

ISSN 2520-2073 (print)
ISSN 2521-442X (online)

TRAINING, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

*'Language shapes the way we think, and
determines what we can think about'*

- Benjamin Lee Whorf

**Vol. 6
Issue 4
2022**

Issue doi: 10.22363/2521-442X-2022-6-4

Quarterly journal published by

Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University)

TRAINING, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

ISSN 2520-2073 (print)
ISSN 2521-442X (online)

Quarterly journal published by RUDN University

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Training, Language and Culture is accessible online at <https://rudn.tlcjournal.org>
Publication schedule: four issues per year coming out in March, June, September and December

Printing run 100 copies. Order No 24. Open price.
Signed to print 4.12.2022. Date of imprint 12.12.2022. Format 60x84/8.
Offset paper. Offset printing. Typeface "Optima, Impact".
Printer's sheet 10,02

Printed at RUDN University Publishing House:
3 Ordzhonikidze str., 115419 Moscow, Russian Federation
Ph.: +7 (495) 952-04-41; Email: publishing@rudn.ru

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Training, Language and Culture (TLC) is a peer-reviewed journal that aims to promote and disseminate research spanning the spectrum of language and linguistics, education and culture studies with a special focus on professional communication and professional discourse.

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CONTENTS

- 5 **About our contributors**
- 7 **Introduction to Issue 6(4)** by Elena N. Malyuga

Original Research

- 9 **ACCOUNTING TERMINOLOGY IN ENGLISH ECONOMIC DISCOURSE (BASED ON INDIA'S THE COMPANY ACT 2013)**
by Alexandra V. Radyuk
- 20 **THE CHANGING ROLE OF ENGLISH IN BANGLADESH**
by Mohammad Mosiur Rahman
- 31 **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF FLIPPED CLASSROOM IN THE HOSPITALITY EDUCATION**
by Polina Ermolaeva and Paul Barron
- 50 **PERFECTION AS A CONCEPT OF HYPERBOLISATION IN ENGLISH PROMOTIONAL DISCOURSE: A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS**
by Yulia A. Filyasova
- 62 **LANGUAGE AGGRESSION IN VIRTUAL PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITIES**
by Tatiana V. Dubrovskaya and Elmira I. Yuskaeva
- 73 **THIS CAN BE MADE MORE STUDENT-CENTRED: ASYNCHRONOUS MEDIATION IN IN-SERVICE TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**
by Victoria Kareva, Tatiana Rasskazova and Dmitri Leontjev

Book Reviews

- 91 ***Humble pie and cold turkey: English expressions and their origins (a review)***
original work by Caroline Taggart reviewed by Victoria A. Borisenko
- 93 ***Why is this a question? Everything about the origins and oddities of language you never thought to ask (a review)***
original work by Paul Antony Jones reviewed by Ludmila V. Gushchina

News & Events

- 96 **RUDN University News**
- 97 **TLC News**

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Introduction to Issue 6(4)

by Editor-in-Chief Elena N. Malyuga

Welcome to the December issue of Training, Language and Culture. This year's final issue has gathered some noteworthy research with the studies offering insights into the issues of field-specific terminology, language policy and planning, hospitality education, promotional discourse, language aggression, and in-service teacher training.

In *Accounting terminology in English economic discourse (based on India's The Company Act 2013)*, Alexandra V. Radyuk explores the form and meaningful content of English-language accounting terminology used in India's *The Company Act* establishing the norms and regulations overseeing company activity in the country. The study systemises the notional classes of accounting terminology, singles out the pragmatic and semantic properties of accounting terms, and looks into their culture-specific attributes. The paper ultimately makes conclusions regarding the comprehensive structure of the conceptual framework of accounting terminology mirroring a wide range of specific characteristics of Indian corporate activity, as well as the regulative mechanisms behind it.

In *The changing role of English in Bangladesh*, Mohammad Mosiur Rahman investigates the intricate history and regulatory background bringing into focus the current role of English in Bangladesh as evidenced in both theory and practice of language policymaking. The study presents detailed research into how English is being treated in the country's normative policies (and why), while falling back on cultural, linguistic, social and ideological reasonings propelling the various approaches to and stances on the issue. All in all, the major incentive for the scientific community to address problems like these is the stringent need to provide for balanced language policies to preserve and nurture mother tongues.

