment and its impact on students' beliefs and opinions related to selected aspects of the foreign language learning process. It will concentrate on the influence of the environment on an individual. It is possible, however, that subsequent to data analysis, some tentative suggestions can be made to reshape selected aspects of the learning environment in order to create more facilitative conditions for the language learning process.

The paper consists of five sections. First, definitions and characteristic features of the learning environment in general and of the formal classroom environment in particular are presented and commented on. These will be followed by the description of the study group, the data collection procedure and instrument, the results of the research and discussion. In the conclusion the paper aims to offer some tentative implications for future teacher training and development at the university level. The detailed aim of the research is to collect university students' opinions on the influence of some selected aspects of the classroom learning environment during their primary and secondary education and their influence on their individual language development, their attitudes to foreign language learning and their attitudes to the foreign language culture and community. It should be mentioned that the participants in the research were second year undergraduate university students who had completed their formal compulsory school education two years prior to taking part in the study.

Learning Environment

This part begins by defining the *learning environment* as a general construct. "Learning environment refers to the diverse physical locations, contexts and cultures in which students learn" (Bates, n.d.). Students may, in fact, learn in different settings: in a school building that contains classrooms, at home while browsing the Internet, during a school trip or during family travels, while talking to friends and acquaintances, while watching television, or listening to audiobooks. There may also be numerous other opportunities for learning

which remain beyond the scope of this paper. It is enough to say that the rapid development of mobile information technology has created extremely favourable conditions for learning, provided the process is properly channelled.

The term learning environment may also denote the prevailing ethos and characteristics of a school or class—how individual members of the group relate to one another, how they interact and in what ways the teachers create a positive classroom atmosphere to facilitate the learning process (Bates, n.d.).

In the case of language attainment, we frequently make a distinction between the *formal learning environment* and the *naturalistic learning environment.* The former will be referred to in the next section as the research summarised in this paper concerns students' opinions formulated in contact with formal classroom instruction. The latter, in contrast, refers to learning the language outside the classroom and resembles, to some extent, the process of language acquisition. In contact with the target language community, individuals implicitly attain the language without concentrating on its formal features. It is frequently claimed (e.g., Krashen & Terrell, 1983) that people acquire languages more efficiently in naturalistic settings and that formal classroom learning does not facilitate language attainment. We return to this discussion in the Section: Anvantages and Disadvantages of the Classroom Learning Environment (p. 61 of this paper). A different viewpoint is adopted by other specialists (e.g., Ryan & Mercer, 2011, pp. 160–162; Michońska-Stadnik, 2013, p. 76). They claim that cultivating strong beliefs about the advantages of naturalistic settings over formal settings may weaken students' motivation to learn, make them less active and less willing to accept challenges. Many individuals believe then that a mere visit to a target language country will miraculously trigger language development and guarantee success. It seems advisable to ascertain that such a visit may appear profitable for students, but that contact with the target language in a formal setting may strengthen their strategic competence and academic learning skills and develop learner autonomy.

As Wolff (2011, p. 8) claims, various learner features may be affected by the two types of learning environment. The first characteristic trait that comes to mind in this context is motivation. Some learners will be more motivated while interacting in the naturalistic setting, whereas others will thrive in the formal classroom environment in which they may be able to make effective use of their academic abilities. Students' use of learning and communication strategies will also undergo change due to exposure to different learning contexts. Learning beliefs, attitudes, affective states and willingness to communicate may also be influenced by the environment. As young people are usually subject to institutionalised schooling for around 12 years during their most sensitive developmental period, it seems reasonable to assume that this form of learning environment may have a profound influence on their beliefs, opinions and attitudes. Let us now concentrate on the classroom environment

and its characteristic features following Wolff's (2011, p. 10) point that "[in] my understanding, a *learning environment* encompasses the classroom and the activities that take place there." To conclude, even though the term learning environment covers different educational settings, it is traditionally associated, even by specialists, with formal education in the classroom.

Classroom Learning Environment

General Characteristics of the Classroom Environment

Long (2000, pp. 131–134) agrees with the statement expressed above that institutionalized forms of education may shape learners' attitudes, beliefs, and even personality. He refers to the educational context in general when he writes that students' school experience "will have important effects on their development" (Long, 2000, p. 131). In his opinion, school organization plays an important role. By school organization Long means, among other features, the size of the school, classroom size and the number of students in a group. Classroom size and layout will clearly depend on the students' age and the school subject being taught. A chemistry laboratory will look different from a language classroom and a primary classroom will scarcely resemble a secondary one. In the distant past, however, educational authorities did not really put much effort into adjusting classrooms to students' age and needs—there seemed to be no interest in creating a learner-friendly atmosphere.

School organization also involves different forms of ability grouping, which is a procedure frequently criticized by parents and other social groups. The critics often claim that once a learner is classified into a lower ability group, no matter how hard they try later and achieve better results in tests, they may remain in that group till the end of their school education. This may result in lower motivation, unwillingness to attend school and even truancy. In a language classroom, however, it seems more natural to group students according to their proficiency level—which may have little to do with their general academic learning abilities—and students may be moved to higher level groups when they make noticeable progress.

Long (2000) also mentions that school organization may sometimes have political significance. Discussing that issue, however, remains beyond the scope of this paper.

Determinants of an Effective Classroom Learning Environment

In his further description of the classroom environment, Long (2000, pp. 133–134) proposes some conditions favoring academic achievement. First, he emphasizes an orderly and favorable school climate, in which learners may feel safe and secure. This is much easier to achieve if the school and classes are smaller. In densely populated neighborhoods, unfortunately, schools are usually overcrowded and young learners may feel lost, insecure and deprived of the teacher's appropriate attention.

Another condition necessary for academic achievement is agreement and co-operation between teachers, which also includes effective school administration and the head teacher's supportive leadership. This leadership should involve, for example, appropriate lesson scheduling, adjusted to learners' and teachers' needs, departure from fixed lesson times and the appropriate distribution of recess periods. The most important aspect, however, is the quality of the school curriculum and the coordination of that curriculum with methods of instruction.

Other favorable conditions for academic achievement include the degree of parental involvement, effective monitoring of students' progress and—last but not least—high expectations and strong beliefs in learners' abilities.

This set of conditions proposed by Long (2000) is focused mostly on school as an institution, on its organization and cooperative mood within the school community. Another approach can be observed in Heick (2014), who also proposes a collection of the characteristics of a highly effective classroom learning environment. These characteristics concentrate on students' attitudes, behavior and the relationship between classroom learning and the world outside. First of all, in an effective learning environment students are encouraged to ask questions and such questions are valued more than the answers. Students ask questions not because the teacher directs them to do so, but because they genuinely want to know and display authentic curiosity. By asking questions, students direct the teacher towards explaining things they really want to understand, which makes the whole teaching process worthwhile. That is why good questions are more important than answers. Heick (2014) also emphasizes the fact that in effective learning, ideas for lessons do not all come from the teacher or from the course book—they may derive from different sources, for example, the students themselves, their families, the Internet, or the outside world, to name just a few. This variety of learning sources may motivate the students to pursue authentic, real-life knowledge. As Heick (2014, n.p.) claims, "[c]lassroom learning 'empties' into a connected community—learning starts from the real world and ends there."

In an effective learning environment different learning models are employed. The learners develop awareness of their own learning style preferences and they are encouraged to make use of their individual learning strategies. The

teacher's role involves, inter alia, the presentation of different learning habits so that the learners can personally assess their effectiveness in various learning contexts. When it comes to assessment, according to Heick (2014), it should be regular, persistent, authentic and transparent. It should never be treated as a punishment for lack of knowledge or for misbehavior. The assessment criteria should also be clear and transparent. Last but not least, in an effective learning environment constant opportunities for practice should be created.

Effective Learning Environments in Relation to Different Approaches to Learning

Different learning theories developed over the last 60 years show diverse understandings of the effective classroom learning environment. This effectiveness is determined by the role of the teacher, the treatment of learners, the attitude to the learning process itself and—last but not least—by the classroom layout (Guney & Al, 2012). Guney and Al discuss six different learning theories with respect to how each of them understands the conditions for effective education: behaviourism, cognitivism, constructivism, experiential learning, humanistic learning, and social-situational learning theory.

For behaviourists, learning consists of creating new habits, the stimulus for learning comes from the environment and it is an observable process, with the learner being a passive participant. "[K]nowledge is viewed as objective, factual and absolute" (Guney & Al, 2012, p. 2335). The teacher is the center of attention because he or she is the only source of knowledge available to the students. That is why the teacher's desk occupies the central position in the classroom and students sit in rows, all facing the teacher. Effective teaching and learning consists of inspiring new but predictable behavior and the teacher is responsible for this.

From the cognitivist perspective, learning is a mental process which requires attention and focus. This process involves noticing, storage, the retrieval of new information and finally its use. The teacher still remains at the center of students' attention, but favorable conditions for stimulating curiosity and exploration are also created, for example by arranging space for both individual learning and group work. Learning is supposed to be meaningful and the learners are encouraged to experiment and explore on their own rather than only listen to the teacher's instructions.

For constructivist theorists, learning involves constructing knowledge through individual experience. This experience is the result of one's social, cultural and environmental interactions, which help to interpret new information and reflect on it (Guney & Al, 2012, p. 2335). The effective learning environment should create conditions for individual learning and group discussions

as both are equally important for acquiring knowledge. The teacher circulates within the classroom learning space and facilitates the learning process. Both the teacher and students must take part in the organization of an efficient learning space and learners must become aware that they are also responsible for their success or failure. The usefulness of the learning content must constantly be stressed and learning styles should be respected (Wolff, 2011, p. 12).

Experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984) is similar to constructivism in understanding learning as a combination of experiences, perceptions, behavior, and cognitive processing. The classroom environment should encourage reflection on activities, feelings, and thoughts. There should be space for social interaction to gain experience and create better group relationships. Experiential learning can take place both in the classroom and outside it.

Humanists emphasize learners' needs in learning and treat them holistically, which means that education should cater for students' mental, physical, and emotional development. Knowledge develops gradually and lifelong learning is a natural process. Therefore, the learning environment should first of all cater to learners' safety and sense of belonging, which are basic physiological needs according to Maslow's (1954) hierarchy. This seems to be of the utmost importance in a primary classroom as young children's safety and security are especially essential for the learning process to take place. What is more, learners will need to personalize their learning space to attain the maximum amount of independence and realize their goals.

Finally, social-situational learning theory emphasizes "that learning takes place in social relationships" (Guney & Al, 2012, p. 2337). People learn by observation, contact with others and modeling the behavior of others. Consequently, group and pair work will mostly be used to create an effective learning environment.

Each of these learning theories favors a different type of effective classroom environment. Generally, however, cooperation between various elements of the environment is necessary to achieve success. Thus, we need to look into such aspects of the environment as the relationship between the learners and the teacher, relations within the group itself, the teaching materials and the preferred classroom layout. Only then will it be possible to observe the extent to which the environment may shape learners' opinions, attitudes and beliefs.

Advantages and Disadvantages of the Classroom Learning Environment in Foreign Language Attainment

The opinions in research reports on classroom language learning, instructed language learning or formal instruction related to successful foreign or second language development are diverse. There is no agreement on the extent to which

this form of language attainment is beneficial for learners, or whether it is perhaps more profitable to replace formal instruction with some form of naturalistic language acquisition. The opinions of second language acquisition specialists are generally divided into two groups: there are those who believe that formal instruction should be abandoned (the zero option, e.g., Krashen, 1982) and those who treat formal instruction as a facilitator of the language learning process (e.g., Sharwood-Smith, 1981). Among those scholars who believe in the facilitative effect of classroom instruction, four distinct positions may be distinguished: the interface hypothesis (Sharwood-Smith, 1981), the variability hypothesis (e.g., Tarone, 1983), the teachability hypothesis (e.g., Pienemann, 1984) and the selective attention hypothesis (e.g., Seliger, 1979). According to the first hypothesis, instruction facilitates language acquisition by providing conscious rules and by supplying the learner with numerous opportunities for practice. Practice is needed to make conscious knowledge automatic. The variability hypothesis, on the other hand, claims that teaching new structures consciously will only affect the learners' careful, planned but not spontaneous language performance. The teachability hypothesis concentrates on the fact that the learners will not automatize certain language structures until there are no maturational constraints on attainment based on the natural order of acquisition. Finally, the selective attention hypothesis argues that formal instruction acts as an aid to learners in helping them concentrate their attention on salient language structures.

Theoretical considerations seem to confirm the facilitative effects of formal instruction on language development. Formal instruction takes place primarily under classroom conditions. Even though the facilitative effects of the classroom environment itself are not unconditionally supported by research, from the practical point of view, formal learning conditions seem to hold more advantages than disadvantages (Hendricks, n.d.). From the positive viewpoint, the classroom environment offers opportunities for face-to face interaction with the teacher, who is a proficient user of the foreign language, as well as with peers. In the classroom, friendships and relations are formed, which sometimes continue for a lifetime. What is more, in the classroom, students are encouraged to ask questions and to discuss issues, which may enhance their cognitive development. On the other hand, there is no flexibility in the classroom—there is a fixed curriculum, a nationally established core syllabus and mandatory course books. Opportunities for individual and autonomous learning are also limited. In the study presented below, the participants comment on both the positive and negative features of the classroom environment.

The Study

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

As already stated in the introduction, the purpose of this study was to explore students' opinions and beliefs concerning the influence of different aspects of the classroom learning environment on their language development and attitudes to the target language culture and community. The aspects of the classroom environment taken into consideration were: the teacher, the group, the school, the course book and the classroom layout. In addition, some other influential factors were also remarked on by the students themselves. The following five research questions were addressed:

1. In what way did different elements of the school environment influence students' language development?
2. In what way did they influence students' general attitudes to learning a foreign language?
3. In what way did they influence students' attitudes to the target language culture and community?
4. Which opinions prevailed, positive or negative?
5. Which aspect(s) of the classroom environment appeared to be the most influential in shaping students' language development and attitudes?

Group Characteristics, Research Procedure and Instrument

The research used a data collection instrument appropriate for the qualitative methodology adopted. The participants in the research were second-year undergraduate students at the Institute of English Studies, University of Wrocław (N = 56). Their level of English approached B+ or C1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001). They had completed their standard primary and secondary education two years prior to taking part in the research. It may thus be assumed that the students would still remember their school experience quite well, but at the same time would be ready to evaluate it from a certain distance. In April 2017 they were asked to give written answers, in English, to three open-ended questions on questionnaire sheets. Students answered each question extensively, which may mean that all three questions were relevant to them and the answers were based on their genuine experience.

The questionnaire was formulated as follows:

The influence of the learning environment on selected aspects of language attainment
Try to remember your formal language education in English in the school environment. Which elements of that environment (e.g., the teacher, the group, the classroom layout, the school, the course book, etc.) influenced positively or negatively:
a) your language development;
b) your general attitude to learning a foreign language;
c) your attitude to the target language culture and community?

Results

The quantitative data referring to the number of opinions expressed are presented in Tables 1, 2, and 3 and examples of students' comments are then provided.

Table 1
Question 1—Influences on students' language development

Type of comment	Teacher	Group	School	Course book	Classroom layout	Other	Total
Positive	40	13	5	14	3	3	78
Negative	23	17	3	9	1	7	60
Total	63	30	8	23	4	10	138

Altogether the students provided 138 responses to question one, which asked about the perceived influence of different aspects of the learning environment on their language development. There were 78 positive and 60 negative opinions, which on the whole is rather concerning because of the relatively high percentage of critical comments (43%). The teacher appears to be the most influential element in the classroom environment with regard to students' language attainment. Students gave 40 positive and 23 negative opinions concerning the teacher's role in building their language confidence. The peer group influence rendered more negative (17) than positive (13) comments, which was again quite disturbing. The school itself appeared not to have much impact: five positive and three negative opinions. The course book influence was quite favorably evaluated: 14 positive and nine negative comments. Classroom layout seemed not to have much influence on students' language development, but the participants mentioned other factors which unfortunately had mostly a negative impact. A few examples of students' comments are presented below.

Positive: "Enthusiastic teacher," "the teacher had a very good accent," "the teacher was demanding but friendly and well-organised," "the group—we talked in English so I could see my mistakes and strong points," "the teacher developed vocabulary awareness," "the teacher was devoted to her subject," "the classroom was cosy and tidy."

Negative: "…if groups are streamed according to language level, weaker students have no chance to improve," "the school—lessons were frequently cancelled and there was no replacement," "the group wasn't interested in English," "the teacher looked bored all the time," "the teacher couldn't make the class quiet and it was disruptive all the time," "the course book was not inspiring," "the teacher's language level was really poor and she couldn't understand what I was saying."

Other: "…learning the same things for many years," "the program was not inspiring."

Table 2

Question 2—Influences on students' attitudes to learning foreign languages

Type of comment	Teacher	Group	School	Course book	Classroom layout	Other	Total
Positive	29	5	4	4	2	7	51
Negative	13	7	10	7	–	6	43
Total	42	12	14	11	2	13	94

Examining the responses to question two, which concerned the influence of selected aspects of the classroom environment on students' attitudes to learning foreign languages, the picture is not particularly optimistic. Students offered 94 comments altogether, out of which 51 were positive and as many as 43 negative. Similar to the comments covering question one, in this context also the teacher seems to have the strongest influence, with 29 positive and 13 negative opinions. The influence of school as an institution was in most cases negatively evaluated (only four positive in contrast to ten negative opinions). Also the group, the course book and classroom layout gathered more negative than positive answers. The influence of classroom layout seems to be insignificant. There also appeared other influential factors, not mentioned in the questionnaire. A few examples of students' comments are presented below.

Positive: "The teacher—she really loved her job and inspired me to learn," "the teacher told us that learning a foreign language is really important," "the school events organised for us to have contact with the foreign language," "the group—because it was advanced and had a motivating influence."

Negative: "Even bad teachers couldn't make me lose interest in learning a foreign language," "pathetic dialogues and stories were discouraging,"

"nothing in my formal education had a positive influence," "school—learning a foreign language was just an obligation."

Other: "Not school—music and film were influential," "a visit to England with my mum," "tests were too easy—no challenge," "private lessons."

Table 3
Question 3—Influences on students' attitudes to foreign language culture and community

Type of comment	Teacher	Group	School	Course book	Classroom layout	Other	Total
Positive	25	5	12	11	8	13	74
Negative	2	3	11	3	-	1	20
Total	27	8	23	14	8	14	94

When it comes to the influence on students' attitudes to foreign language culture and community, 94 opinions were expressed, out of which 74 were positive and only 20 negative. The positive opinions significantly outnumbered the negative ones, which gives hope that at least in this respect the classroom environment plays a more constructive role. Again, the teacher's influence appears to be the most important, with as many as 25 positive comments from the students. The school and the course book also seem to exert quite a significant influence, even though the students' opinions on the role of the former in affecting their attitudes are distributed almost equally between the positive and the negative impact. There were also 14 other factors, not mentioned in the questionnaire, which contributed to students' formation of attitudes. A few examples of their opinions appear below.

Positive: "The teacher was excited about culture," "school competitions I took part in," "classroom layout—maps, flags, pictures," "some colleagues from the group travelled to England and told us about their experience," "school language open days," "the teacher who didn't think that by teaching about culture she would lose precious time."

Negative: "Teachers didn't encourage us to look for information," "none of the formal language education elements made me actually think anything of the English-speaking part of humanity," "only grammar was discussed."

Other: "Meeting with guests from different countries," "private lessons," "books, films, not school."

Discussion

In light of the findings presented in section Results, it can be confirmed that the students' opinions expressed in the questionnaires provided an extremely rich set of authentic data. It must be observed, though, that the participants in the research, who all studied in the English department, were exceptionally gifted individuals whose language level was definitely above average. They expressed their opinions in English without any constraint. There is much fascinating material in the students' answers, which clearly needs further analysis and categorization to relate students' comments to various factors, such as conditions favoring academic achievement in the classroom environment. The following are just a few comments based on the preliminary analysis of the data. At the same time, they include answers to the first three research questions.

Students voiced as many as 326 opinions altogether, which gives an average of almost six opinions expressed by one student. In all, 203 (62%) were positive and 123 (38%) negative. These numbers, even though the percentage of critical comments seems to be rather high (see comments to question 1, Table 1), offer a relatively optimistic image of the classroom environment and its role in influencing students' attitudes to the three selected aspects of their language development. The teacher appeared to be the most influential element of the classroom context. Students gave 94 positive comments about the teachers' attitudes and behavior and 38 (around 29%) negative. The participants appreciated teachers' involvement, creativity, enthusiasm and professionalism, for example: "The teacher was really demanding but as a result I could develop my language"; "he was the one who made me think about learning as an interesting process, made me see the perspectives for the future"; "I think it was the teacher who made me fall in love with English. All my teachers were very creative, funny and I always wanted to be just like them"; "brilliant guy, made the group feel special"; "she always seemed to be interested in what she was doing"; "the teacher had a very good accent." Unfortunately, there were also critical comments, for example: "I've had many different teachers. Mostly they weren't educated enough to do the job properly, which I noticed even at that time"; "I used to argue with my teachers to the point that people laughed. I was better than them"; "Secondary school was only about the course book, most often without any teacher's help or involvement"; "we had only theory; the teacher didn't speak English to us"; "they always made even the most interesting topic dull"; "every teacher I have met during my education made some pronunciation mistakes."

As far as the group's influence is concerned, students expressed 50 opinions altogether, out of which 23 were positive and 27—negative (54%). This situation seems to be rather disturbing because the process of foreign language learning in the classroom requires, among others, effective group cooperation. Those

students who gave positive comments about the group's influence wrote, for example: "because of the students who grew up in English-speaking countries I was always motivated to study harder in order to catch up with them"; "it was an advanced group and it was motivating"; "conversations within the group had shown my strong and weak points." The negative comments predominantly stressed the group's indifferent attitudes to English lessons and the low language level, for example: "the group treated English very lightly and didn't pay much attention to it"; "the group was never really that interested in language"; "my class in the middle school did not like English lessons so it was hard for me to work in groups sometimes"; "the level of the group was also rather low and I think I would have benefited much more if the level had been higher."

There were 45 comments on the influence of the school as an institution, out of which 21 were positive and 24 (53%) negative. Positive opinions mostly stressed the many school events organized to provide contact with foreign languages, for example meeting foreigners, exchange programs, competitions, workshops and virtual lesson projects with a partner group abroad. Negative opinions mostly concerned the attitude to foreign language lessons, for example: "maths, chemistry—these were really important subjects, not English, so it was a little bit discouraging"; "elementary school … didn't want to allow us to learn English and therefore I started learning when I was in the 4th grade"; "often cancelled classes, no replacement teachers."

There were 48 comments concerning the influence of the course book on students' attitudes. Most of them (29) were positive and 19 (39%) were negative. Students praised the course books for their interesting activities, additional materials offered and for information about the culture associated with the foreign language, for example: "the course books made use of excerpts from books, videos, radio talks—it all showed me that I have to know the language in order to be able to function in everyday life"; "the [course book was a] help needed to expand knowledge and developed some aspects of language." Students were also critical of course books, for example: "course books are rarely amusing and entertaining"; " the course book was so chaotic and disorganised"; "English teachers in my school relied heavily on the course books and hardly ever looked beyond them, which made the classes boring and not very useful."

Students expressed only 14 opinions regarding the role of the classroom layout, of which only one was negative. It seems that students do not pay much attention to this factor of the classroom environment. Positive remarks mostly concerned posters on walls, colorful pictures and the use of interactive boards.

Apart from the five aspects of the classroom environment which appeared in the questionnaire, students also mentioned other factors that could have a positive or negative influence on their attitudes. These were mentioned 37 times: 23 were positive comments and 14 (38%) were negative. Students listed the influence of parents, media, the Internet, private lessons, television, films

and oral and written interactions with foreigners. Some experiences were not entirely encouraging, for example private lessons were sometimes inappropriately planned and the core curriculum was not sufficiently challenging.

In response to question number four, positive opinions (62%) prevailed. Students generally seemed to appreciate the influence of the classroom environment on their language development, attitude to language learning and attitude to the target language culture and community. Research question number five referred to which of the classroom elements, in students' opinions, exerted the greatest influence. In turn, these were first of all the teacher, then the group and the course book.

As demonstrated with respect to all the factors in question, the evidence offers substantial amount of insight into the contribution of all these variables of the classroom learning environment to the quality of the learning process itself. As it appears, none of the factors which determine the integrity of the environment can be completely ignored.

Implications for Teacher Education and Suggestions for Further Research

The influence of the teacher on different aspects of learning a foreign language in the classroom environment is enormous. Pre-service teachers must be made aware of how much influence they possess.

What seems to be one of the most essential problems is the teacher's pronunciation. Higher proficiency students notice pronunciation errors very quickly and comment on them. As a consequence, pre-service teachers must not neglect to work on their pronunciation, word stress and intonation because they are more salient than grammatical accuracy. Future teachers should also be instructed to devote time to developing their own enthusiasm and group motivation.

They should also take care to develop background knowledge and collect information about the target language culture and community. It is best to avoid "I don't know" answers to students' questions.

Teachers must show good group management. This skill must be acquired during teaching practice under the careful guidance of a mentor teacher. The organization of contests, quizzes, and meetings with native speakers is appreciated by students. Teachers and schools should devote time to these aspects.

As already mentioned, the participants in the study were English students (philology), that is, they were all genuinely interested in the target language and culture. It would be interesting to compare their opinions with those of students from different university departments. The research could also be advanced by investigating the influence of other elements of the classroom environment

(e.g., classroom interaction patterns, type of school) on students' attitudes to a different set of language development variables, for example pronunciation, vocabulary or grammar learning.

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Anna Michońska-Stadnik

Das Schulumfeld und dessen Einfluss auf manche Aspekte des Fremdspracherwerbs. Studentenbemerkungen

Zusammenfassung

Die Unterrichtsumgebung und namentlich eine Schulklasse sollen entsprechende Bedingungen für autonomes und zur Zusammenarbeit bewegendes Agieren schaffen. Hier sollen die Motivation der Schüler und deren Fähigkeit zur Selbstregulierung entwickelt und aufrechterhalten als auch vor allem der Fremdsprachenunterricht begünstigt werden. Die Unterrichtsumgebung bilden: Schüler, Schulklasse, Lehrer und Lehrbedingungen, z.B.: Ausstattung der Schulklasse. Die Inspirationsquelle der vorliegenden Studie waren Meinungen der Studenten zum positiven und negativen Einfluss der ausgewählten Elementen der Schulklasseumgebung auf Prozess der Erlernung der englischen Sprache, auf ihre Motivation, Selbsteinschätzung, Selbstsicherheit und Einstellung zur Zielsprache und deren Kultur. Die mittels gesteuerter schriftlicher Befragung gesammelten Studentenbemerkungen können eine Inspiration für die an Hochschulen tätigen Sprachlehrer werden.

Schlüsselwörter: Unterrichtsumgebung, Schulklasseumgebung, Studentenmeinungen, Prozess des Fremdsprachenunterrichts, Einstellung zum Unterricht, Kultur des Zielsprachelandes

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Gure Ikastola en Tres Languages[*]: The Teaching and Learning of Trilingual Oral Expository Skills by Means of a Didactic Sequence[**]

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyze the development of trilingual oral expository skills in sixteen-year-old students of Spanish (L1), Basque (L2), and English (L3) in the framework of a trilingual didactic sequence. Initial and final oral expository texts produced at the beginning and at the end of a didactic sequence by trilingual students constitute the empirical data of this study. We followed text genre-based criteria in order to analyze students' trilingual productions (Dolz & Schneuwly, 2016).

Results show that students improved their oral expository texts to different extents: among the aspects that showed a greater improvement, we can name: explicit mention of core elements at the introductory section in Basque, more consistent use of topic introducers regardless of the language and more regular use in English of resources to clarify those concepts whose meaning could be difficult to grasp for foreign students. Among those aspects where improvement is notably poor, we could mention that students hardly ever addressed the audience in English and thus failed to catch their interest; also, the production of target-deviant past tense verb forms in English remains quite problematic.

We conclude that well-defined language alternation and integration, which in our case occur both in students' productions and in the classroom activities, lead, overall, to the development of the three languages. We will further argue that this kind of language alternation and integration fosters interlinguistic transfer, resulting in the development of students' multilingual competence (Cummins, 2008).

Keywords: Basque, English, Spanish, trilingual oral expository skills, trilingual didactic sequence, language alternation and integration, interlinguistic transfer, multilingual competence

* We called the didactic sequence *Gure Ikastola en tres languages*, which is a name made up of different words from the three languages that constitute the didactic sequence, and means "Our school in three languages."

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Introduction

Multilingualism is an undeniable reality nowadays and there is no state in Europe in whose territory there is only one living language (Idiazabal, 2011). García-Azkoaga and Idiazabal (2015) state that what is natural is plurilingualism. Even if the ubiquity of multilingualism is considered a reality, in the last years, the fact that languages are taught from an often too monolingual perspective has been criticized (Cummins, 2008), standing up for the adoption of a more multilingual approach to language teaching. For example, Leonet et al. (2017) report on a study in which students learn compounds in Basque, English, and Spanish by comparing the three languages. This integration of more than one language in the classroom, however, cannot assume just any form but has to be handled taking into account the specific sociolinguistic characteristics of each context (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017). This is especially relevant in a context in which a majority and a minority and minoritized language coexist and the use of the minority language has to be promoted.

The aim of this paper is to study the acquisition of Basque, English, and Spanish oral expository skills by making a comparison between the initial and final texts of a didactic sequence. In fact, in this paper we introduce a didactic sequence based on the alternation of languages and on the interlinguistic transfer principle, and present some of its outcomes. In the first section the project is contextualized: we talk about the multilingual Basque Educational System and we also give some theoretical background information. The second section focuses on the didactic sequence that was implemented, called *Gure Ikastola en tres languages*, and gives details about the participants, the activities involved (from now on we will refer to this as the *modules* of the didactic sequence) and the analysis procedure we used to examine the data. The Findings Section shows the results that we have come up with, giving examples and commenting on them. In the Conclusions, we draw some conclusions from the experimentation of the trilingual didactic sequence.

Multilingual Basque Educational System

This project takes place in the Basque Autonomous Community, where both Basque and Spanish have an official status and, according to the Basque curriculum (Basque Government, 2015), students need to attain a B2 level in those languages by the end of Secondary Education. English is included as the first and main foreign language, and students must achieve a B1 level by the end of Secondary Education. The promotion of multilingualism including a minority language (Basque in this case) is a major specificity of the Basque

educational system (Cenoz, 2009; Idiazabal et al., 2015). In the Basque educational system, parents can choose among three different models: A, where the language of instruction is Spanish, except for language lessons; B, where some subjects are taught through Spanish and others through Basque; D, where the language of instruction is Basque except for language lessons. English is also used in those three models as the language of instruction for some non-linguistic subjects. Our students, who are in fourth grade of secondary school, on a weekly basis, take three hours of English language arts classes, two hours of Science in English, and also part of Technology subject. For students who choose the scientific-technological specialty, Robotics is also taught through the medium of English.

Integrated Didactics of Languages

The Integrated Didactics of Languages is highlighted as a relevant approach for multilingual education both in the Basque and European contexts (Basque Government, 2015; 2016; Candelier et al., 2010). The integrated didactics proposal states that the plurilingual communicative competence requires that the learning of all the languages of the curriculum is planned in a coordinated way. This planning is based on the same theoretical and methodological principles so that, according to the linguistic transfer principle (Cummins, 1979), crosslinguistic transfer can occur (Ortega & Anakabe, 2015). The Integrated Didactics of Languages is based on the communicative approach to language teaching, among which the text-genre-based approach has been considered relevant (Larringan, 2009), and it takes texts as empiric forms of the use of language. Text-genres constitute historically constructed models to use the languages and allow for stabilization of formal elements (Artemeva & Freedman, 2015). The text-genre-based teaching can be found in legal documents regarding education in the Basque Country and also in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Since the didactic sequence introduced in this paper is about the alternation of languages, it raises the controversial question of whether or not languages should be taught and learnt separately or whether or not an alternation of languages or adopting a translanguaging approach to language teaching is more desirable, seeing that it brings more positive effects to the learning process (Cummins, 2008; Cenoz & Gorter, 2017). As we all may be familiar with, there has been a long tradition in separating languages in language teaching. In fact, at school there is a distinct space, time, teacher and content for each language and, apart from that, there is a tendency to correct students whenever they switch between languages, which shows that purism is regarded of utmost importance in language teaching. Among the arguments for separat-

ing languages in educational contexts such as in immersion programs is the protection of minority languages. In sociolinguistic contexts where a minority language exists, there is, as Baker (2017) claims, fear that students will choose the majority language over the minority language. The arguments that, on the other hand, support the alternation of languages and translanguaging are the following, taking these latter approaches, languages would benefit from each other and that these approaches respond better to today's social exigencies. It is quite clear so far that languages can no longer be treated as isolated entities not being influenced in any way from the acquisition process of another given language and, therefore, it needs to be considered that they should be learnt in interaction because what is acquired in one language cannot be suppressed in the acquisition of another one. It is true, however, that integrating different languages requires certain criteria and, accordingly, cannot be implemented in any way. In fact, for example, there is a certain reaction against using translanguaging in the context of a minority language, and Cenoz and Gorter (2017, p. 910) claim that "the celebration of translanguaging without taking into consideration the specific characteristics of the socio-linguistic context can have a negative effect on regional minority languages." Having said that, we argue that the alternation of languages has to be precise, in order to be controlled and avoid the overuse of the majority language.

Taking the integration of languages to the precise context where the didactic sequence is carried out, the Basque educational system assumes a general level of coordination as far as non-linguistic contents are concerned, since the non-linguistic contents achieved through Basque are not repeated in Spanish. However, the didactic materials of Basque, Spanish, and English based on a coordinated perspective are scarce (Apraiz et al., 2012): in some cases, we find explicit interlinguistic references between the different languages (Aldekoa, in prep.); in other cases, coordination is limited to working on a different text genre in each language (Manterola, Almgren, & Díaz de Gereñu, in prep.).

Gure Ikastola en Tres Languages: A Trilingual Didactic Sequence

The two main research questions addressed in this project are the following:

- Is the trilingual didactic sequence outlined in this project effective in promoting an improvement of the oral expository skills in the three different languages?

- Do the language alternation and interlinguistic transfer carried out in this project contribute to the improvement of oral expository skills in the three different languages?

In this paper we will mainly focus on the development from the initial to the final text of the skills of the experimental group, who did complete the modules, but it does not fall within the scope of this paper to look at the results that the group of subjects who did not complete the modules of the didactic sequence obtained.

Participants and Task

The participants of our study are students of fourth grade of Secondary Education of a D model school in Bilbao, where English is introduced at the age of three. In total, 21 students constitute the experimental group of our study (nine boys and 12 girls), divided into seven groups of three students each. The students, who have an autochthonous background, are mainly L1 Spanish speakers, some are two L1 Basque/Spanish speakers and there are only a few L1 Basque speakers. Very often the use of Basque is limited to the school context and Spanish is predominant in the relationships outside the school, and, in their spare time, they usually conduct their activities in Spanish or, to a lesser extent, English and Basque. Concerning the sociolinguistic background of Bilbao, it can be said that the use of Basque in Bilbao has decreased in the last fifteen years (1989–2016); in Bilbao other languages—Spanish, French or others—are used more than Basque (Spanish 93.6%; French 0.3%; other languages 3.5%; Basque 2.5%) (Soziolinguistika Klusterra, 2016).