In *The effectiveness of flipped classroom in the hospitality education*, Polina Ermolaeva and Paul Barron evaluate the student acceptance and overall effectiveness of the flipped classroom approach focussing on a particular Swiss Hotel School. The study offers an in-depth account of the theories of learning acquisition, students' preferences in teaching and learning methods, and application of teaching styles in hospitality education. Guided by an objectivist research perspective and thus adopting a quantitative approach to gathering data,

the authors aimed to evaluate the impact of adopting a flipped approach to learning with due allowance for ethical issues, limitations, and the context of the research. Among other things, the study exposes social learning as the strongest method for hospitality students, highlights students' preference towards the student-oriented approach over traditional teaching, as well as their particularly prominent embrace of the mixed approach, but with less teacher involvement and more student participation.

In *Perfection as a concept of hyperbolisation in English promotional discourse: A multi-dimensional linguistic analysis*, Yulia A. Filyasova considers the descriptive attribute 'perfect' and its derivatives as a commonly used abstraction for creating persuasive emotional texts that encourage potential customers to make purchases and satisfy their needs. To that end, the author explores the contextual uses, semantic fields and syntactic structures all making up the scope of the scientific inquiry offered. The study makes a number of valuable inferences and conclusions, all of which will be of interest to both linguists and teachers dealing with the issues of hyperbolisation, semantic mapping and discourse.

In *Language aggression in virtual professional communities*, Tatiana V. Dubrovskaya and Elmira I. Yuskaeva focus on language aggression as it is enacted in virtual professional communities to reveal the dominant forms and mechanisms of aggression in the virtual environment. Adopting a methodology that draws on an inferential model of communication, the study analyses aggressive utterances and their meanings in situational contexts distinguishing between insulting aggression and aggression of exclusion, both bearing their own pragmatic mechanisms and tactics, as well as their own linguistic resources. Obviously, with virtual communities gaining momentum in today's landscape of social interaction, this kind of research is essential to understand the intricate mechanisms governing their actual production.

In *This can be made more student-centred: Asynchronous mediation in in-service teacher professional development*, Victoria Kareva, Tatiana Rasskazova and Dmitri Leontjev explore how asynchronous assessment of in-service teachers' portfolios informed by dynamic assessment framework shaped the tutor's mediation in synchronous online interaction with two teacher candidates. The study presents a well-grounded investigation offering insights into the sociocultural theory in teacher education, the dynamic assessment framework, and

portfolio assessment techniques. Overall, due to its context – in-service teaching training – and the asynchronous modality of mediation, the study has something to offer both to practice and further research.

The issue also comes with two book reviews: *Humble pie and cold Turkey: English expressions and their origins* reviewed by Victoria A. Borisenko, and *Why is this a question? Everything about the origins and oddities of language you never thought to ask* reviewed by Ludmila V. Gushchina.

As is customary, recent news from RUDN University and TLC finalise the issue offering highlights of the latest updates on the university and journal operations, events and developments.

Training, Language and Culture welcomes contributions in the form of original research articles, book reviews and correspondence. Details are available online on the journal's website at rudn.tlcjournal.org. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at tlcjournal@rudn.ru.

Original Research

Accounting terminology in English economic discourse (based on India's The Company Act 2013)

by Alexandra V. Radyuk

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Article history Received July 3, 2022 | Revised October 3, 2022 | Accepted December 1, 2022

Conflicts of interest The author declared no conflicts of interest

Research funding This publication has been supported by the RUDN University Scientific Projects Grant System, Project No. 050734-2-000

doi [10.22363/2521-442X-2022-6-4-9-19](https://doi.org/10.22363/2521-442X-2022-6-4-9-19)

For citation Radyuk, A. V. (2022). Accounting terminology in English economic discourse (based on India's The Company Act 2013). *Training, Language and Culture*, 6(4), 9-19.

The paper studies the structure and semantics of English-language accounting terminology through a close examination of The Company Act, the official legal document regulating the establishment and operation of India's commercial companies. The study aims to explore specific terminology occurring in accounting and audit books in the economic discourse, as well as to identify and analyse culture-marked terminology in the chosen field of study. Study results were used to compile a glossary of commonly used accounting terms constituting a part of a unified terminological system. The author has systemised the main notional classes of accounting terminology thus demonstrating its structural nature in English economic discourse, the semantic organisation and conceptual framework of the field-specific terminology system.