"A didactic sequence can be defined as a set of teaching periods (or "lessons"), grouped together in time and systematically organized around a *linguistic activity built in an explicit classroom activity*, and articulated around a shared and homogeneous learning purpose" (Idiazabal & Dolz, 2013, p. 40, my translation). According to Idiazabal and Dolz (2013), the aim of didactic sequences is for the students to master texts that are placed in social context, and not the ones that are often produced for pedagogic purposes, which means that a selection of real model texts has to be made (Figure 1).

In our study, we designed a didactic sequence within which students, in groups of three, were required to produce an oral expository text as the initial text (*Gure ikastola en tres languages*).

"An oral expository text is a formal text genre, whose main aim is the transmission of expertise or knowledge" (García-Azkoaga, 2007, p. 182, my translation). Students had to combine three languages (Basque, English, and Spanish) in their texts. Multilingual expository texts are common social practices, that is, in public conference contexts (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017). The text was

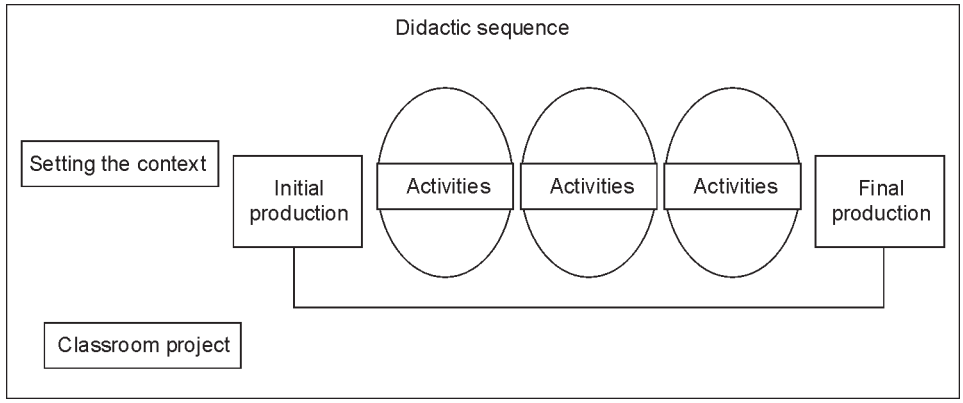

Figure 1. (Dolz, Noverraz, & Schneuwly, 2001, p. 7)

fictionally addressed to students from an Irish High School (exchange-program students) and to our students' parents. Students were provided with a planning model that contained the contents to be explained and the language to use for each of them, and their oral productions were videotaped and transcribed. In the oral expositions, students essentially had to mention their linguistic biography, one of the following three topics, depending on the speaker: the general characteristic, the projects or the history of the school, and finally, the most interesting aspect or what should be improved at school. It must be remarked that the instructions to produce the final text were modified in the sense that, in the final text, the use of a PowerPoint presentation was introduced where a summary of what was said in Basque or Spanish was included, so that it was also understood by Irish students.

Analysis Criteria of the Initial and Final Texts

After producing and transcribing the initial texts of the didactic sequence, some analysis criteria were specified. The analysis criteria for the trilingual texts were established based on Bronckart's (1997) text architecture model and other works about expository texts, which include the works of J. Dolz, and B. Schneuwly (1998), J. Dolz, R. Gagnon, S. Mosquera, and V. Sánchez (2013); Battaner et al. (1997). Following Bronckart's text architecture model (Figure 2), three categories were defined, namely, the planning, the adaptation to the communicative situation and the textuality. In the *planning* category, a subcategory was included, which had to do with the introductory section, which students produced in Basque, and here we looked at whether the objective of the text was mentioned at the beginning of the oral presentation, an initial contact with the audience was established, the listeners' attention was caught and the project was

presented. In the *adaptation to the communicative situation*, three subcategories were included, and the first one we looked at was whether the introductory and final sections were presented on behalf of the group in Basque. The second one had to do with the target audience, whether the words whose meaning might be difficult to grasp for Irish students were explained and whether the target audience was addressed in the text, and if yes, then by which linguistic means, all of it in English. The last subsection was whether the invitation to take part in the forum was addressed correctly in Basque. In the *textuality* category, two subcategories were included. The first one had to do with connection among different segments; whether topic introducers were used in Basque, English, and Spanish; whether a text organizer that announces the end of the oral exposition was included in English; whereas the second one—whether verb forms were consistently employed to refer to the past when talking about the history of the school and the students' linguistic biography in English.

Bronckart, 1997	Analysis Criteria
1. Planning	1. The introduction in Basque: is the objective of the text mentioned at the beginning of the presentation? Is an initial contact with the audience established? Is the listeners' attention caught? Is the project presented?
2. Adaptation to the communicative situation	2. Are the introductory and final sections presented on behalf of the group? 3. The target audience: are the words whose meaning may be difficult to grasp for Irish students explained? Is the target audience addressed in the text? By which linguistic means? 4. Is the invitation to take part in the forum addressed correctly?
3. Textutality	5. Connection among the different segments: are topic introducers and a final marker used? 6. Are verb forms consistently employed to refer to the past when talking about the history of the school and the students' linguistic biography?

Figure 2. Bronckart's architecture model

Then, we analyzed those initial texts, so that we could design the trilingual modules that would help the students overcome the most prominent difficulties that they had encountered in the initial texts. The modules were designed according to the interlinguistic transfer principle (Cummins, 2008), so the aspects to be improved have not been worked on in every single language (Basque, English, and Spanish), even in those cases in which we wanted them to improve in more than one language.

Aims of the Modules of the Trilingual Didactic Sequence

After the production of the initial texts, students received instruction in order to improve their oral expository texts.

The skills worked on in the didactic sequence were divided into three different modules, each one of them targeting a specific aspect of the oral expository text. The aim of the first module was "Giving a sense of entirety to the oral exposition."

In this first module students were taught to contextualize the oral exposition at the introductory section in Basque, because that is the language students were asked to use at the introductory section. So they learnt how to mention the project within which the oral exposition took place, to outline the aim of the oral exposition and to set an initial contact with the audience in Basque, attracting their attention. Apart from learning how to contextualize the oral exposition, they also learnt to talk on behalf of the group at the introductory and final sections in Basque. The third and last learning they acquired in this first module was using topic introducers to connect the different segments in Basque, English, and Spanish. With regards to the topic introducers, they learnt two different forms of topic introducers: the first type were topic introducers such as *concerning*, *regarding* or *with reference to*, that is, short phrases to let the audience know what the next topic will be. The second type of topic introducers were more complex, such as *Now I'm going to talk to you a bit about the history.* Within the acquisition of this second type of topic introducers students were taught to do three different things. First, in Basque and Spanish they were asked to use other verbs rather than the common ones such as *esan*, *azaldu*, *zerbaiti buruz hitz egin*; *decir*, *explicar*, *hablar sobre algo* ("say," "tell" or "talk about something") and in English the verbs "tell," "talk," and "explain" were the ones that were taught, since the Basque curriculum Heziberri 2020 states that students must attain a higher level of competence in their L1 and L2, that is, in Basque and Spanish, than in their L3 English. Leaving the verbs aside, in the topic introducers section they also learnt how to modalize in order to somehow "justify" the little amount of information they were providing their audience with, because if, say, they were asked to talk about the history of the school, it is clear that some historical facts would be skipped, so modalizers were another teaching topic but only with regards to the amount of information they were giving (i.e., "I'm going to talk to you *a bit* about"; "I'm going to *slightly* explain to you…"). The third and last aspect that was taught within the topic introducers was to make reference to the audience. Since we witnessed that when they made reference to the audience in English the reference to the audience was sometimes incorrect (they said things like "*talk you," "*explain you," "tell" without object), they were also taught to refer to the audience correctly. Not only did they have to use topic introducers just before mentioning the

main topic of the oral exposition (the history of the school, the characteristics or the projects), but also when letting the audience know that the exposition was about to finish.

The aim of the second module was "Taking the audience into account." This module had to do with interculturality. We need to bear in mind that the speakers and a part of the audience (the Irish students) belong to two different cultures and, thus, have different social and cultural references. This can clearly be seen in the initial texts when they mention Basque culture-specific terms that have to do mainly with both Basque culture and education system (*DBH*—secondary education, *ikastola*—school, *euskalki*—dialect of Basque, *batuera*—the name of the standardized form of Basque, etc.). Students were taught to make sure that the Irish students understood what they were talking about, using the phrase *which/who + to be* in English. Also within this second module, students were taught how to catch the listeners' attention in a particular way in English: after spotting a word whose meaning could be difficult to grasp for the Irish students, they had to define it using the phrase just mentioned, then if the word could lead to a comparison between the Basque and the Irish society, students were expected to raise a question and tell the Irish students how interested they were in knowing more about it (*We study in bizkaiera, which is the dialect spoken in the largest part of Biscay. Do you too have dialects in Ireland? You'll tell us when you come here/ We would really like to know about that*). Lastly, students were taught to address correctly the invitation to take part in the forum (specify how to take part and do it tactfully) in Basque.

The aim of the third module was "Telling correctly the events in the past" and here students were taught how to use correctly in English the verbs to make reference to the past, that is, to consistently use the past verb forms to refer to the past.

Didactic sequence based on the alternation of languages and the interlinguistic transfer. As we can see, this is a didactic sequence based on the alternation of languages and interlinguistic transfer. There are three dimensions of alternation in it. The first dimension of alternation regards the fact that the target text itself proposed in this project alternates Basque, English, and Spanish. Here the alternation remains at a textual level. The second dimension concerns the fact that the modules implemented in this project are also trilingual because they combine the three languages, but the combination here does not yet happen at the exercise level. In this second dimension we would include the forms they have produced in, say, Basque in the initial text, have been worked through in Basque in the modules and have been produced in Basque again in the final text, and the same with each language. The last dimension regards alternation within the exercises of an individual module, that is, the use of more than one language within the same exercise.

As we have previously seen in the explanation of the aims of the didactic sequence, the way language alternation occurs in this project has been the outcome of a thoroughly thought-through process and it serves the purpose of giving each language the exposure that this specific sociolinguistic context requires (Idiazabal et al., 2015). That is why Basque is the most widely used language, because this didactic sequence is held in an immersion model and because Basque is a minority language in this certain sociolinguistic context. English is the second most widely used language, in the Basque country, because it is the main foreign language and students have little exposure to the language outside school. Lastly, Spanish is the least used language, because it is their L1 and students already have adequate exposure and motivation to learn the language (Cummins, 1979).

The modules work with the three languages jointly and, as a working strategy, at certain times interlinguistic transfer is fostered, more specifically, within the exercises of the modules. It occurs at two specific moments: the first one is when teaching about topic introducers. Students are taught to use topic introducers both in Basque and English, not in Spanish, even if improvement is also pursued in Spanish. In this moment interlinguistic transfer is promoted from Basque and English to Spanish, that is, from their L2 and L3 to their L1, because it is only in the control list that students are asked about how they would do it in Spanish, without having been given instruction of any kind about how to do it in Spanish. In this case interlinguistic transfer is encouraged to see if they also improve in Spanish. The second moment of interlinguistic transfer occurs when teaching students to consistently use past verb forms in English. Here the exercise in which they have to realize that they mix present and past verb forms to make reference to the past is in Basque, and then the next exercise in which they have to fill in the gaps with the correct form of the verbs is in English. In this moment interlinguistic transfer is stimulated from Basque to English, that is, from their L2 to their L3. In this case interlinguistic transfer is supported to see if doing metalinguistic reflection in a language, in this case the language they master better, causes that the knowledge acquired in that language is transferred to another.

The final texts were transcribed and we conducted a thorough analysis of them. With this analysis we wanted to know what the influence of the didactic sequence had been, and therefore, to what extent the students had improved their oral productions, especially regarding the aims that were foreseen, but we also wanted to identify those aspects where improvement was notoriously less. Moreover, we wanted to know if the alternation of languages suggested in the project had given way to provoking the intended interlinguistic transfer, and therefore, to achieving the goals set for each language, and also if there was any other aspect where interlinguistic transfer had occurred and to what aspect of the oral exposition that transfer belonged.

In the following section we will introduce the findings of the final text, by establishing a contrast with the initial texts.

Findings

The Planning

The first analysis criterion concerns the introduction of the oral exposition in Basque: whether or not the objective of the text is mentioned at the beginning of the presentation, an initial contact with the audience is established, or what is the same, whether the listeners' attention is caught, and the project is presented. In the initial texts, 4/7 groups include no introductory section whatsoever and only 3/7 groups mention any of the three parts that were included in the introductory section, that is, they mention the objective of the exposition, set an initial contact with the audience or present the project within which the oral exposition takes place. Example number (1) is a typical illustration of what students usually do at the introductory section in the initial texts, which is limited to introducing the group briefly.

(1) e: kaixo gu / *n*[1] Ikastolako ikasleak gara / e: laugarren / DBHko ikasleak / eta *x y* eta *z* gara /

➢ a: hi / we are students from *n* Ikastola / a: DBH / four students / and we are *x y* and *z* /

In the final texts, however, there is a significant improvement in how they produce the introductory section. All the seven groups include an introductory section and all the seven groups mention any of the three parts. As we can see in example number (2), in the final texts the introductory section is no longer limited to only briefly introducing the group, but they also mention the project, its aim and they set an initial contact with the audience by trying to catch their attention.

(2) egun on gu *x* e: *y* eta *z* gara eta: e: *n*:ko hiru ikasle eta: orain gure ikastola en tres languages deitutako proiektu bat aurkeztuko dizuegu / e:m eta gure ikastolaren aurkezpena egitea da proiektu honen helburua

[1] *n*, *x*, *y* and *z* have been employed so that both the school and the participants preserve their anonymity.

beraz berari buruz informazioa emongo deutsuegu / eta: / e: / hemendik gutxira: Irlandatik etorriko zarienentzako: erabilgarria izan daiteke /

- good morning we are *x* a: *y* and *z* and we are three students from *n* Ikastola and now we are going to introduce you a project called Gure Ikastola en Tres Languages / a:m the aim of this project is to present our school so we are going to give you information about it / and / a:m / it can be useful for those of you who are coming from Ireland /

Adaptation to the Communicative Situation

In this section we will focus on three different analysis criteria.

The second analysis criterion was whether or not the introductory and final sections are presented on behalf of the group in Basque. In the initial texts only 3/7 groups talk on behalf of the group at the introductory section (mostly because in the remaining four groups there is no proper introductory section in the initial texts) and 5/7 groups do at the final section. In the final texts, however, all seven groups talk on behalf of the group at the introductory section and all seven groups do it at the final section too. Examples (1) and (2) perfectly illustrate how, in the initial texts (1), the introductory section lacks any of its core elements most times, that is, the presentation of the aim of the text and of the project, and the setting of an initial contact with the audience are missing. In fact, if they talk on behalf of the group, it is only to introduce the group briefly or sporadically introduce any of the three core elements of the introductory section. At the final texts (2), along with the introduction of the core elements of the introductory section, there comes the use of the first person plural.

The third analysis criterion focuses on the target audience, whether the words whose meaning may be difficult to grasp for Irish students are explained in English. It should be reminded that the audience of the texts were, on the one hand, the students' parents and, on the other hand, Irish students. In the initial texts, orally in English, 49/84 concepts are clarified, that is, 58.3%. However, in doing so no group uses the phrase *which/who + to be*. Instead of that, it is very common to use **that + to be* in non-defining relative clauses. Also, in 4/84 concepts, despite trying to clarify a given word which they guess could cause some degree of incomprehensibility among the Irish students, the comprehensibility of the definition is questioned, as in example number (3).

(3) here we study in bizkaiera / that is a euskalki / that it's only spoken in Bizkaia /

We can see that, apart from using incorrectly the pronoun *that*, in an attempt to describe the word *bizkaiera* (the name of the dialect spoken in Biscay*)*, the student introduces another word—*euskalki* (which means "dialect of Basque")—equally difficult to understand for Irish students.

In the final texts, in English orally, hints of progress can be seen. 61/85 words are clarified, or what is the same, 71.76%. Six out of seven groups use the phrase *which/who + to be* sometime. However, it is very common to use **that + to be* in non-defining relative clauses, therefore, we can say they have developed consciousness about explaining the difficult words, yet their form has not been fully assimilated. Again, as happens in the initial texts, the comprehensibility of the definitions is questioned in 3/85 concepts. Examples (4) and (5) are two good illustrations of what can be seen in the final texts. In (4) the correct form of the relative pronoun *which* is used, whereas in (5), in order to define the word "polikiroldegi" the pronoun *that*, which cannot be used in non-defining relative clauses, is applied.

(4) we study DBH 4 / which is the secondary education here in Biscay /
(5) and finally the polikiroldegi that is e: like a normal sport centre but only with a: football couch /

In the PowerPoint presentation in English 37/93 concepts are clarified, that is, 39.7%, with the same problems as in English orally with regards to correctness of the relative pronoun and the comprehensibility of the definitions.

Besides, also with reference to the target audience, we looked at whether or not the target audience was directly addressed in English, and if it was, by which linguistic means. As we have mentioned in Section Aims and modules of the triangual didactic sequence, we taught them to make reference to the audience in quite an explicit way, and in the initial texts no groups makes such explicit reference to the audience. In the final texts, only 2/7 groups make such explicit reference and each only once. One such example can be seen in (6).

(6) e:m e: do you too have e: school programmes i:n in i- in Ireland? e: we: you will tell us when you come here /

The fourth analysis criterion concerns whether the invitation to take part in the forum is addressed correctly in Basque. In the initial text no group specifies how to take part in the forum. However, 4/7 groups expand on the invitation, 6/7 groups make reference to the audience and also 6/7 groups use polite expressions in the invitation (in one group the invitation is addressed as an order). In total, 14 modalizers are used: the verb *invite*, conditional clauses and phrases with *can* and *if you want* constitute the main modalizers.

Overall, the tendency in the initial texts is to make a very short invitation to take part in the forum, as in (7).

(7) gogoratu e: joan ahal zariela / e: for- parte har- tu ahal dozuela foroan / e: ba agur /

➢ remember that you can go / a: that you can take part in the forum / a: and goodbye /

In the final texts, there is a significant improvement in how they produce the invitation to take part in the forum: 2/7 groups specify how to take part in the forum, 4/7 groups expand on the invitation although they do not say how to take part, so almost every group expands on the invitation; all seven groups make reference to the audience and 6/7 groups use polite expressions in the invitation (in one group the invitation is addressed as an order). In total, 18 modalizers are used: besides the verb *invite*, conditional clauses and phrases with *can* and *if you want*, *we remind you* and *with pleasure* are also included. As we can see in example number (8), the tendency in the final texts is to elaborate more on the invitation, introducing the forum as a chance for the audience to deepen their knowledge about the school while expressing their willingness to solve any doubt the audience may have.

(8) […] e: gogoratu e: nahi dizuegu e: […] e: zalantzak e: badituzue e: e: webgunean foro bat e: daukazuela […] e: diapositiban ikusten denez e: link horretan e: sartze:n bazarete e: / e: forora e: sartu ahal izango zarete
eta guk e: prest egongo gara zuen zalantzak e: argitzeko / […]

[…] a: we want to remind you that a: if you have a: any question […] you have a forum in the website […] a: if you go into the link a: you can see in the slide a: / a: you'll be able to go into the forum and we'll be a: willing to solve your doubts / […] /

Since the invitation to take part in the forum is expressed in Basque in all seven groups, when this section is presented in the PowerPoint in English, it can be observed that the polite forms acquired in Basque in the modules have been transferred to English. Four out of seven groups mention the invitation to the forum in the PPT and 3/7 groups copy the forms they have learnt in Basque. As we can see in example number (9), the modal verb "can" or the polite form "with much pleasure" have been transferred from Basque to English.

(9) If you have any questions you can get in the schools web where you'll find forum and there, we will resolve your doubts with much pleasure.

Textuality

In this section we will be looking at two analysis criteria.

The fifth analysis criterion concerns connection among the different segments, more precisely, whether or not topic introducers are used in the three languages when introducing different topics of the oral exposition: the linguistic biography, the main topic (that is, the history of the school, the characteristics or the projects), the interesting aspect/to be improved and subtopics, and also, whether or not a final marker which announces the end of the oral exposition is employed. In the initial texts, in total, 13 topic introducers are produced: in English 5/7 groups produce some, and they produce 6; in Spanish 3/7 groups produce some and they produce 4; in Basque 3/7 groups produce some and they produce 3. The final marker is introduced in 6/7 groups. In the topic introducers, the verbs that are used in Basque or Spanish can be considered common verbs among the language users, since they do not demand a high command of the language from the speaker. The verbs used are *hitz egin*, *hablar* ("talk"). In their L3, English, the verbs they use are *speak*, *talk*, *explain*. Concerning the modalizers, 2/7 groups use them in English and Spanish, and 1/7 groups make reference to the audience in Spanish. In the section of the oral exposition where each student had to let the audience know what they were going to talk about, we found out that the reference to the audience was wrong most of the times, since they used the verbs ungrammatically (*explain you, *talk you, *tell without object).

In the following example (10), which is taken from the initial text, the speaker finishes talking in Spanish about the general characteristics of the school and he starts right away talking about the most interesting aspect of the school in English, without introducing the new topic.

(10) las obras empezaron en mil novecientos ochenta y uno y duraron once meses / e: now e: the thing that I like the most from: the school is that we don't work as: only class and the teacher explaining […]

In the final texts, there is a clear improvement from the initial text. In total, 48 topic introducers are produced: in English 7/7 groups produce some, and they produce 18; in Basque 7/7 groups produce some, and they produce 16; in Spanish 6/7 groups produce some and they produce 14. The fact that in Spanish not all seven groups produce a topic introducer does not mean that

one group uses no topic introducer in Spanish, but that for the topic they have to explain in Spanish they use a topic introducer in English. The final marker is introduced in 7/7 groups.

The verbs they use in the final texts in Basque or Spanish are still *hitz egin*, *azaldu*, *esan*, *explicar* ("talk," "explain") and, to a lesser extent, some that were taught in the didactic sequence: *aipatu*, *mencionar*, *referirse* ("mention," "refer to"). In English they use *explain*, *speak*, *talk*.

Five out of seven groups use modalizers in Basque, English, and Spanish and 5/7 groups make reference to the audience in Basque, English, and Spanish. In the final text the reference to the audience is produced correctly within the topic introducers, although in the section of the oral exposition, where each student had to let the audience know what they were going to talk about, it seems that students still have difficulty addressing correctly the audience in English.

Example number (11) belongs to the final text version of the same group and speaker as example number (10). We can see that while in (10) the speaker does not introduce the new topic, in (11) he does let the audience know what he is going to talk about next by saying "Now I'm gonna talk to you about…"

(11) que tardaron: once: meses en construirlo y fue también gracias a: un benefactor de: la iglesia / e: ok and now I'm gonna: talk to you about the things that I like the most o:f this school / that's for example the personal / the projects that we do in the school

The sixth and last analysis criterion takes into consideration whether past verb forms are consistently employed to refer to the past when talking about the history of the school and the students' linguistic biography in English.

In the initial texts, when they do their linguistic biography or the history in English orally, in 6/7 groups we can find target-deviant past tense verb forms in English, that is, it is very usual that students mix present and past to refer to the past in English.

(12) In ninety seventeen a group of parents **built** a school in *m* and they **call** it *n* Ikastola / some years ago the number of pupils **increased** and they **build** another school bigger than the first one

In the final texts, when they do their linguistic biography or the history in English orally, in 4/7 groups we can find target-deviant past tense verb forms in English.

In the PowerPoint in English, the production of past verb forms in writing is performed more successfully than in speech.

(13) It **was founded** on 1970
A group of parents **was founded**
First **built** in neighbourhood called *m* but then they **transported** to other neighbourhood called *k*
At first the school only **has** a 13 students but now has more of 1193 students

In example number (13) even if the form is sometimes wrong, the tense is correct.

It should be taken into account that in Basque and Spanish students produce correctly the verbs in the past.

Conclusions

The goal of this paper was to analyze the development of trilingual oral expository skills in the framework of a trilingual didactic sequence. To achieve this goal, we designed a trilingual didactic sequence based on the alternation of languages and the interlinguistic transfer. After students produced the initial oral expository text of the didactic sequence, some modules were outlined taking into account the most prominent difficulties that were found in the text, and then the final text was produced.

From the perspective of the Integrated Didactics of Languages, we will conclude that the contrast between the initial and final text shows that teaching oral expository skills from an integrated perspective fosters multilingual development, being language alternation and interlinguistic discursive transfer relevant didactic resources (Cummins, 2008).

Among the aspects that showed a greater improvement from initial to final texts are the following: the explicit mention of core elements at the introductory section in Basque, talking on behalf of the group at the beginning and at the end of the exposition in Basque, the more consistent use of topic introducers regardless of the language, the more precise way of inviting the audience to take part in the forum in Basque, and the more regular use in English of resources to clarify those concepts whose meaning could be difficult to grasp for foreign students.

Among those aspects where improvement is notably less, the following can be mentioned: students hardly ever addressed the audience in English and thus failed to catch their interest, and the production of target-deviant past tense verb forms in English remains quite problematic. The reason of mixing present and past to make reference to the past can either be caused by fossilization of the

form or by lack of automaticity (Thornbury, 2005). With the lack of automaticity we mean that students do know these forms because they perform them well in writing, but they have not automated these forms orally, so the students resort to a form which, even if it is not correct, enables them to communicate.

Interlinguistic transfer seems to have occurred at three different points. The first two have been consciously promoted by alternating languages in a specific way: when working on topic introducers from Basque and English into Spanish, and when working on the past verb forms in English: from Basque into English. The last, however, has happened unexpectedly, when working on the invitation to take part in the forum: from Basque into English.

We argue that in our didactic sequence the role of each language is very precise and well defined, and therefore, specific and reliable control can be exerted over the results. The text genre employed in this project gives the opportunity to combine the languages, and the didactic sequence, for its part, to insert correctly the common and specific aims of the languages.

The possibility that our text, as a target text, could be considered some kind of translanguaging practice can be pondered (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017). If that would be the case, it seems that a well-limited alternation of languages which prioritizes the minority language and gives each language the exposure that the specific sociolinguistic context demands when setting the aims and designing the modules of the didactic sequence fosters multilingual competence, and thus, can lead to an improvement in the three languages.

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Ana Aldekoa

Gure Ikastola en tres languages: Beibringen und Erlernen dreisprachigen Sprechvermögens mittels didaktischer Sequenzen

Zusammenfassung

In dem Beitrag wird die Entwicklung des dreisprachigen Sprechvermögens bei 16-jährigen Schülern mit Spanisch als Muttersprache, Baskisch als Zweitsprache und Englisch als Drittsprache mit Hilfe didaktischer Mehrsprachsequenzierung untersucht. Das Bildungssystem des Baskenlandes fördert die Mehrsprachigkeit mit besonderem Nachdruck auf baskische Sprache (Conoz, 2009; Idiazabal et.al, 20015). Der Unterricht erfolgt der Idee des integrierten Unterrichts zufolge (Gobierno Vasco, 2015; Troncy, 2014). Die vorliegende Studie beruhte auf deskriptiven Tests, deren Ergebnisse haben aufgezeigt, dass die Schüler ihre Sprechfähigkeiten im Bereich der Darlegung des Themas und Erläuterung von neuen Begriffen verbessert haben. Ein nicht so großer Fortschritt wurde dagegen im Bereich der öffentlichen Auftritte und Anwendung von englischen grammatischen Strukturen erzielt.

Schlüsselwörter: Dreisprachigkeit, Sprechvermögen, dreisprachige didaktische Sequenzierung, Sprachintegration, zwischensprachlicher Transfer, Mehrsprachfähigkeit

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Developing Learning Environments for Blended and Online Learning

Abstract

Developing online and blended learning programs at a university requires the selection of an appropriate framework which addresses the criteria of effective pedagogy. This paper aims to determine a framework for developing and evaluating online and blended learning environments within university educational contexts. The paper is based on the experience of developing blended and online teacher training programs in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages at Bond University, Gold Coast, Australia. First, the paper outlines the methodology of the project. Then, it explores various concepts and theoretical models of learning environments. The next part of the paper examines students' perspective of the elements of the learning environment as defined by the framework of choice. The paper concludes with a comparative overview of the theoretical framework and its application within the Bond University context.

Keywords: language learning, online learning, blended learning, teacher training

Introduction

While developing online and blended programs in the Faculty of Society and Design at Bond University, it became essential to determine an appropriate framework to ensure that the developed learning environments addressed the criteria of effective pedagogy. This paper aims to determine a framework for developing and evaluating effective online and blended learning environments. First, the paper outlines the methodology of the project. Then, it explores various concepts and theoretical models of learning environments in order to select the framework which addresses the elements and features of blended and online

education best. The final part of the paper examines students' perspective of the learning environment elements as defined by the framework of choice.

Project Methodology: Research Background, Research Aims, Research Tools, and Research Sample

This section outlines research background, aims, research tools, and the sample. The study explores (1) language teacher education programs in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and (2) Spanish programs including levels 1 to 4, at Bond University, Gold Coast, Australia. Bond University offers two postgraduate programs for language teacher education, Master of Arts in TESOL and the Graduate Certificate in TESOL. The programs aim to either prepare students for teaching English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) or to extend the expertise of existing EAL/D teachers. The TESOL programs have been offered in the on-campus mode of delivery since 1989, and in the online mode since 2013. The Spanish program has been offered in its blended format for seven years which provided important longitudinal data on effective practices in the blended environment.

Both, TESOL and Spanish programs, have been undergoing continuous evaluation to strengthen the alignment between the content, pedagogy, learning design, instructional design, and emerging technologies that increasingly offer better teaching and learning solutions. Students enrolled in the programs represent very high level of diversity regarding age, cultural and linguistic backgrounds and fields or levels of previous teaching and learning experience.

Three aims have been formulated for the purposes of this paper. The first aim was to examine theoretical frameworks for developing learning environments for blended and online learning to determine the model which conceptualises online context best. The second aim was to analyse students' perspective regarding an effective learning environment in the context of online and blended education. The final aim was to compare the key elements of the theoretical framework with the students' perspectives to determine whether the Bond University TESOL and Spanish programs address the requirements of effective pedagogy.

TEVALs (Teaching Evaluations) are a non-compulsory teaching evaluation tool that allows students to provide feedback on each subject they enrol in. They consist of two parts, in the first part, the students respond to ten questions rating various aspects of teaching and the subject using the Likert scale. In the second part, students answer the following two open questions:

1. What aspects of this educator's approach helped you learn?
2. What aspects of this subject did you find most helpful?

This project focused on the analysis of the qualitative data provided in the TESOL and Spanish student responses. The sample was collected over six semesters between 2015–2016, then the responses were tabulated and analysed, according to the categories representing the elements of the learning environment selected in the research phase of the project.

The next section explores a range of learning environment frameworks for developing blended and online environments.

Learning Environments: Definitions and Frameworks

This section examines the frameworks of learning environments. First, it outlines the need for a flexible learning environment suitable for developing online and blended programs. Next, it explores definitions of learning environment and reviews a variety of learning environments defined in professional literature. The last part presents the selected learning environment model and explores its elements in detail.

Defining Features of Learning Environment in Blended and Online Contexts

One of the main challenges the authors of this project experienced while developing blended and online learning environments was the difficulty in communicating the features of online education employed for the purpose of the program delivery. This difficulty resulted from the high level of ambiguity in the terminology employed to describe online environments and their resources. In particular, it was difficult to describe the TESOL online program which is delivered fully online, using tools which allow for high level of interactivity and collaboration, not commonly associated with online environments. A wide range of asynchronous resources is delivered via Blackboard Management Learning System, and the Blackboard Collaborate (Classic and Ultra) video conferencing tool is used for synchronous weekly tutorials.

Due to the advancement of technologies, many terms used to describe and distinguish between the online and the 'brick and mortar' classrooms no longer describe this dichotomy accurately. For example, when discussing the characteristic features of online education, this mode of delivery is often referred to as lacking in interaction, collaboration, and personalisation. Therefore, it is

viewed as less effective than brick and mortar 'face-to-face' mode of delivery. However, the principal feature of the Blackboard Collaborate platform is the ability for students and teachers to work 'face-to-face,' in a virtual classroom. Consequently, both modes of delivery allow students to engage in live sessions which are interactive and personalised. Accordingly, 'the brick and mortar' term of reference was the only term which adequately described the difference between the two modes of delivery. To sum up, the way educational technologies are employed in the program blurs the existing terminology and it emphasises the need for redefining learning environments concepts and frameworks.

Review of Learning Environments

The next step in the project was to explore concepts and models of learning environments suitable for blended and online education. Many sources (Abualrub, Karseth, & Stensaker, 2013) referred to a learning environment within the political contexts. Other authors used the term 'a learning environment' when discussing issues with connection to technology, blended learning or difficulties with their implementation (Abualrub et al., 2013). Accordingly, many articles were written by information technology experts in the language easily accessible only to this particular expert group. Overall, very few references and sources defined learning environments. Koper (2000, p. 3) stated in 2000 that "the term 'learning environment' has been widely used but it has rarely been defined." It appeared the situation, almost 20 years later, has changed very little (Abualrub et al., 2013).

The most comprehensive overview of learning environments was recently provided by Abualrub et al. (2013). They identified various ways with which a learning environment is referred to in professional literature. For example, Salmi (2009, in Abualrub et al., 2013) referred to it as "an educational environment," while Hiemstra (1991 in Abualrub et al., 2013) described it as "educational climate." Other researchers used the terms "academic environment" (Lizzio, Wilson, & Simons, 2002, in Abualrub et al., 2013), or "study environment" (Kirschner & Vilsteren, 1997, in Abualrub et al., 2013). Grabinger and Dunlap (1995, in Abualrub et al., 2013) proposed that educational researchers often use the term "learning environment" to encode "unlimited and more unspecified things in education, places and activities." The definitions of learning environments vary in topic, range, and features. They may refer to physical spaces where learning activities take place, supportive technologies, online conditions or approaches. Abualrub et al. (2013) concluded that a learning environment was the sum of teaching and learning activities and approaches. They also observed that a concept of learning environment is often intended to fit a specific research agenda.

The Holodeck

While reviewing the models of learning environment, one framework in particular came into focus due to its flexibility and the positive lack of reference to the terms associated with online or non-online learning environments. Thornburg's (2013) concept of a learning environment as 'a Holodeck' presents an ideal framework for developing blended and online educational settings. A Holodeck is a concept known to Star Trek (an American science fiction television series) fans, and it refers to a virtual reality room (a plot device) on board of Star Trek USS Enterprise, in which the crew can participate in a variety of plots, in different environments of their choice. To sum up, the Holodeck provides a virtual environment which allows the Star Trek staff to do what they need or wish at any particular moment.

Thornburg's (2013) model of a learning environment as a Holodeck underlines the features of an effective pedagogical model, defining them at a level which goes beyond the terms difficult to avoid in many other frameworks. A learning Holodeck, according to Thornburg's (2013) metaphor, is, therefore, an environment where learners can have a full successful learning experience, and to do what they need during their learning experience. Its four elements reflect the principal features of good pedagogy models promoted in broad education. Thornburg's (2013) design of a learning environment as a pedagogical setting includes four learning spaces: (1) Campfires, (2) Watering Holes, (3) Caves, and (4) Life.