KEYWORDS: *semantics, terminology, economic discourse, accounting, language for specific purposes, culturally marked vocabulary*



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1. INTRODUCTION

Language for specific purposes is one of the extensively studied applied fields of linguistics. Of particular interest to linguists are comparative studies looking into the variations in mindsets witnessed in field experts such as businessmen, economists, or lawyers, reflecting the specific worldview of various cultures (Moutafidou, 2021; Aririguzoh, 2022; Tamimy et al., 2022; Darics & Koller, 2018; Pan et al., 2020). This study considers the terminological system in The Company Act, India's basic statutory document, striving to pinpoint an adequate interpretation of accounting terms in English and capture the nation-specific vision of the Indian business

realm. There is also a need to review and classify accounting terminology upon a thorough analysis of its structure and semantics.

The paper thus addresses a few tasks: to explore the economic discourse in general, including its basic characteristics, structure, stylistic and genre-specific features; to explore the status of The Company Act 2013 at the point of intersection of economic and legal perspectives; and to cross-reference business, cultural and economic realia in terms of their role in legal and linguistic operationalisation in the text. By addressing these tasks, the study expects to identify and validate accounting terminology occurring in the economic dis-

course and piece together a picture of accounting terminology as a system in the framework of Indian legal and statutory texts. By applying the structural-semantic approach, the study shall classify terminological notional classes depicting the set of notions representing Indian company operations. Country-specific vocabulary will thus be analysed within the confines of a narrow institutional discourse, filling in most commonly encountered gaps in definition and interpretation.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study relies on previous research in lexical semantics, cognitive linguistics, theoretical and cognitive terminology as a primary guide in making theoretical and methodological observations. The key methods employed in light of the defined purposes of the study are the methods of continuous sampling, structural-semantic analysis of the terms in question, stylistic and comparative analysis of the existing practices of terms usage.

The Company Act 2013 (hereinafter – The Act), the formal legal instrument administering corporate activity in India, is introduced as study material subject to a detailed analysis as per research objectives. The document was issued by the Indian Parliament to regulate corporate incorporation, management, structural organisation, as well as relevant controlling mechanisms, responsibilities, and dissolution procedures. The Act comprises 29 chapters containing 470 sections and 7 appendices and constitutes a fragmentary stand-in for a previously working document that has been in force until August 29, 2013. A large number of sections (98) became operative a month later with a few changes (such as the newly added *one-person company* term) introduced into the document.

One of the most emblematic regulations introduced into the new document has to do with greater corporate accountability within the realm of IT operations for the purposes of better prevention and defense against organised cybercrime. The latest version of the document also engrains binding corporate social responsibility (CSR) dues obligatory for big corporate bodies, which is an unprecedented statutory CSR, officially unencountered elsewhere. As the newest revision within the bounds of Indian law, the document also lays down regulations governing the appointment of a company secretary, who is now categorised as essential administrative staff. Constituted three years later, in 2016, is the document's stipulation constituting the National Company Law Tribunal.

In 2018, Indian government established the National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA), which to this day functions as a regulatory agency dealing with and inquiring into the issues of dereliction and occupational negligence registered with certified auditors and companies. The document was compiled based on UK's 2006 Parliamentary Companies Act (the principal legal instrument governing British company law) and exercises roughly the same authority pertaining to the matters of statutory management of corporate agencies with due allowance for legal territorial specifics.

The study thus intends to use the above-described material to investigate originally-sourced accounting terms registered in The Act as India's primary formal instrument governing the institution and operation of the country's commercial corporate bodies.

3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Accounting discourse has been an object of linguistic inquiry in social, structural, conversational, pragmatic, and semantic aspects (Baker et al., 2022; Hardy et al., 2005; Seal & Mattimoe, 2016; Carlsson-Wall et al., 2016; Malyuga & McCarthy, 2018; Alveson & Karreman, 2000; O'Dwyer, 2021; Basturkmen, 2018; Evans, 2018; Aburous & Kamla, 2022). Accounting is the process of recording, assessing, and communicating financial transactions that helps individuals and organisations estimate their financial condition. Accountants keep track of expenses, profits, and losses, using the accounting formula: assets equal liability plus equity.

Further, audit can be rightfully referred to as a key aspect of business regulation as it provides for independent evaluation of the enterprise's principal documentation – books of account.