The first learning space, Campfires, is the home of didactic presentation of the material. The term Campfires refers to the ancient way of learning, where, sitting by the campfire, the young generations listened to the stories passed on by the elders. This epitomises teaching provided by the storytellers, who were the keepers of knowledge. Thornburg (2013) underlines the importance of such learning and compares it to one of the roles of a successful learning environment, with teachers as arbiters of knowledge, disseminating it at a metaphorical campfire, the home of the lectures.

Thornburg (2013), however, recognises that lectures are only one of the important elements of effective teaching and learning processes and he identifies the second learning space as Watering Holes. The Watering Holes are "a place of social learning among the peers" (Thornburg, 2013). The concept of social learning as a dominant activity in various communities has been debated and accepted through the work of Vygotsky in the 1920s, who developed a concept of the zone of proximal development initiated by social interaction (Vygotsky, 1978). Similarly to many current methodologies (Scarino & Liddicoat, 2009), Thornburg (2013) views the role of the metaphorical Watering Holes, or in educational conceptual spaces where learners meet in small groups of three or four and talk informally about the material they have learnt in lectures.

The third space, Caves, is the home of reflective learning. Again, this feature of education has been central to many older (i.e., humanistic approaches) and more contemporary concepts in teaching, such as Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning (Scarino & Liddicoat, 2009). Scarino and Liddicoat (2009) emphasise the role of reflection in learning language and culture: "Learning involves becoming aware of how we think, know and learn about language (first and additional), culture, knowing, understanding and their relationship as well as concepts such as diversity, identity, experiences and one's own intercultural thoughts and feelings" (Scarino & Liddicoat, 2009, p. 35). Similarly, Thornburg (2013) refers to Caves as the home of cognitive understanding of the material. Caves, depending on the learner, may or may not be solitary places. Importantly, Thornburg (2013) highlights the fact that the teacher's role is twofold: to provide the space for reflection and something to reflect on.

The fourth and the last learning space in Thornburg's Holodeck learning environment is referred to as Life. This learning space provides learners with an opportunity to demonstrate that they understand what they have learnt and to apply that knowledge to practical real-life contexts (Thornburg, 2013). According to Thornburg (2013), the learner continues the learning process through applying what they have learnt in authentic situations and sharing the application with others. In other words, learning in this space continues through practicing and applying knowledge gained in the previous three learning spaces in real-life situation.

The four elements of Thornburg's metaphorical learning Holodeck provide program designers with a flexible and universal model of an effective learning environment, which superimposes features of any specific pedagogy.

Thornburg's (2013) Model of a Learning Environment and Its Four Learning Spaces at Bond University

The Holodeck: A Learning Environment from a Student Perspective

This section explores whether the TESOL and Spanish programs at Bond University fulfil the requirements of an effective learning environment. Each section first presents the evidence selected from the program design and curriculum. Next, students' TEVAL comments are investigated for the references to the four elements of the Thornburg (2013) model of a learning Holodeck. Table 1 presents all student TEVAL comments and it shows that, although the

distribution is uneven, all the elements of the Holodeck model of a learning environment are referred to in the student remarks.

Table 1
Student comments on elements of the Holodeck as a learning environment

No.	Elements of the Holodeck as a learning environment	Student comments
1.	Campfire	80% (109)
2.	The whole subject: the Holodeck?	11.9% (16)
3.	Watering Hole	3.7% (5)
4.	Cave	3.7% (5)
5.	Life	0.7% (1)

The majority of the comments made by the students concerned the first learning space, Campfires, or the home of the lecture. The second cluster of the responses were comments referring to all of the program elements, the whole Holodeck. Watering Hole and Cave were mentioned by a smaller group of five students each. Only one remark was made when referring to the fourth learning space, Life. Next, each of the four learning spaces in Bond University programs are addressed in detail.

Campfires at Bond University TESOL and Spanish Programs

As far as Campfires are concerned, Bond University programs provide this space for both online and brick and mortar students. The programs offer both synchronous and asynchronous resources. The synchronous resources, where learning and teaching occurs at the same time, include live lectures on campus and live lectures online, using Blackboard Collaborate. Both online and on-campus students also participate in asynchronous learning, which involves watching the pre-recorded lectures, either recorded earlier by program lecturers or made available from educational sources.

While analysing student TEVAL comments, this space also was identified by students as the most significant. Out of 136 student comments, 80% (109) of the comments made very positive references to Campfire, the home of lectures. Table 2 details the topics of students TEVALs and it demonstrates that teacher's teaching is the most important aspect of student positive learning experience (Coe, Aloisi, Higgins, & Major, 2014).

Table 2
Topics of student TEVAL comments: Campfire

No.	Campfire: student TEVAL comments	Student comments
1.	Teacher's teaching	62% (37)
2.	Teacher's knowledge	15% (9)
3.	Liked the topics	15% (9)
4.	Teacher's experience	8% (5)
5.	Total	60

The table above demonstrates that the majority of students in this category, 62% (37), made positive references to teacher's teaching (1), and that teacher's knowledge (2) and the topics students liked (3) were appreciated by 15% (9) students each. Teacher's experience (4) was valued by 8% of the students referring in their positive comments to teaching and teachers. Examples of student quotes concerning teacher's knowledge and skills are included in Table 3.

Table 3
Students quotes on teacher's knowledge and skills

No.	Teacher's strengths	Knowledge and skills
1.	Teacher's knowledge	'teacher is knowledgeable; experienced; with impressive depth of knowledge'
2.	Teacher & teaching content	makes content authentic; makes it relevant; directs me when I am confused; prepares highly valued activities; explained concepts and theories: interestingly, easily, thoroughly; introduces remarkable and relevant topics
3.	Teacher, tasks, & activities	enables the environment that engages us with the lesson engages us with the tasks at hand; involves us in activities; always keeps the class engaged throughout the lesson

Student remarks referring to specific characteristics of a teacher form another large cluster of 49 comments. The students made positive comments about teacher's learner-centredness and they appreciated the fact that the teacher provided a positive learning environment. The teacher attributes emphasised by the students included teacher's willingness to support and help them and to encourage and inspire them in their learning. It was important to students that the teachers were approachable and they valued teachers' positive personality and attitude.

Overall, examples from the Bond University program design as well as student TEVAL comments, provide the evidence of addressing the require-

ment of the first learning space in Thornburg's (2013) framework. Therefore, the programs address the first element of a successful learning environment as a Holodeck. The qualitative data also suggests that teachers, their knowledge, skills and 'soft teaching skills' (Webb & Vallero, in press b) are of particular importance to the students, that the Campfire element is addressed in the Bond programs, and that students value quality lectures and lecturers as central to their successful learning.

Watering Holes at Bond University TESOL and Spanish Programs

Thornburg's (2013) Watering Hole, the home of social interaction between peers, is the second learning space explored in the TESOL and Spanish programs at Bond University. Bond University TESOL and Spanish programs, which are offered both, in the brick and mortar physical classrooms of the Bond University campus, as well as in an online mode of delivery, provide Watering Holes for students of both cohorts. The brick and mortar campus provides many Watering Holes, and students who undertake their studies on campus can utilise the many physical spaces for meeting with their peers outside the classroom. These learning spaces can range from the collaborative learning spaces on campus such as Multimedia Learning Centre or the non-quiet parts of the Bond Library, to a coffee shop or a bar.

Surprisingly, considering the technology regularly employed for online learning and the explosion of social media, it is still easier for some educators to picture students talking during the break outside the classroom, than envisaging them communicating digitally (Webb & Vallero, 2017, September). In the physical classroom, students communicate during and after the class. The virtual classroom allows online students to do the same, by using many interactive tools, for example, the chatroom, the whiteboard in the Collaborate Ultra environment, the camera and audio tools. Additionally, the online classroom is always open for them to drop in and work with their classmates. Online students, similarly to on-campus students, can participate in a lecture and exchange ideas with their peers in small groups. The differences between the way the two cohorts use Watering Holes blur even further as the students of both modes of delivery use digital communication tools extensively. Watering Holes for both groups also include learning spaces made possible through the use of Facebook, email, texting, messenger or WhatsApp.

As far as the Bond University student comments concerning the Watering Hole are concerned, some students made very positive comments highlighting the importance of this learning space. Interestingly, however, all the five comments in this category were made by the online students only. They all refer to the interactions within the Blackboard Collaborate and its tools. The online

students stated that they "really enjoyed the interaction in the Collaborate tutorials," others added that "online sessions were very personable." The remaining comments emphasised the effective use of the Collaborate sessions which allowed for rich student to student interaction.

This section demonstrates that the TESOL and Spanish programs at Bond University address the Watering Hole criterion for a successful pedagogy designed by Thornburg (2013). The only difference between the online and the brick and mortar students is the utilisation of the physical learning spaces on the Bond University campus. Both cohorts, students studying on campus and online, participate in the Watering Hole activities, in their physical and online classrooms, and through the use of digital media.

Cave at Bond University TESOL and Spanish Programs

Caves are the third learning space identified by Thornburg (2013) as part of the Holodeck model of the effective learning environment. Caves refer to the element of learning where learners can reflect on what they have learnt so far. This is, however, not just the space for reflection and the teachers need to prepare something for the students to reflect on. For Bond University TESOL and Spanish students, that includes asynchronous resources prepared for the students and delivered through the Blackboard Learning Management System. These resources are accessible for all the students, on-campus and online, via the designated subject website. They include reflective learning activities, tasks students can complete throughout the semester, self-tests, and weekly quizzes.

As far as the evidence from the TEVALs is concerned, students identified and pointed to the importance of the Cave activities. Similarly to the Watering Hole learning element, only five students (3.7%), highlighted its importance. Three students made positive remarks specifically referring to weekly revision tasks: "the weekly tasks made sure we were practicing outside of class to improve our learning" and two stated "the weekly tasks were helpful." Two other students emphasised the importance of weekly quizlets and self-assessed quizzes.

The evidence provided by the instructional design of the programs, supported by student comments indicates that the TESOL and Spanish programs at Bond University take into consideration the third learning space defined by Thornburg (2013), Caves. Students undertake these reflective learning activities and the recognition of their importance is demonstrated in some TEVAL remarks.

Life at Bond University TESOL and Spanish Programs

The fourth element of the Holodeck learning environment, Life, is the learning space where it all ties together, where students demonstrate what they have learnt. In the Spanish programs, the application of Spanish language in real life is interwoven in authentic, interactive, and communicative tasks which students participate in regularly during the class time. They also have regular tasks set up via Learning Management System. These weekly tasks have been discussed in the Cave learning space but they also include authentic language tasks.

In the TESOL programs, that application of knowledge is evident in the subjects which bring the theory of language learning and teaching into classroom practice. The practical subjects in the TESOL program provide the space for the students to observe teachers in the classroom, to design language programs, tests, and lesson plans. Students studying in the physical classrooms and online have to undertake the teaching practicum which is organised, set up and discussed during physical and virtual classes. Consequently, both cohorts of the TESOL program must participate in the learning activities in this learning space such as using and developing the teaching resources, or working on lesson plans. One student commented in TEVALs that "the practicum aspect of this course is especially useful." Similarly to the other three learning spaces, the fourth learning space, Life, was also documented both through the instructional and learning design of the programs and supported by student response in the TEVALs.

To sum up, the evaluation of the Bond University Spanish and TESOL programs demonstrates that these programs address the learning needs of the four learning spaces defined by the Thornburg's (2013) Holodeck model of the learning environment.

Students' Overall Experience of the Bond University TESOL and Spanish Programs

The last category formed by the student comments from TEVALs include the positive comments about students' overall experience of the programs. A significant number of 16 student responses (11.9%) evaluated the subject they undertook positively as a whole. The student remarks in this grouping focused on remarks describing the subject as "enjoyable learning experience," highlighting the fact that "all aspects were very helpful." This means that all of these students appreciated the design of the subject they were enrolled in as a whole. It is tempting to observe that all the elements of learning have been addressed, however, without the specific details of types of student experience, it is difficult to make such a statement. Nevertheless, the student responses sug-

gest that many students found the variety of learning experiences developed by the two programs as providing an effective learning environment.

Learning Environment as a Holodeck at Bond University Spanish and TESOL Programs

The choice of Thornburg's (2013) Holodeck as a framework of an effective learning environment was a result of careful consideration of many pedagogical frameworks. The Holodeck as a conceptual pedagogical model offers noteworthy flexibility and, as a concept, it supersedes traditional notions in curriculum design which often interfere in developing blended, online or mixed mode delivery programs. The Holodeck, in order to form the basis of an effective learning environment, must develop the four learning spaces. Conversely, for any learning environment to be effective, it must provide learners with opportunities to learn in the metaphorical learning spaces of Campfires, Watering Holes, Caves, and Life.

Several steps were undertaken in the process of comparing Bond University programs with the Holodeck structure of the pedagogical framework. The first step of this research project was to determine a suitable model of a learning environment as a basis of evaluating and developing the iterative process of curriculum design in Spanish and TESOL programs at Bond University. The choice of an appropriate learning environment is essential for the ongoing evaluation of the programs and as the diagnostic tool to determine its strengths and weaknesses.

The second step in the process of evaluation was assessing the Bond University Spanish and TESOL programs according to the four learning spaces defined by Thornburg (2013) in the Holodeck. Two types of evidence were selected to determine whether it was possible to categorise the Bond programs into the four Holodeck elements. In other words, the evaluation aimed to determine whether the programs under investigation fulfilled the requirements of the Holodeck, or whether changes were necessary to ensure the development of a successful model of a learning environment. The first type of evidence included information concerning the instructional and content design. The second type of data was drawn from the TEVALs, and the aim of this information was to see whether students observed and valued different learning spaces during their educational experience as a whole.

The result of this evaluative process clearly delineated the view of the Bond University programs as adhering to the principles of the four learning spaces of the Holodeck. Data collected from both sources, instructional and pedagogical design of the subjects and from student responses to open TEVAL questions demonstrated that the programs under investigation take into consideration all

the four spaces, which, in turn, implies that the Holodeck is already in place. Although the aim of the project was to identify the learning spaces in the Bond University programs, and not to undertake the statistical analysis of the student comments, it is noteworthy to observe the significant gaps between student comments concerning the four learning spaces. Accordingly, the majority of comments concerned teacher's skills, knowledge, experience and soft teaching skills such as encouragement, promoting interaction between learners and empathy. Despite the fact that the remaining three learning spaces are well-developed in the program and subject design, they were the topic of comparatively very few comments. This result supports the view that teachers have a greater impact on student achievement than any other source or factor (Stillings, 2015; Coe et al., 2014). The student comments show the students recognise the fact that good teaching practice helps students succeed (Chubb, 2012).

Another very important observation should be added following the comparison of the student engagement in the teaching and learning process in different modes of delivery. The results of the study suggest strong similarity between the learning experience for students who attend classes in the Bond University brick and mortar classroom and students who attend the Blackboard Collaborate sessions. This further indicates that technology employed in the development of the Bond University blended and online programs allows both cohorts to have a very similar learning experience (Webb & Vallero, 2017, September; Malczewska-Webb, Vallero, King & Hunter, 2016).

Additionally, the source of student data, student ratings, also supports the validity of Bond University student responses from TEVALs. Student ratings are considered as having moderate validity in evaluating teaching. Evaluating the quality of teaching is a very complex phenomenon and no methods are considered of high validity. Although the most reliable approach involves a mixed-method approach, student ratings are considered the best, next to classroom observations by peers, bosses and external evaluators, and 'value-added' models (assessing gains in student achievement) (Coe et al., 2014; Chubb, 2012).

Conclusions: Bond University Spanish and TESOL Programs as a Holodeck

To conclude, Thornburg's (2013) framework of an effective learning environment was selected for the purposes of the evaluation and development of the Spanish and TESOL blended and online programs at Bond University. Thornburg's (2013) model promotes the features critical for learning such as learning through interaction, reflection, independent thinking and application of skills, and knowledge in real world situations. The four learning spaces safeguard the essential conditions of successful learning, in any educational

context or through any mode of content delivery. In this sense, the framework is both flexible and universal.

The examination of the elements of the Bond Spanish and TESOL blended and online programs demonstrated that the programs take into consideration the four learning spaces delineated by Thornburg (2013). The students' comments show that the key factors in determining program success are teachers and their development of the learning Holodeck.

It is, however, crucial to undertake further research in order to explore teachers' understanding of the four elements of the learning environment and the ways they can support student positive learning experience in developing blended and online settings.

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Die Entwicklung der Unterrichtsumgebung in gemischtem und digitalem Bildungssystem

Zusammenfassung

Die Entwicklung von Lehrprogrammen in gemischtem (blended) und digitalem (online) Bildungssystem bedarf eines solchen Modells, das die für Erzielung der Bildungsziele angemessene und wirksame Kriterien berücksichtigen würde. Der vorliegende Beitrag bezweckt, ein für Entwicklung und Beurteilung von gemischten und digitalen Unterrichtsumgebungen an Hochschulen geeignetes Modell auszuwählen. Er basiert auf der Praxis, solche Programme zu entwickeln, deren Ziel weitere Ausbildung der Englischlehrer an der Bond Universität in Gold Coast in Australien ist. Im ersten Teil wird die Methodologie des Entwurfs und Ergebnisse verschiedener Konzepten und theoretischen Modellen der Unterrichtsumgebung dargestellt und die einzelnen Elemente des ausgewählten Modells aus der Sicht der Studenten beschrieben. Der Beitrag schließt mit der Diskussion zu theoretischen Grundlagen des Modells und dessen Verwendung für die an der Bond Universität geltenden Programme.