In The Act's structure, two chapters deal directly with accounting – Chapter 9 *Accounts of Companies* and Chapter 10 *Audit and Auditors* – outlining basic principles of auditing and the keeping of corporate books and accounts. Key accounting terms are collected generally in Appendices 2 & 3 (*Useful Lives to Compute Depreciation* and *A Basic Guide for the Compilation of Balance Sheet and Earnings Statements*, respectively).

The Indian numbering system applied in the Indian subcontinent includes the terms *lakh* (100,000) and *crore* (10,000,000) to refer to large numbers. All calculations have been made in Indian rupees reflecting the most obvious difference between English and Indian accounting and financial systems.

'This paper's primary focus on accounting is due to its crucial role as a fundamental aspect of corporate operations that require ongoing and adequate assessment, breakdown, monitoring and revision of accounting matters. Hence the underlined need and scientific and practical rationale for the compilation of a basic glossary of widely accepted accounting terms'

Due to its primary functions and aims, The Act's professional language is largely represented by the specific terminology (McGee, 2019; Grischechko et al., 2021). This paper's primary focus on accounting is due to its crucial role as a fundamental aspect of corporate operations that require ongoing and adequate assessment, breakdown, monitoring and revision of accounting matters. Hence the underlined need and scientific and practical rationale for the compilation of a basic glossary of widely accepted accounting terms. This task, in turn, calls for the classification and unitary presentation of the corresponding terminological system, which will help to systemise the language behind accounting-related corporate operations (including, but not limited to other cognate terminology within the realm of banking, finances, equity market, marketable investments, etc.).

To assess the role of terminology in professional discourse the study shall first of all define some relevant notions.

An *official document* is a document formulated in due order in conformity with applicable rules by a governmental or local public agency, an authorised constituent unit, or an eligible officary. An official document is issued and adhered to as a legislative verification of a company's managerial and legal obligations, and its validity in law basically signifies its facility to entail legal ramifications, including redefining, altering or terminating a company's benefit and burden. Categorised as an official document, The Act incorporates an explicit, concise and consistent structure, takes effect in the manner prescribed, and is part of the state-operated document turnover (Levy-Tadjine et al., 2022). India's Ministry of Corporate Affairs also puts forward a number of additional official documents to be actioned by corporate entities in compliance with state-sanctioned liabilities.

An official document bears a range of compositional, vocabular, and grammatical specific traits. Perhaps the most evident and overtly prominent peculiarity of an official document is its focus on unequivocal precision and monosemy devoid of any misinterpretations and disambiguation (Allen, 2018), only next to its abundant and well-feasible use of 'hardwired' linguistic tokens (clichés) introduced as instruments of consistent, uniform and calibrated expression of ideas and stipulations (Farmer & Hu, 2016). *'These features are represented in the structure and composition of the official documents, its font, content, system of headings, division of the text and paragraphs, etc.'* (Qayumova & Kodirova, 2021, p. 1156). Therewith, the special language means employed are rather limited in range in terms of their community and industry-related application and include industry words, legal, accounting and auditing terms, conventional attributive and nominative word combinations denominating occupations, job positions, range of applicable action, etc. (Peluso, 2021).

An official document bearing juridical validity is generally identified as a *legal/legislative/regulatory act* or a *statutory instrument*. This study assumes *legal act* as a prevalingly used term denoting a normative document laid down in writing under the standard procedure by an authorised state body, entity or official. It regulates binding legal norms to be applied repeatedly regardless of whether a legal relationship is being established or terminated.

The Act adopts its own language and terminology system to serve the professional field of law. The professional language employed here derives from field-specific expertise, both internal and hinging on best practices, and appears rather vivid in terms of its commitment to uniformity. Linguistic approaches applied to determine professional language differ. The notion of professional discourse is used together with the professional language, business discourse, professional functional style, official style, language for special purposes (LSP) and other concepts (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000). The terms bear a common cognitive (the facility to mirror perception and construe the occupational landscape via parlance), and discursive peripheral (applied foregrounding as per the expert's objectives pursuant to factors beyond the realm of language and linguistics).

The distinctive features of professional discourse are (1) a limited area of expertise in which it functions, (2) the actual language and rhetoric transmitting the idea behind a specific set of data, and (3) the consistent scope of notions applied within a given restricted professional community (Malyuga & McCarthy, 2020).