Schlüsselwörter: Lehrerausbildung, gemischter (blended) Unterricht, digitaler (online) Unterricht, Modelle des digitalen Unterrichts

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Reflections on Complexity: TESOL Researchers Reflect on Their Experiences

Abstract

Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST), or complexity, is increasingly being used as a theoretical framework in Applied Linguistics. In this article, we present the reflections of researchers in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) about how they have made use of complexity in their work. The aim of this article is to take stock of how it is being used in the field, the challenges and benefits it provides, as well as inspiration for future work from this theoretical perspective. In the first part of the article, we present a concise overview of CDST, focusing specifically on three salient features: its holistic lens, its non-linear perspective on causality, and its focus on emergence and self-organization. We also outline how complexity perspectives have been used to inform research in a variety of applied linguistics topics. We then move on to present narratives provided by nine academics who have employed CDST in their work, which we synthesize with a view to showing how the theory has gradually developed in TESOL. Early encounters of the field with CDST were usually serendipitous, but the theory has so far proved to be useful, both on account of its descriptive power and because of its phenomenological validity. A common theme in the narratives of these experiences of complexity researchers is that complexity is associated with a steep learning curve, compounded by terminological opacity, and conceptual challenges. However, their responses also indicate optimism regarding the potential of the theory to inform research in TESOL and applied linguistics more generally.

Keywords: Language Education, TESOL, Complex Dynamics Systems Theory

Introduction

Recent research in language and language learning has increasingly made use of Complex Dynamics Systems Theory (CDST), or complexity, as a theoretical lens to understand phenomena that cannot be meaningfully fragmented

or whose behavior cannot be reduced to a singular cause, which display internal organization but are not centrally co-ordinated, and which behave in somewhat unpredictable but not random ways. This theoretical frame has allowed researchers in Applied Linguistics in general, and the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) in particular, to account for the processes of language acquisition, classroom learning, and the psychologies of learners and teachers in ways that highlight the intricate interconnectedness of diverse psychological elements, interpersonal interactions and micro/macro-societal structures. It has also provided insights into the ways in which similar phenomena are manifest at different timescales, and challenged our understanding of constructs such as agency and structure.

A key milestone in the adoption of CDST in the study of language and language learning was the publication of *Complex Systems and Applied Linguistics* by Diane Larsen-Freeman and Lynne Cameron (2008). In this monograph, Larsen-Freeman and Cameron outline CDST, provide multiple examples of how it can be used to study different linguistic phenomena, and put forward a set of guidelines for complexity-informed research. The impact of this monograph has been such that subsequent years saw a dramatic increase in the number of empirical studies and theoretical treatises in which complexity was explicitly invoked or present in the background. To name but a few examples, CDST has been used as a model for the description of language (e.g., Beckner et al., 2009), first language acquisition (e.g., Hohenberger & Peltzer-Karpf, 2009) and second language acquisition (e.g., Spoelman & Verspoor, 2010; Verspoor, De Bot & Lowie, 2011). It has also been used to describe processes in language education (e.g., King, 2015; Kostoulas, 2018; Mercer, 2016; Stelma et al., 2015), classroom interaction (e.g., Kostoulas & Stelma, 2016) and lack whereof (King, 2013). Moreover, it has been usefully brought to bear on the description of a range of psychological constructs related to language learning, such as the self-constructs of language learners (Mercer, 2011a) and teachers (Henry, 2016), agency (Mercer, 2011b), learner motivation (Sampson, 2016), and cognition (Feryok, 2010).

Prompted by the upcoming ten-year anniversary of Larsen-Freeman and Cameron's (2008) landmark publication, we decided it is an appropriate time to take stock of how we—the key authors of this paper—and other scholars working in the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) have been using complexity in our academic work. To do this, we reflected on the ways we have been using complexity, and also invited a number of colleagues to share their reflections around four key questions: what attracted us to this perspective in the first place, what we find useful about working from this perspective, the challenges we face in doing so, and the future directions we feel could be explored. In this paper, we present our collective understandings of complexity, which we have brought together in a deliberately more informal

way. Our intention, as authors, is not to systematically map out the field, or to provide definitive answers about how CDST is to be best used; rather, we view this paper as an opening move in a conversation, and as an invitation to readers—whether they are engaged in research or in language teaching—to reflect on how complexity might be of similar value to their own work or not.

What is Complex Dynamic Systems Theory?

Before we present our own evaluations of the merits and challenges involved in working with complexity perspectives, we will briefly outline Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST) for the benefit of those readers less familiar with it. Such a discussion does not aim to offer a comprehensive account of CDST; for that, interested readers are referred to overviews by Byrne and Callaghan (2013), Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008), and Kostoulas (2018). Instead, we will limit ourselves to presenting three core assumptions around which the theory is built: its holistic lens, its non-linear perspective on causality, and its focus on emergence and self-organization.

Complex Dynamic Systems Theory challenges the assumption that problems can be solved by breaking down entities into ever-smaller researchable units. Instead, complexity theorists view the social world as a network of interrelations between entities, which can be best understood when viewed as a whole. Holistic perspectives are preferred in CDST because fragmentary approaches would break the connections between the components of the system, and these connections are central to understanding the phenomena that interest us (Cilliers, 2001). In linguistics, for instance, a complexity-informed study of a discourse event might account for the interrelationships between discourse elements, but it would also seek to explain how the mental processes associated with individual language use connect to linguistic structures that have a social presence (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008). Similarly, in TESOL, such an outlook might help us to trace connections between classroom events and the emergence of classroom routines or professional cultures (Kostoulas & Stelma, 2016).

Secondly, CDST calls into question linear causality as a way of interpreting phenomena in language and language learning. As language teachers, we intuitively know that the same teaching approaches rarely lead to the exact same outcomes. We also see that sometimes substantial effects on learning can be traced back to disproportionately small events, which were not significant enough to be noticed or reliably measured at the time they occurred. Given the tight interconnections between components that make up complex systems,

changes in one part of the system can have various effects on other parts of the system and the system as a whole. The effects are not entirely predictable, although they are not completely random either. This perspective on cause and effect helps us to better understand processes such as language acquisition that are typified by both regularity and unpredictability, progression, and regression.

Thirdly, CDST attempts to account for how order and structure is created in the absence of central design and coordination. Key to this is the notion of emergence; a process through which complex dynamic systems produce activity that is qualitatively different from the activity of their components. Similar processes can be observed in the evolution of languages, where the activity of multiple people engaged in communication leads to the creation of new discourses, and even novel linguistic patterns. For example, recent research in English as a Lingua Franca, which seeks to understand how such patterns come into being, has increasingly used insights from CDST as an explanatory frame (e.g., Mauranen, 2012; Seidlhofer, 2011).

The state of complexity theory in the field is now very different from what it was when Larsen-Freeman and Cameron published their seminal 2008 monograph, as the scope of its use in the study of language, language acquisition, and language education is broadening, and a community of researchers is emerging, who may differ in their research agendas and priorities, but who share the common epistemological perspective and the common discourse of complexity. It is this development that has motivated us to write this article and bring together the reflections of some of that community of researchers. We do not do so in order to systematically map out the field, but rather reflect critically on our shared trajectories, past and future, in the hope of inspiring others wishing to embrace this theoretical frame.

Our Reflections on Complexity and TESOL

In this article, our focus is on outlining how complexity-inspired work has been employed in TESOL. We want to bring center stage the personal reflections and evaluations of individuals who have chosen to work from a complexity perspective in TESOL, our own area of specialization within Applied Linguistics. To that end, we reached out to multiple TESOL academics who have employed a complexity lens in their recent publications, and asked them to provide us with written narratives, using the following questions as prompts:

1. How did you become interested in complexity theories?
2. What do you find useful about working with this perspective? What types of questions do you think it can best address, compared to other perspectives?

3. What challenges do you think it poses?
4. What directions would you like to take with it in the future?

In the sections that follow, we present our synthesis of the responses provided by eight scholars (including ourselves) who responded to our invitation. We approached these texts holistically, using methods loosely informed by narrative inquiry (Earthy & Cronin, 2008). Specifically, we preserved the original spelling and structure of responses and the voice of the participants, so as to prevent the fragmentation and de-contextualization of their responses. However, we have reassembled and regrouped some responses according to our questions for reasons of readability, and we also shortened some responses for length.

First Encounters

While some of us were exposed to complexity in the context of our studies and research in language education, for most of us, our initial interest in complexity came from engaging with ideas that were being developed outside the field.

> I first encountered Complexity Theory (CT) some time ago quite by accident. A stranger in a bookstore thrust a copy of James Gleick's *Chaos: Making a New Science* [(1987)] into my hands, along with the comment, "You will enjoy reading this." I bought the book. I found that Gleick's book had nothing to do with language, but as I was reading it, it was easy to make connections with language. After all, perhaps nothing is as complex, nonlinear, and dynamic as language. These thoughts led to my early foray (Larsen-Freeman, 1997), speculating on the application of CT to Applied Linguistics issues. (Diane Larsen Freeman)

> I was initially intrigued by Chaos theory when I first encountered it in the 1980s, but I didn't then see its applicability outside mathematics and the natural sciences. (Agneta Svalberg)

> My first encounter with the Complexity Theory literature was James Gleick's book *Chaos*, which I picked up from a used book stall around the University. That was useful history, and affectively it left me with the feeling that I was learning something new—which was my reason for doing a PhD in the first place. (Juup Stelma)

> Perhaps influenced by my father who was a geography teacher, in my secondary school days I had been fascinated by the interactions between earth systems and the way that everything seemed connected. However, it was not until my postgraduate studies that I re-encountered similar ideas in the form of dynamic systems theory applied to language learning. (Richard Samson)

Even among those of us whose first encounters with complexity were more closely related to our work in language and language learning, this first contact was often serendipitous.

> In the 1st year of doing my PhD I went along to a research presentation by my supervisor in which he talked about complexity and used dynamic systems theory to interpret some results from his study. I remember at the time thinking, "This complexity business sounds terribly difficult. I really hope he doesn't ask me to adopt it in my own work." Sure enough, he did! (Jim King).

> I had been working on the self in SLA and had taken a grounded approach to exploring how it functioned and was structured as part of my PhD. I came across the ground-breaking book by Larsen-Freeman and Cameron later and was amazed to discover the incredible resonance with what I had found. All the same characteristics were there, but I just did not have the theoretical frame or language to talk about it that way. This was interesting in that I found complexity without the formal theoretical lens. (Sarah Mercer)

> It was like a shot of Ritalin to the system when in 2009 I was introduced almost by accident in an email exchange with a senior academic to a book about complexity theory. I had suddenly found a way to think, talk, and write about things in a way that spoke to the core of what I felt and who I was as a teacher. As I've continued to explore complexity more deeply the resonances have only strengthened; there is no going back for me. (Phil Hiver)

It seems that the reasons why our first encounters with complexity were as productive as they proved to be was because of the intuitive appeal of the theory, particularly for those of us who had a practical background in language teaching.

> As a classroom teacher, it just made sense, a lot more sense than much research that I was reading, of what I experienced day-in day-out of being part of language learning class groups. (Richard)

> It was and has a tight connection with the phenomenological reality of the language classroom that resonates so strongly and thus makes it such a convincing frame for me to work with. (Sarah)

> I came to academia/research from a background in language teaching. Being a teacher meant that the daily realities of the language classroom were the filter I used in approaching new information or theories. I knew intuitively and even experientially that my success, and the success of my students, involved the coming together of many elements and was contingent on various things over time, but I didn't yet have a way of articulating this reality or reasoning about how and why this might be the case. (Phil)

Coupled to this intuitive appeal, some of us felt that there was a definite *Zeitgeist* that helped the new theory to take hold in our field:

> …had I read the book [Gleick, 1987] a decade earlier, I might not have made the connection to our field as readily. Over the years, though, I had grown increasingly dissatisfied with what I perceived to be a piecemeal approach to understanding second language acquisition. I felt that we would benefit from a relational systems approach, although I might not have called it that then. (Diane)

> I remember [Zoltán] Dörnyei speaking about the need for a complexity-informed understanding of motivation—I think it was 2003 or thereabouts—and Martin Hammersley (ethnography of education)—and David Byrne—and Paul Meara—and more. But whilst everyone seemed to suggest the need for Complexity Theory, no one had anything concrete to offer—I guess it was early days. (Juup)

Whatever the pathways and motivations that led us into complexity, this encounter almost invariably involved a fundamental shift in the way we perceive reality:

> I think "complexity" is a threshold concept in the sense that it changes how you see the world irreversibly. (Agneta)

> [Complexity] developed within me a new way of seeing the world around me. This did not happen overnight […] it took time to purge linear and reductive thinking from my mind. […] As Complexity Theory started to take hold in mind, this affected and continues to affect how I approach more and more tasks in my life, both academic, professional and personal.

> I guess it has made me more secure both personally and as an academic. I can understand a wider range of problems, situations and theories. In short, Complexity Theory has been empowering and emancipating, and this feeling extends to the present. (Juup)

> In the absence of a better way of describing it, it just makes sense, and once you are sensitised to complexity, you begin seeing it everywhere. (Achilleas Kostoulas)

Now several years later, new scholars exploring complexity will find more readily available. Working in TESOL means they are likely to also recognize its real-world applicability and also find it representing somewhat of a paradigm shift.

Attractions and Affordances

As hinted by some of the responses above, one of the reasons CDST has appealed to many is that this change of perspective enables us to describe the phenomena that interest us in ways that are not reductive, and also to see interconnections between what Diane described as '*the BIG picture*' (original emphasis) and more situated phenomena.

> I have always thought that complexity lends itself well to questions of a grand scope (e.g., "What does the future of language learning look like?" OR "How will multilingualism change societies in centuries to come?") that attempt to get at something big about the real world and the role of language and learning within it. Complexity theory is equally well suited to descriptive-level work and explanatory work in this sense. Conversely, because it prioritizes a fractal view of life and its phenomena, smaller events and timescales are also just as important. This makes it a rigorous and flexible way of approaching questions will be of real significance for many players. (Phil)

> I would like to better understand how change on different timescales interact and affect each other but this is in itself complex and requires time in order to longitudinally explore trajectories in an ongoing dynamic sense […] It also sensitises me to the bigger picture even if I am zooming in on one fragment of a larger whole. It cautions me to avoid over-simplistic and decontextualised perspectives. Essentially, it makes me humble. (Sarah)

> Concepts within complexity theories such as 'interdependence,' 'affordance,' 'mutuality,' 'emergence,' 'nesting' (of systems within systems) are tools which enable me to deal with reality without over-simplifying it. (Agneta)

Another appeal of complexity, which seems particularly relevant to working in TESOL, is that helps us to develop nuanced understandings of human psychology and human behavior, which go beyond mechanistic descriptions.

> It is ideally suited for questions about human processes, and about states which are not totally stable. I would think that any social system (e.g. language, language learning, engagement with language, and also economic, political, family and other social systems) is more complex than natural systems such as the weather or systems in physics. The presence of human agents, and volition in particular adds enormously to the complexity. […] So, it seems to me we need to take a complexity view when we ask questions related to attitudes, beliefs, motivation, self-concept… (Agneta)

> I think it is especially well suited to understanding human complexity. People, their psychologies and interactions with others are naturally complex and simplistic views will always fall short of capturing the essence of what it means to be human… (Sarah)

Many of us noted that we recognize our lived realities in the theoretical descriptions that complexity helps us to generate. In other words, the mental representations that complexity affords us seem to have a certain validity, which we variously labeled as phenomenological, ecological or ontological.

> I had never liked post-modern thinking, which is a path many travel on away from reductionism. (Juup)

> Fundamentally, the joy is in being better able to represent the real-life complexity as I phenomenologically perceive it without losing too much of its authenticity. (Sarah)

> There is genuinely a sense of working with people and phenomena in a way that is authentic—in ways some refer to as "ecologically valid." There is no need to shy away from the inherent messiness, interconnectedness, and complex dependency of so much of what we do as L2 researchers and practitioners. (Phil)

> Complexity theories […] provide me with a way of understanding the social world which I find ontologically comfortable. (Achilleas)

Interestingly, several of us perceive CDST as having potential to connect with other useful theoretical perspectives and even function as connective tissue between them:

> [Complexity] is compatible with so many ways of thinking and doing things (socio-cultural and critical perspectives of teaching and learning), it has the potential for even wider appeal. (Phil)

> [Complexity] helps me to make links between the somewhat diverse elements that make up my professional field (applied linguistics, educational psychology and the sociology of education)—I am not sure exactly how to make this work, but I think that complexity can provide a unifying meta-narrative for the field. (Achilleas)

> For me one of the key benefits of […] complex dynamic systems theory is that I can use it as a kind of supra-theory which allows for other apposite theories and frameworks to be adopted in my work. I really like the theoretical flexibility that complexity affords. (Jim)

> My understanding of Complexity Theory gave me a head start on understanding and using Ecological Theory, and I was quickly up and running. Also, my interpretation of Ecological Theory was probably more dynamic as a result. […] I think this is how I see Complexity Theory going forward in our field … it may well work as an informing theory, feeding into the dominant TESOL discourses. […] In fact, Complexity Theory works as a 'background theory' for me, making my ecological account of process and context in TESOL more convincing and coherent. (Juup)

Challenges to Overcome

A common theme in our shared reflections was that engaging with complexity involves a steep learning curve, which is compounded by the fact that the conceptual toolkits of complexity are often used in different ways by different authors. Similar sentiments were echoed by many of us:

> My supervisor suggested a number of books, like Davis and Sumara (2006) and Byrne (1998), both of which I hated because they challenged my powers of understanding rather too much. (Achilleas)

> I think complexity is also difficult to understand well. Indeed, I have spent several years studying it and am not yet convinced I have fully grasped its implications and potential. (Sarah)

> At the same time as being hugely liberating, complexity research is also very challenging. (Agneta)

However, as Phil reminds us, "those who are patient enough and persevere in exploring what complexity means and how it may be useful for our field never regret doing so" and that "nothing this worthwhile comes without at least some struggle." While this difficulty arguably "adds to its attraction" (Agneta), it can also mean that "sometimes people use or, indeed, dismiss it without fully appreciating what it is" (Sarah).

Most visibly, many of the challenges associated with understanding complexity relate to its challenging technical vocabulary. As is the case with every discipline, technical language is sometimes necessary in order to designate constructs and processes that are specific to CDST. However, there was a shared feeling that the language of complexity-informed accounts has often acted as a barrier to understanding:

> Another key concern I have is the use of jargon. In our field, I feel that […] frameworks need to be widely comprehensible to be properly useful. Whilst we maybe need to engage with new language to describe new phenomena, we must not use overly complex language merely to obfuscate or inflate academic egos. (Sarah)

> [Another problem is] an unnecessary fascination with impressive-sounding technical terms. For instance, the idea that systems have a usual or preferred state is fairly unchallenging but it is rendered less accessible by the obscure term 'attractor.' (Achilleas)

> One of the biggest challenges I find […] is that complex dynamic systems theory can seem impenetrable to many students and fellow researchers because it is so jargon-heavy. There's no doubt that the lexicon of complex systems turns many people off… (Jim)

> I doubt, then, that the full vocabulary of Complexity Theory will ever become mainstream. (Juup)

Another, somewhat deeper problem is that complexity involves the challenge of perceiving reality as a mesh of systems, which overlap and interconnect

inextricably, but also need to be bounded if they are to become conceptually and empirically manageable.

> You have to set boundaries to work with it and what we define as a system is merely a perception. I think sometimes it is easy to forget that and imagine the system is something real and tangible as opposed to something we perceive. We must remain conscious of the bigger picture and the system's position within that larger frame of perception. (Sarah)

> It is sometimes difficult to decide where the borders of an open system are. One is forced, for practical reasons if nothing else, to impose borders on the system and to make what sometimes feels like arbitrary decisions on which factors to consider. (Agneta)

A corollary to the epistemological move associated with developing a complexity outlook is that this change of perspective also requires changes in the ways in which we make sense of the world.

> One of the main challenges I have encountered first hand is that thinking and acting from a complexity perspective does not come naturally to most people. There is a tendency to slip back into other more habitual modes of thought and of action. With time, however this does become easier… (Phil)

> Part of this difficulty is, I think, unavoidable as it concerns challenging some of the core ideas of our ontology, such as linear causality, i.e., the belief that events can be linked to causes in a straightforward way. (Achilleas)

Added to these concerns, disseminating the insights that complexity inspires is not always unproblematic. In part, this challenge connects to the reluctance in some quarters of the scientific community to accept complexity as a legitimate and fruitful way of making sense of language and language learning. In Juup's words:

> I did finally complete my PhD, and it made overt use of Complexity Theory […] However, I only scraped a pass (or such was my feeling). What stuck in my mind is how the examiners competed in who could be more critical of my approach […] and I started to see another side of what I was getting into. Complexity Theory was taking me away from the mainstream research approaches and community of TESOL. This impression was reinforced subsequent to the PhD, when I struggled to publish much (in hindsight, there were other reasons for this as well as me doing Complexity Theory). […] I did work with Lynne Cameron on other things, and although Complexity

> theory was always there for us, it did not overtly appear in what we published.

There is also a concern that existing academic conventions do not always help to make the best use of what complexity has to offer.

> In most current representative forms for the dissemination of academic work (papers, monographs, presentations) the dynamism and interactive nature of the development of interpretations is nullified. Let me be more specific: Even as I'm writing this, the act of writing and seeing my thoughts come up as text on a screen is altering my thinking. I can (and no doubt will) go back over what I've written a number of times, but at some point this text will become a set artefact (if it becomes a published form). But my thinking and interpretations do not stop there. They are continually evolving such that the words on this paper (or screen, as the case may be) form part of the history of my thinking, but may not be representative of my ideas after this has been published. This lack of dynamicity is all the more troublesome considering the (necessarily) protracted nature of academic publishing. (Richard)

There is also a sense of a need to engage with the potential concern, among more practically-oriented audiences, that complexity cannot directly inform teaching and learning. Agneta notes that "complexity research cannot on its own answer questions about learning effects […] on the contrary, it throws up many more questions" and although for her (and arguably all of us) "it puts you on a different path" towards understanding research problems, this is not a perspective that everybody is comfortable with.

> In a classroom, a practitioner's understanding that learning is a complex and dynamic process is not easily distilled down to a toolbox of response options—which is often the short cut and easy way out many look for. Instead they will need to develop an adaptivity of thought and action for the large number of potential situations they may come up against. This necessitates being comfortable with not always having the right answers, or even that there may not be one per se. (Phil)

While the insights that complexity can afford are not always directly translatable into practical prescriptions for teaching, it is unlikely that the teaching profession will benefit from yet another set of theory-driven prescriptions. Rather, one of the values of complexity perspectives stems perhaps from their function "as a foil whereby teachers can clarify their own principles and beliefs," or

as heuristic devices that "challenge teachers to think in new ways" (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, p. 197).

Finally, a problem noted in some of the narratives was the fact that complexity can be, and at times has been employed in gratuitous ways that can damage its legitimacy.

> There is at times a somewhat shallow application and understanding […]. These applications draw on metaphors, images, properties or processes in dynamic or complex systems to conduct research without being based on the understandings upon which these tools are founded. (Richard)

> A complexity framework needs to be used only when the theory is appreciated in terms of its nuances, is helpful to the task at hand and is utilised in a way that contributes positively to understandings more broadly and not merely for perfunctory academic prowess. […] it is important to remember that not everything can be a complex dynamic system but rather it must fulfil certain criteria to be classified as such. And there are no simplistic ways of working with the framework. It must only be used if it adds to our understanding. (Sarah)

All these challenges notwithstanding, complexity can be beneficial to research and practice in TESOL, and, in the final section of this paper, we turn our attention to possible ways in which it can inform our field.

Looking Ahead

The thoughts about the future directions complexity can take reflect our diverse specific research interests, but they also reveal a shared confidence that complexity can help to advance our understanding in respect to a number of research agendas.

> I would like to see links explicitly made between complexity and how languages are taught and learned successfully, between complexity and research methodology, between complexity and the big questions or issues in our field (SLA/TESOL). For me the first of these (classroom practice) is a current area of interest, and this ties into my interest in the psychology of language learning. (Phil)

> An area that I feel offers great potential […] is to consider the language learning classroom as a complex system […] As learners interact with materials and the other humans in these educational spaces they form the classroom context, which in turn feeds back to adapt their own behaviours. (Richard)

> My particular interest is in the conscious language learning process, but also what happens before and outside this process to facilitate or hinder it. (Agneta)

Echoing views also advanced by de Bot, Lowie, Thorne, and Verspoor (2013), it was also suggested that CDST could serve to connect different disciplines, and possibly help to bridge the perceived dichotomy between teaching practice and research in language and learning.

> On the other hand, teams of researchers could approach the same central topic from different angles, depending on their individual research interests and expertise. One could envisage a team (perhaps international) all working with the same data set, or overlapping data sets but approaching the analysis of the data with different, interlinked, research questions in mind to produce a really in-depth, holistic understanding of a particular issue. (Agneta)

> One direction of future research that has a lot of appeal to me personally involves exploring how complexity can help to generate more cohesion in the theoretical foundations of the field. I am thinking now of Stern (1983) who argued that the field needs a solid foundation which includes a theory of language teaching, a theory of linguistics, a theory of sociology, a theory of psychology and a theory of education […] I would like to argue that the field also needs a meta-theory that brings all of the above together, and to me at least complexity is the only theory that can fulfil this role. (Achilleas)

> For myself, I would also like to see the practical contributions of this framework strengthened. As I think this intuitively resonates so strongly with practitioners, I would be keen to explore links between practitioners and academics working together with this shared frame. It has the potential to serve as a shared frame of reference and could foster dialogue when used appropriately. (Sarah)

The potential of CDST to function as connective tissue between the disciplines that inform TESOL and also with teaching practice, is an idea that we began to tentatively explore in the Manchester Roundtable on Complexity Theory and

English Language Teaching, held at the University of Manchester in April 2015, which was attended by many of the participants whose views are recorded in this paper. This was further developed in a conceptual paper that came out of the event, where the argument was put forward that CDST can provide a shared discourse space, "defined by a shared vocabulary and common ways of thinking, which can be used by practitioners and researchers in TESOL together, in our joint quest to develop new ways of understanding and improving our language learning and teaching experiences" (Kostoulas et al., 2018, p. 256). Looking towards the future, we expect to see these synergies becoming more common, stronger, and even more useful.

Concluding Remarks

These narratives reveal these researchers' belief in the potential of CDST to generate understandings of language and language learning that are intuitively convincing, phenomenologically valid, analytically powerful, theoretically generative, and, hopefully, ultimately useful for practice. What is even more encouraging is that, despite the challenges outlined, there is a sense of a growing awareness and appreciation of what complexity can offer.

> Then, in 2014, when I attended the PLL conference in Graz, Austria, and then later the 2014 Leeds BAAL SIG event, I realised that there was a renewed interest in Complexity Theory in TESOL. Looking back, it was almost as if Complexity Theory had gone underground for a number of years, and then after this period of gestation it had re-emerged. And, of course, I met others who were passionate about Complexity Theory. In some ways, it resembled the 'buzz' around this theory that I had seen when I was a PhD student, but with one difference. There were now a number of leading figures in TESOL who are writing and using Complexity Theory in more concrete ways, and with more authority than in that earlier period. (Juup)

> As a community of people who are interested in complexity, I think we are now at a time where a 'critical mass' is developing that can make such work possible. We are at an exciting time when discourse spaces are being created, where we can exchange insights about complexity (the exchange of narratives in this article is just one example), and while being aware of the scepticism that is voiced, I am also optimistic that our shared understandings are becoming more robust. (Achilleas)

However, as Sarah cautions:

> We must remain grounded in working with this lens and exploit the real-world potential and phenomenological authenticity it offers, avoiding the risk of becoming academically remote and convoluted. We must also ensure it has something to offer so that we do not get trapped in an academic endeavour which leaves practitioners saying, so what? Tell me something I don't already know.

When describing language development, Peltzer-Karpf and Hohenberger noted that it "does not take a linear path but comes in phases of intermittent turbulence, fluctuation, and stability, along a 'chaotic itinerary'" (2009, p. 481). We believe that the ways in which TESOL has engaged with complexity have been very similar: As the reflections outlined above show, our encounters with complexity also followed a chaotic itinerary punctuated by false starts, bursts of optimistic growth, stability, and turbulence. In this article, we have tried to show some of this dynamism, as seen from the perspective of a growing community of TESOL scholars with a shared interest in CDST. We are aware that ours is a partial account, both because of our enthusiasm about the potential of complexity, and because of limitations inherent in our deliberately informal approach. However, we hope to have been able to share what complexity means for us, as a community of researchers, and how an increasing corpus of research has began to shape expectations about the explanatory and practical potential of complexity. Whether these expectations will be fulfilled remains to be seen in the future. It is our hope that readers will take up our invitation to reflect on what complexity can mean for them and their work and perhaps take inspiration from the narratives of those already engaging with this perspective.

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Achilleas I. Kostoulas, Sarah Mercer

Reflexionen über Komplexität: Erfahrungen der TESOL-Forscher

Zusammenfassung

Theorie komplexer dynamischer Systeme (CDST von *Complex Dynamic Systems Theory*) ist eine immer häufige verwendete theoretische Grundlage in angewandter Linguistik. Der vorliegende Beitrag schildert Erfahrungen der TESOL-Forscher, die nach dem Modell gearbeitet haben. Besprechen werden dabei Nutzen und Herausforderungen für Lehrerarbeit und potenzielle Anwendung des Modells in Zukunft. Der erste Teil des Beitrags handelt von CDST-Grundlagen, deren drei bedeutende Merkmale besonders berücksichtigt werden: holistische Einstellung, nichtlineare Perspektive der Kausalität, Fokussieren auf Auftreten und Selbstorganisation. Zum Forschungsmaterial wurden die von neun wissenschaftlichen Mitarbeitern verfassten Abhandlungen zur CDST-Anwendung in ihrer Arbeit. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass die zunächst mit Zurückhaltung aufgenommene CDST-Theorie mit der Zeit ihr wirkliches Potential offenbarte. Die Befragten waren zu künftiger Anwendung der Theorie in Forschungen zur Erlernung des Englischen und im Bereich der angewandten Linguistik optimistisch eingestellt.

Schlüsselwörter: Zweitspracheunterricht, Fremdsprachenunterricht, Theorie komplexer dynamischer Systeme

Reviews

Theory and Practice of Second Language Acquisition
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Katarzyna Ożańska-Ponikwia, *Personality and Emotional Intelligence in Second Language Learning*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018, ISBN: 978-1-5275-0915-3, 146 pages

The monographic volume authored by Katarzyna Ożańska-Ponikwia and entitled *Personality and Emotional Intelligence in Second Language Learning* consists of two parts, a theoretical and an empirical one, each of which fulfils the aims set by the author. According to Ożańska-Ponikwia, the book has two objectives: to give an overview of second language acquisition (SLA) studies focusing on personality traits and emotional intelligence and to present the results of an empirical study measuring the influence of personality traits and emotional intelligence on learning a second language in the context of formal instruction.

The monograph consists of six chapters covering 121 pages of text, a bibliography of over two hundred entries and, additionally, it contains two indexes: a three-page *Author Index* including the author sources quoted in the publication and a *Subject Index* listing the main constructs discussed and studied empirically in the project presented. However, what might be considered missing are appendices, which could for example contain the questionnaires used as instruments of data collection in the present study. The book opens with Chapter 1—The Concept of Personality, followed by Chapter 2—Personality in the Context of Second Language Learning and Use, Chapter 3—Methodology, Chapter 4—Quantitative Data Analysis, Chapter 5—Open Question Data Analysis and is completed with Chapter 6 Discussion and Conclusions.

Chapter 1—The Concept of Personality (pp. 1–13) offers a comprehensive review of approaches to personality and emotional intelligence, firstly by defining these terms. The construct of personality is discussed here from a diachronic perspective. Comments are made on the earliest approaches and models of personality, for example, Eysenck's model of "Big Three" (1947) and a more contemporary treatment of personality structures in the "Big Five" models of Costa and McCrae, with their most recent developments (1985–1992). Here the discussion focuses on the individual components of the higher-order personal-

ity traits of Costa and McCrae, that is, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Neuroticism. These are illustrated with an in-depth description of the NEO-FFI Inventory of Costa and McCrae (1992). Next, the lower-order personality traits of emotional intelligence (EI) are commented on with reference to the most comprehensive presentation of the concept of Trait Emotional Intelligence by Petrides and Furnham (2001). It is illustrated with a data collection instrument, the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue, Petrides & Furnham 2001) measuring the EI of informants. Again something is missing here; I think it might have been interesting if the author had traced back emotional intelligence as a personality trait not only to Howard Gardner, in his theory of multiple intelligences, but also more comprehensively to Daniel Goleman, the classic exponent of EI theory. Also here, the author introduces the reader to the research instruments mentioned above, which were used as the main data collection tools in her study—(Chapter 4–6).

The theoretical considerations of Chapter 1 are illustrated with examples of studies in second language learning. Chapter 2—Personality in the Context of Second Language Learning and Use (pp. 15–42) offers a fairly comprehensive overview of both older and more recent research in the area and so it can serve as a point of reference for those interested in this area of research, especially since it covers a whole range of language learning contexts (formal instruction, immersion of immigrant language learners and users, study abroad). After a general introduction to the relation between personality and learning, the author presents studies focusing on each personality trait of the higher-order, in the context of SLA, as well as a lower-order trait of personality, emotional intelligence in immersion (immigration) and study abroad environments. Here the reader will find references to such distinguished scholars as Susan Gass, Zolan Dörnyei, Peter MacIntyre, Aneta Pavlenko, and importantly Jean-Marc Dewaele, whose contribution to this area of research (especially in relation to emotions) needs no further acknowledgement. The author also refers to the contribution of some, but perhaps too few, Polish scholars investigating the issues of personality in SLA (Adrianna Biedroń, Ewa Piechurska-Kuciel, Joanna Bielska).

Charter 3—Methodology (pp. 43–52) presents the research questions and hypotheses as well as the design of the empirical project, its participants and data collection instruments. The author poses seven questions and formulates seven hypotheses all related to correlations between individual personality traits of higher-order (e.g., Extraversion, Openness to Experience) and emotional intelligence, and written and oral scores on the examination, grades in grammar, writing and integrated skills, also self-reported preferences in skills, L2 acquisition and self-perceived L2 proficiency. The sample selection of 140 participants in the study was chosen from an English department of a tertiary education institution. The group consisted of students from the first and second years of B.A. studies, a fairly homogenous group in terms of their learning

histories and language competence level. The research instruments employed for data collection were a questionnaire focusing on the personal background of the subjects, their self-perceptions of learning preferences and difficulties, their grades, a personality trait test (NEO-FFL) and the TEIQue of emotional intelligence (described earlier in Chapter two). The author also adds a reliability analysis for each of the instruments to demonstrate that they are indeed appropriate and thus can be used in the study.

The following chapters, four and five, constitute the empirical part of the book. In Chapter 4—Quantitative Data Analysis (pp. 53–80), the author focuses solely on the presentation and analysis of the data analysed by means of statistical instruments (correlations, multiple stepwise regression and t-test). For readers not familiar with statistical measures, this may be a bit of a mine-field, as the author does not offer an explanation of how these statistics are applied and assumes a general knowledge of these, in fact, pretty basic statistical measures. At the same time, this knowledge is not absolutely essential to understanding the findings as they are commented upon by the author. In the concluding part of the analysis, the author states that "the relationship between personality traits and SLA is quite complex and nuanced" (p. 79). At the same time, certain correlations appear as stable, among them a general belief that Extraversion will be conducive to the development of speaking and Conscientiousness to grammatical accuracy, and were confirmed by these statistical data. Also, as is widely believed, Emotional intelligence appeared to have a significant influence on speaking abilities and pronunciation scores. The chapter offers many new and interesting findings as well as confirms generally held beliefs concerning foreign language learning and personality traits.