Since a languages' functional tenets dwell within the re-mits of informing, depositing and systemising a given field of expertise (Agapova & Grischechko, 2016), it is only natural for any given professional discourse to develop within itself a consistently coordinated system of terms to designate specific notions. The rigidness that follows from a strictly standardised arrangement of language resources found in professional discourses is the most evidently prominent quality of their terminology systems.

As the semantic centrepiece for professional (economic) discourse, terms emerge as conceptualisations of real-world phenomena. Each area of business or activity, particularly legal and institutional, develops its specific linguistic framework to denote notions and make professional communication more efficient. Any science or business branch will inevitably create a new knowledge that modifies and develops terminology systems.

Within the bounds of the functional perspective of analysis, terms stand in as a viable tool through which the functional makeup of a language is canvassed, which is why professional language presents itself as a functional strain of its literary counterpart. Therewith, industry-specific terms appear to be a part of the norm bearing a distinctive – industry-specific – status, rather than stand-alone language tokens. The cognitive realm of analysis interprets professional language as a compartmentalised linguistic group of items arranged so as to reflect perception and discourse-driven reality.

As to the lexical composition of professional language, we distinguish general vocabulary, professionalisms, and terms. Being inherently systemic, terms are incorporated into the professional terminology system, which endows them with the semantic 'power' to be explicit, unequivocal and typically self-sufficient, meaning that they don't habitually rely on or are conditioned by the context. Devoid of any stylistic colouring, the connotation is deducible through lucid definition that maps the corresponding notion within the field-specific domain (Oktamovna & Nasriyevich 2021).

Terminology serves as the foundation for the special or professional language where terms are the delivery vehicle of the information in the text. The terms act as the key means of accumulating and transferring special knowledge (Anokhina, 2021). A term is a word or word combination with specific and defined meaning applied in a certain area, such as accounting, financial reporting, auditing, etc. As units of special knowledge, terms serve as linguistic signs that are contingent on

'As the semantic centrepiece for professional (economic) discourse, terms emerge as conceptualisations of real-world phenomena. Each area of business or activity, particularly legal and institutional, develops its specific linguistic framework to denote notions and make professional communication more efficient. Any science or business branch will inevitably create a new knowledge that modifies and develops terminology systems'

precepts dictated by both language and logic. Terms are also to be seen as embodiments of shared professional consciousness and cognizance, resulting in them taking on the role of 'intermediaries' conciliating the processes of construction, aggregation, conservation, and transmission of special knowledge (Anisimova & Tikhonova, 2021). Therefore, the main objective of the term is to facilitate the process of information exchange at the professional level.

Summarising some key terminology studies, we can single out the key features of the term which as a rule is consistent, nominative, definite, accurate, contextually independent, task-oriented, stable and regular in speech, lacks connotation, monosemic within the terminology system, and concise. The actual process of becoming a term hinges upon a lexical token's 'transition' from literary language by a process of terminologisation, which of course can be 'reversed' when an established term enters the literary norm upon being used widely.

To study the structural composition of the terms, researchers have been relying on a number of well-established approaches, such as: (1) the semantic approach looking into semantic derivation whereby a language item is borrowed into the professional discourse completely unaffected, i.e., in its unaltered form; (2) term formation, which is overwhelmingly focused on the processes of term construction via affixation, syntactic building, and the like; and (3) inter-borrowing, whereby different terminological systems come to 'exchange' terms between one another, mostly due to the substantive similarity of the corresponding industries using these systems (Gardani, 2021). Over the years of investigative inquiry, research literature has also been replenished with the various structural classifications of terms, grouping them as simplex (containing a single

root), affixal (using affixes attached to the roots), and complex (incorporating two or more roots) (Grinev-Grinevich, 2009), as well as basic, proper, borrowed, general, specific, etc. (Rashidova, 2021).