Chapter 5—Open Question Data Analysis (pp. 81–109) constitutes the qualitative part of the study. First, it looks at the subjects' responses to the question: "What, from your point of view, is the most difficult thing in foreign language learning? Explain why." The top aspects enumerated are: vocabulary, lack of fluency, being afraid of making mistakes and stress, among many others. Each of them is illustrated with a short narrative comment by the subjects to explain their choice of a particular difficulty. Secondly, the author analyses the data from personality and emotional intelligence tests and compares them with the questionnaire results in relation to high-order and low-order personality traits. In the concluding section of these analyses, the author points to a certain uniformity of all the informants in rating speaking as the most difficult aspect of FL learning. However, she observes that different types of difficulties are pointed out and these are related to individual personality traits (profiles) of the subjects.

The closing Chapter 6—Discussion and Conclusions (pp.111–121) sums up the purpose of this study and juxtaposes it with previous research, emphasising both continuity and novelty of the project. It focuses on giving answers to the research questions and confirmation/partial confirmation of the hypoth-

eses formulated. At the same time, the author recommends that more research should be done to further isolate the complexity of the role personality (itself a complex construct) plays in second/foreign language learning. I believe that some didactic implications for teachers of foreign languages, not included here, should have been proposed.

Having presented briefly the content of individual chapters, I would like to point out the strengths of this publication as well as some areas of weaknesses. First of all, as to the formal aspects of the book, it is written in correct academic English, it is well-structured and reader-friendly. Each chapter starts with an introduction briefly presenting the contents and concludes with a short summary of the content. As to the content, I applaud the choice of topic and the extent to which the author has managed to present the most up-to-date research on personality as a psychological construct (both its theoretical underpinnings and models) and especially emotional intelligence as a significant trait in the affective functioning of a person, at the same time locating it all in the context of second/foreign language learning and use. The sources used and the discussion provided present the issues in a very clear and concise manner. Perhaps for the psychologist reader, the text might be considered a bit summary, however, for a second language researcher there is no need for a more elaborate discussion of the psychological constructs of personality and emotional intelligence. The author thereafter makes her own choices as to adopting certain theoretical models and consequently (and consistently) using the research instruments required by them.

Despite the fact that personality (and especially affectivity) has long been known to be of primary importance, not much research has been systematically carried out on it so far. In other words, despite some general (folk) beliefs as to how personality traits affect learning and performance in a foreign language, researchers have come up only with sample studies that cannot substantially confirm or at least only partly confirm the above belief. The author of this publication poses research questions that could perhaps be answered intuitively. For example, the role of extraversion in language achievement has always been considered facilitative in the development of speaking skills, whereas introversion has always been seen as more conducive to grammar accuracy and learning preferences in this area. Of course, the research questions posed by the author are much more intricate and demonstrate the author's understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of the problems investigated. Following the most recent personality models and understandings of the construct of emotional intelligence, Ożańska-Ponikwia looks at personality as a complex construct of intertwined traits, interacting with each other. Thanks to meticulous statistical analysis, the author was able to point out the correlations between the individual traits and their effects on different areas of language development in the learning process (speaking, grammar, integrated skills, etc.). The mixed methods

study presented by the author also offers some qualitative data derived from the subjects' responses to the questionnaire. These responses were analysed by means of the Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA), a model offered by Philip Mayring (2000, 2001). It is a pity that the author did not make it clearer how the model works and did not offer a more detailed description of the procedures. It is a relatively under-used model in English studies and so explaining it would have been an additional advantage of this publication.

Although the answers given to the research questions provide a fairly thorough discussion and summary in the findings, it is a pity that the author did not try to construct profiles of FL learners/users based on her results, which was at a certain point suggested by the author herself as the aim of the conducted study. Thus, the concluding comments in the last chapter may leave the reader with a feeling of incompleteness. Additionally, although the author did not intend to present any implications of her findings for the FL learning and teaching context, it would perhaps have been of value as an addition to a quite short concluding section. One general point I would also like to make is that the author, like some other SLA researchers, deploys the term "a second language," instead of "a foreign language" (or uses them interchangeably). The context of the study refers exclusively to that of formal instruction and not to immersion or acquisition in the natural context of language use (L2). So, for example, the qualitative data express learners/users perceptions and beliefs in relation to a language learnt by means of formal instruction and not in the target language environment. The latter might create a different picture the impact of personality traits on language acquisition would have, for example, in relation to the lower-order trait of emotional intelligence.

These critical remarks above do not have any serious consequences for the value of this publication. I can sincerely recommend it—as one of not very many in this research area—to anyone interested in studying personality and the affective dimensions of language acquisition and learning processes, as well as in second/foreign language use. This monograph is also valuable for any bilingual language learner/user as it demonstrates very visibly that one's personality plays a key role in language learning/communication success and suggests how we could perhaps learn to control and to some extent manage emotions (emotion labour). I also believe that this book is a reference source that may be of great help to second/foreign language teachers in developing their awareness of how their students' personalities (and indeed, their own) impact their language performance and achievement, as well as the wellbeing of the learners and the teacher. This book demonstrates these things very clearly.

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Anna Borowska, *Avialinguistics. The Study of Language for Aviation Purposes*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang 2017, ISBN 978-3-631-72138-4, 334 pages

Anna Borowska's monograph is the first comprehensive coverage of the specialized language used in aviation communication. The term *avialinguistics*, coined by the author, is used for the first time in this very book to refer to "the interdisciplinary science that covers the linguistic study of aviation language in use" (p. 19). Although the bulk of the book is devoted to the delineation of the new field of research and building foundation for a new discipline, it provides a rich assortment of practical implications, related mainly to the training of professionals whose careers will be connected with civil aeronautics. As the author puts it, "the applied objective aims to support and advocate the improvement of the training process and the quality of aeronautical communication in order to enhance global safety" (p. 20).

The book consists of seven major chapters, introduction, bibliography, appendix, subject index, list of abbreviations, and list of illustrations, extending over 334 pages. The bibliography is impressive—it contains as many as 470 items, covering almost all relevant literature on the subject. The index, however, constitutes a negative counterbalance, encompassing only 37 headwords, which do not offer much help in searching for information within the book. The appendix contains the questionnaire which was used by the author in the study reported in Chapter 7. All in all, the book makes an impression of a neat and orderly elaboration, characterized by clear and detailed structure (although not balanced between particular chapters), very rich in content, both in its theoretical and practical dimension. It is very well prepared when it comes to the general layout and consistency of highlighting conventions, but there are a few (fortunately infrequent) editorial faults, mainly in form of grammatical mistakes: "having **attending** thematic conferences" (p. 19), "256 respondents (81%) did not **observed** any…" (p. 276), "I will present those that **seems** to be…" (p. 280) or "aviation language **which** use is strictly connected with…" (p. 283).

The introduction to the book serves a typical organizational-rationalizing function, it is very well written and provides a clear statement of the most important objectives. The first chapter (pp. 25–43), in turn, is devoted to the historical perspective and delineating the origins of the specialized language known today as *Aviation English*. In a convincing, interesting, and relatively concise manner, the author presents the civilizational, cultural, and professional circumstances which led to the emergence of the language of aviation and provides explanation for the fact that the English language assumed the role of a commonly accepted medium of communication in aeronautical contexts. In addition, we also find there the account of the origins and the description of the procedures introduced by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) pertaining to the language competence level of the candidates for intenational aviation service. This is one of the most important issues, as it turns out later on, because the author points out the discrepancy between the criteria applied for native and non-native speakers of English. This factor, reiterated in the following chapters as a potential source of various problems brought up and discussed by the author, is one of the major incentives for the modifications in the training procedures put forward in the concluding parts of the book.

The second chapter (pp. 45–100) is much longer and performs the constitutive role for *avialinguistics*, where the author takes up an ambitious challenge of defining it as a new and independent area of investigation. Positioning herself as a pioneer, first of all she had to point out the shortcomings and problems inherent in the existing approaches and accounts. It must be admitted that the argumentation presented in the initial parts of the chapter is quite convincing, especially when it comes to the shortage of literature on such contexts of specialized aviation communication as the aircraft maintenance service or passenger service (interestingly, the author herself does not analyze such contexts in the practical part of the book, either). Additionally, it is claimed that the majority of scholars place *Aviation Language* alongside other types of specialized languages under the common banner of *Language/English for Specific Purposes*, ignoring the specificity and the interdisciplinary character of *Aviation English*. The originality of Borowska's proposition lies in the attempt to define *avialinguistics* as an inherently different, interdisciplinary field, requiring a novel approach recognizing the mutual contribution of the three disciplines: applied linguistics, specialized languages and aviation. *Avialinguistics* is thus defined as "the study of aviation language in all its professional aspects in relation to practical problems" (p. 55).

The following subsections attempt to sketch the range of avialinguistic research, its object, aims, and purposes. Here the discussion becomes a bit less clear and is burdened with a number of problems. For example, the author emphasizes the necessity of focus on individual users of *Aviation English* in concrete situations, but in the schematic representation in page 57 this indi-

vidual perspective is missing, unless the whole diagram refers only to such individualized instances. It is also a bit unclear where the border between *pure avialinguistics* and *applied avialinguistics* lies, because some elements described by Borowska as belonging to the former, such as the study of aviation language instruction, seem to belong to the applied branch. Another problematic issue is the model of language assumed as the linguistic foundation of the new discipline, because the only thing which the author explicitly states is that she understands language "not [as] an artificial product created by a researcher on purpose in order to use it for substituting a real analyzed phenomenon, but rather an aviation language in use, in real life" (p. 59). I cannot say if this entails rejection of any theoretical model of language, or only those which rely on more formalized representations; no positively formulated references are made to any of the existing models.

Significant improvement can be found in the final subchapter (2.5), outlining *Aviation Language* and its aeronautical variant. Of particular value is the way in which Borowska uncovers the inconsistencies and inaccuracies identified in the way various authors define such terms as *Aviation Language*, *Aviation English* or *Aeronautical English*, as well as their relation to general English. A natural consequence is the new definition of *Aviation Language* (p. 64), and delineation of *Aeronautical English* as a concrete sub-register, encompassing radio communication employing *Standard Phraseology* (SP) and *Plain Aeronautical Language* (PAL). Thus defined sub-register emerges as the major area of interest for the Author in the remaining part of the book. An extremely important move is placing *Aeronautical English* outside the boundaries of general (standard) English, due to frequent occurrence of phonetic, morphological, and syntactic forms not found in the standard variation of English (richly exemplified in pages 78–92). The Author also points to a unique specificity of *Aviation English* used as *lingua franca*, manifested in its remarkable regularity and stability, subjected to many limitations and standardizing tendencies, which is not found in other contexts related to the use of English in international and intercultural communication. Such a high level of standardization and prescriptive norms make it a variation which even native speakers of English must be taught in order to be able to communicate effectively and faultlessly with all other professionals in aviation industry, irrespective of their linguistic and cultural background.

The third chapter of the monograph (pp. 101–136) focuses on the communicational aspects of *Aviation Language* and presents it from the perspective of the participants of aeronautical communication, attempting at the same time to present the phenomenon within the discourse analytic perspective. However, apart from a few references to short works by Cook (2011) and Schiffrin (1994), no explicit links are made to the more important and more voluminous elaborations by such authors as, for example, Teun van Dijk. Thus, it turns out that

the efforts to place *avialinguistics* within the framework of Discourse Analysis in fact boil down to elaboration on those contextual factors which have to be taken into consideration in the analysis. Furthermore, it has to be mentioned that the relationship between *Aviation Discourse* and *Aeronautical Discourse* outlined by Borowska, where the latter term is seen both as a lower rank, more specific, but at the same time exclusive from the former, is far from clear, especially that *Aeronautical English* is presented on page 67 as an inclusive variant of *Aviation English*. If such a relationship holds on the level of English, why doesn't it hold on the level of discourse?

In the middle of the chapter Borowska puts forward a new approach to the description of texts connected with aeronautics, but what initially looks like an announcement of a presentation of her own typology of such texts turns out to be a discussion of the criteria which need to be taken into consideration in the process of its compilation. Towards the end the Author shifts the focus to the spoken mode of aeronautical communication, although the possibility of text channel exploitation is also mentioned. Such factors as sequential nature of discourse, taking advantage of technological solutions, the rights ascribed to particular roles performed by speakers, and acceptable forms and functions of particular messages are highlighted as the most important factors influencing this type of communication. In my opinion those remarks prepare the ground for the following chapter, where a detailed discussion of aeronautical discourse segmentation is offered. What I found problematic in this section was the reference to a couple of pragmatic theories (Searle, Grice) and theoretical accounts of conversation analysis (Schegloff and Sacks), which made an impression of a bit forced and unnecessary, as if the Author wanted to demonstrate that she is familiar with these theoretical conceptions. What is the point, for example, of discussing Grice's Maxims of Conversation, which were proposed as a part of the theoretical account of implicature formation? The aeronautical discourse is meant to involve mostly unambiguous, clear, and ostensive communication, without any necessity of relying on implied senses, which could even be potentially dangerous and definitely unwelcome.

Chapter four (pp. 137–181) is a very detailed survey of important linguistic features and elements of *Aeronautical English*, divided into two major parts. The first one is devoted to *Standard Phraseology* (SP), the basic register used in aeronautical communication, whereas the second one to *Plain Aeronautical English* (PAE), which constitutes a certain extension of the former in situations which are untypical and non-standard. SP constitutes a system of communication which is almost completely regulated and pre-scribed in official documentation. The norms and rules pertain to controlled exploitation of prosody (especially intonation and pauses), specific syntax, lexis, grammatical features and even pronunciation, which in some cases should be different from standard English. PAE is regulated to a lesser extent, but it still imposes the use of such

constructions and lexis which guarantee easy and problem-free understanding. The discussion is very detailed and well-organized, and it very convincingly and strongly exposes the uniqueness and exceptionality of this form of communication. The only thing which is not very clearly stated in this part of the book is where all the examples come from, whether they were borrowed from ICAO manuals or individually collected by the Author from authentically occurring conversations. It is only on page 285, in the final chapter of the book, where Borowska unambiguously identifies the source of her examples: it turns out that they were recorded and transcribed from authentic dialogues broadcast on www.liveatc.net page.

The fifth chapter (pp. 183–217) is a very illustrative overview of communication errors which in majority of cases led to fatal accidents, involving loss of many lives. Most of those examples had already been described in the literature, but Borowska's compilation is organized according to a typology of errors based on their moment of occurrence in the communicational sequence of speech events. Her discussion is very detailed and exhaustive, richly illustrated with interesting examples. Borowska also highlights the differences between native and non-native speakers of English when it comes to the genesis of misunderstandings, which is later used as a basis for divergent paths of training proposed for the former and the latter in chapter six. Of particular interest is here also a survey of those forms and immanent features of the English language which are likely to generate communication problems: the Author argues for their exclusion from *Aeronautical English* in favor of those which are not burdened with potential ambiguity, vagueness or hazardous similarity to other items with which they could easily be confused. This is yet another methodological postulate which lies at the basis of Borowska's concept of training presented in the subsequent chapter.

Chapter six (pp. 219–249), as mentioned above, is devoted mainly to the presentation of Borowska's ideas regarding the system of training in civil aviation, stemming from the most important objective of *avialinguistics*; improvement of communication. On the basis of all considerations presented earlier and the official recommendations pertaining to the use of language in aviation-related radio communication, the Author formulates detailed instructions vis-à-vis the organization and implementation of language training of candidates for civil aviation service. Exploiting the general framework of ESP course development the Author points to all factors which must be taken into consideration in preparing courses for future pilots and ATC staff. Such issues as needs analysis, participants, expected skills to be developed, teaching staff requirements and the methods of teaching are discussed in a detailed manner. The focal point is the divergent treatment of native and non-native speakers of English and the extensive use of simulations in order to develop the skills necessary for effective communication in the future situations when human

life can be at stake. All these methodological postulates stem from Borowska's invaluable expertise in the field of aeronautical communication and are well grounded in the literature on the subject.

Further support for the postulates included in chapter six is provided in chapter seven (pp. 251–282), where the results of Borowska's survey on aeronautical communication practice are presented. The author constructed a detailed questionnaire (to be found in the Appendix) and managed to receive responses from as many as 290 civil aviation professionals (pilots and ATC staff) from 59 countries. It is the first survey in which native and non-native speakers of English communicating with the use of *Aeronautical English* were evaluated separately. In spite of the fact that the way in which some of the questions were asked could result in a certain bias in the answers provided, Borowska managed to collect impressive material for analysis. Especially the examples quoted by the respondents turned out to be very valuable in the context of *Aviation English* course development. For example, one of the air traffic controllers pointed to the tendency of Asian (especially Chinese) pilots to confirm comprehension of ATC tower commands in situations when the message was not properly understood—the evidence for miscomprehension was the behavior of the pilots. This might stem from the culture-specific strategy of face loss avoidance: the Chinese pilots fear that admitting lack of comprehension disqualifies them as competent professionals. Such remarks and examples, extensively quoted in chapter seven, are very helpful in the formulation of concrete methodological postulates related to the content and focus of training. It seems that many of the postulates presented in chapter six were in fact based on the results of the survey, although the Author does not admit it directly. Such ordering of the chapters might disturb the perception of the book content a little, but the connections are easily traceable and clear.

The book as a whole constitutes an interesting piece of reading both for linguists interested in specialized registers and for people responsible for course development and ESP training. Most importantly, however, it should be recommended to those ICAO experts who are in charge of the organization of training for future pilots and ATC staff, because implementation of Borowska's recommendations is, in my opinion, bound to bring significant improvement in the effectiveness of aeronautical communication. A direct consequence of such improvement is higher safety of aircraft passengers, which means our safety, because it would be hard to find nowadays someone who has never been in such a role.

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Book, two authors and more:
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