Furthermore, terms are a part of a terminology system viewed as a strictly organised conceptual system functioning within a given thematic field. The terminology system operating within the field of accounting sustains field-specific data apropos balancing the company's books, compiling statements of assets and liabilities, formulating bookkeeping and auditing imperatives and policies, etc. so that communications flow within the corresponding communities for the purposes of professional information exchange – both spoken and written – draws heavily on the specialised terminology intended for these purposes. Therefore, making up a manifold conglomerate of linguistic signs of variable yet firmly established structural, semantic and derivative potential, terms act as an important point of reference within professional communities, not least of all being the indicators of the representatives' linguistic identity. The latter primarily hinges on the terminological system's inherent potential to act as carriers of previously accumulated knowledge, which is explicitly formulated, classified, and organised within it. Therewith, linguistic tokens comprising the system retain their individual integral value, each filling up their own slots within the entire framework.

The definitions of *terminology* and *terminology system* have been distinguished as (1) an independently (spontaneously) formed set of terms of the certain field of knowledge, and (2) as a product of intentional linguistic arrangement (Kholboyeva, 2021). Any terminology system is inherently structured and incorporates language tokens denominating both the key notions within the field, and concepts of peripheral importance, all of which are characterised by logical and meaningful affiliation.

4. STUDY AND RESULTS

4.1. Term groups

Following the continuous sampling, a set of economic terms has been selected from The Act. Applying the above-described methodology, the study yielded 7 conceptual term groups naming the notions within the realms of the actors of economic affairs, company setup, fiscal relations, marketable investments, and the like, all relating to India's operating corporate activity procedures, norms and regulations as evidenced from the study material.

'Therefore, making up a manifold conglomerate of linguistic signs of variable yet firmly established structural, semantic and derivative potential, terms act as an important point of reference within professional communities, not least of all being the indicators of the representatives' linguistic identity'

Group 1: Legal Relations. This conceptual group appears the most representative and canvases the country's statutory, managerial and fiscal domains of operation. Such terms include titles of legally established entities, state governing bodies and inspection agencies, professional guilds, monetary authorities, titles of banking facilities and funds, financial organisations, the corresponding job titles applicable in these bodies, agencies, authorities and organisations, as well as the titles of legal instruments implemented. Some of the examples include *Magistrate, Court of Appeal, Supreme Court, Cost Auditor, National Financing Reporting Authority, Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, Comptroller and Auditor-General of India*, etc.

Group 2: Records. This conceptual group is second in place in terms of the frequency of occurrence of the corresponding terms that denominate legal records and documentation circulating within the country's economy and fiscal architecture in the field of bookkeeping and auditing. Such terms refer to corporate charter documents, balance sheets, financial inspection reports, executive policy statements, etc. Some of the examples include *Profit and Loss Statement, Balance Sheet, Annual Summary, Audit Report*, etc.

Group 3: Bookkeeping Activity and Items of Cost. This conceptual group is third in place with respect to the frequency of occurrence of the corresponding terms. These are the terms denoting notions within the realm of the canons and rationale of accounting activity, such as calculation procedures, budget items, auditing standards, processing guidelines, and the like. Some of the examples include *double entry, effective debt, accruals principle, revenue from operations, accounting reference period, cash & cash-like assets, work-in-progress (WIP)*, etc.

Group 4: Fiscal Activity. This conceptual group is fourth in place with respect to the frequency of occurrence of the corresponding terms. This particular conceptual group may be viewed as a subgroup affiliated

to *Group 3: Bookkeeping Activity and Items of Cost*, as it also deals with finance-related issues. However, this study has designated *Fiscal Activity* as a standalone group because of its more engrossing scope of instrumentation, whereby economic, monetary, banking, moneys and cashflow-related realia operating within the bounds of a more generally defined field of business or human activity are designated. Some of the examples include *recognition of expenses, fixed assets, reported earnings, salvage cost, commercial exchange, short-range investments*, etc.

Group 5: Corporate Structure. This conceptual group is fifth in place with respect to the frequency of occurrence of the corresponding terms. The terms in this group denote notions referring to the organisational patterns evidenced in corporate constructs, be it the structure of the business itself, the inner processes taking place within it, its affiliated parts, or the participants involved across the board. Some of the examples include *takeover, project vehicle, internal review and audit compliance, affiliated branch, non-autonomous companies, corporate affiliate*, etc.

Group 6: Securities Handling. This conceptual group is sixth in place in terms of the frequency of occurrence of the corresponding terms. These are the terms denoting securities titles and transactions, stock trading procedures, institutional investors, tender offers, credit rating, financial intermediaries, applicable taxes, etc. Some of the examples include *additional takedown, alternative trading system, asset allocation, blue list, buying power, conversion price, cyclical stocks, defined benefit plan, exercise limit, fixed annuity, functional allocation, gross investment income, overlapping debt, special tax bond*, etc.

Group 7: Manpower Management. This conceptual group is the least represented in the sample in terms of the frequency of occurrence of the corresponding terms. The terms in this group refer to a wide range of titles, properties and procedures having to do with employer-employee labour relations, including provisional measures, pay scales, securities options, reward and recognition schemes, disciplinary action, apprenticeships, attrition, benchmarking, confidentiality, employee lifecycle, performance evaluation, layoff, turnover, etc. Some of the examples include *absconding, absolute ratings, deferred compensation, employee benefits administration, employer value proposition, enterprise resource planning, functional job analysis, grievance, gross misconduct, incentive pay, micromanagement, occupational stress*, etc.

'A language unit's connotation displays a quality of the designated concept that is being suggested, while not entirely falling within the semantic frame of the word in question. At that, any given occurrence of a word does not necessarily embody a specific connotation, mainly due to the extensive contextual flexibility and the far-reaching evaluative potential that hinges heavily on the conventional cultural and communal frameworks of reference'

The specified conceptual groups cover the key notions having to do with corporate activity in India in terms of its fiscal operation and include language tokens referring to both generic and narrowly specific concepts in the corresponding thematic framework. This can be viewed as a testament to the hierarchical nature of the rigidly structured terminology occurring in the material under study.

Thus, setting out to explore the terminology system within a single document, linguistic inquiry can yield some descriptive and structurally consistent results specifying industry-marked vocabulary and worldview, as well as the ins and outs of the business approaches and standards in the comparative perspective of investigation.

4.2. Pragmatic and semantic properties of accounting terms

Proceeding from the theoretical observations made earlier, we can assume the following primary properties of the accounting terminology system in the English language: it is eminently stable and systemic; it abounds in synonymous tokens evidenced both in single language units and expressions (e.g., *expenditures, expenses, costs, outgoings, input requirements, spending, amount due*, etc.); it stores and reflects accumulated field-specific knowledge; and it bears connotation of variable degree of intensity with emotive and expressive units virtually – but not entirely – absent from its repertoire.

This section of the study explores the latter quality of the English-language accounting terminology system which in a way stands in contradiction to the established interpretation of terms as unambiguous and semantically neutral.

'Some researchers refer to connotation through the lens of the concept of 'association', suggesting that a connotated meaning represents secondary or primary semantic load – often of emotive value – canvassing a spectrum of associations elicited by the language unit beyond or in addition to its denotation or dictionary (literal) meaning'

A language unit's connotation displays a quality of the designated concept that is being suggested, while not entirely falling within the semantic frame of the word in question. At that, any given occurrence of a word does not necessarily embody a specific connotation (Będkowski, 2022), mainly due to the extensive contextual flexibility and the far-reaching evaluative potential that hinges heavily on the conventional cultural and communal frameworks of reference. In a broad sense, connotated meaning derives from cultural heritage and established practices that came to be reflected in the language (Galli & Fasanelli, 2021). Some researchers refer to connotation through the lens of the concept of 'association', suggesting that a connotated meaning represents secondary or primary semantic load – often of emotive value – canvassing a spectrum of associations elicited by the language unit beyond or in addition to its denotation or dictionary (literal) meaning (Sibul et al., 2020). This, of course, suggests that the expressive function is at play whenever a connotated meaning is being transmitted, tangled with the empirical, cultural, and general background of the community or society in question, although when used repeatedly through historical evolution, connotations may become commonplace even in formal records when used as a nod to tradition, as this section intends to further demonstrate.

Connotation can be viewed as a word's pragmatic load that does not externalise the concept as such, but rather renders a specific perspective on how it is being construed (Jay, 2018). Vis-à-vis other types of pragmatic information, ultimate transmitters of the specifically rendered meaning are the agents of the linguistic and professional community (as opposed to individual speakers using terms as language instruments to formulate an idea). In simple terms, this means that in this case using a connoted language unit one does not actually voice any kind of personal or subjective sentiments (Dickins, 2019).

The material under study has presented clear evidence of both positively and negatively connoted terms being provided for by the English accounting terminology system. The following is a selection of connotative terms registered in the course of the analysis.

Angel network – *'a network of backers, organised through a central office which keeps a database of investors and puts them in touch with entrepreneurs who need financial backing'* (Russel, 2009, p. 14).

Bad debt – *'a debt which will not be paid, usually because the debtor has gone out of business, and which has to be written off in the accounts'* (Russel, 2009, p. 27).

Face value – *'the value written on a coin, banknote or share certificate'* (Russel, 2009, p. 133).

Barren – *'referring to money which is not earning any interest'* (Russel, 2009, p. 32).

Blue sky law – *'a state law to protect investors against fraudulent traders in securities'* (Russel, 2009, p. 39).

Cold start – *'the act of beginning a new business or opening a new shop with no previous turnover to base it on'* (Russel, 2009, p. 66).

Soft dollars – *'rebates given by brokers to money management firms in return for funds' transaction business'* (Russel, 2009, p. 330).

Boiler room – *'a room in which telephone sales executives try to sell securities to potential investors'* (Russel, 2009, p. 40).

Golden hello – *'a cash inducement paid to someone to encourage them to change jobs and move to another company'* (Russel, 2009, p. 157).

True and fair view – *'a correct statement of a company's financial position as shown in its accounts and confirmed by the auditors'* (Russel, 2009, p. 361).

Arm's length transaction – *'a transaction which is carried out by two parties with no connection between them (resulting in a fair market value for the item sold)'* (Russel, 2009, p. 17).

Uneconomic – *'which does not make a commercial profit'* (Russel, 2009, p. 366).

Black market – *'the buying and selling of goods or currency in a way which is not allowed by law'* (Russel, 2009, p. 38).

Rolling budget – *'a budget which moves forward on a regular basis (such as a budget covering a twelve-month period, which moves forward each month or quarter)'* (Russel, 2009, p. 307).

Doubtful loan – *'a loan which may never be repaid'* (Russel, 2009, p. 109).

'Meticulously intertwined with the extralinguistic reality, language through the course of its evolution ingests the cultural, historical and communal transformations that a people go through. Awareness of extralinguistic reality is what sets speakers apart as bearers of extralinguistic knowledge, which is of immense value in the communication process, as it serves as a kind of benchmark for efficient interaction. This, in turn, is the key to resolving pragmatic tasks'

Orphan stock – 'a neglected share, which is not often recommended by market analysts' (Russel, 2009, p. 246).

Watchdog – 'a person or group that examines public spending or financial deals, etc.' (Russel, 2009, p. 376).

Bulldog bond – 'a bond issued in sterling in the UK market by a non-British corporation' (Russel, 2009, p. 46).

Save-as-you-earn – 'a scheme where employees can save money regularly by having it deducted automatically from their wages and invested in National Savings' (Russel, 2009, p. 314).

English-language accounting terminology evidenced in India's The Act also exhibits other notable qualities that may be beyond the scope of the present study (such as prevalence of word combinations over standalone lexemes, or the syntactic distribution of terms).

4.3. Culture-specific terms

Meticulously intertwined with the extralinguistic reality, language through the course of its evolution ingests the cultural, historical and communal transformations that a people go through (Malyuga & Akopova, 2021). Awareness of extralinguistic reality is what sets speakers apart as bearers of extralinguistic knowledge, which is of immense value in the communication process, as it serves as a kind of benchmark for efficient interaction. This, in turn, is the key to resolving pragmatic tasks (Grishechko & Akopova, 2016).

As the study has shown, Indian accounting terminology does incorporate a few terms that can be classified as culturally marked. Such terms are only common in Indian professional communities or, to some extent,

to outsiders dealing or partnering with Indian companies and other types of corporate entities. This section will further list and interpret some of such terms.

Nidhi company is a non-banking financial company 'which is formed with the object of cultivating the habit of thrift and savings amongst the members and receiving deposits from and lending to the members for their mutual benefits' (Kanoi, 2019).

Indian Depository Receipts (IDR) is 'a depository receipt issued by a domestic repository in India. Much like any equity share, it is an ownership pie of a company. Since foreign companies are not allowed to list on Indian equity markets, IDR is a way to own shares of those companies' (Singh, 2012).

Hindu Undivided Family (HUF) is a type of business covered under the Hindu law. It is run by 'individuals who are lineally descended from a common ancestor and also comprises unmarried daughters. HUF is not formed by a contract but by the status of a family i.e., it is created automatically in any Hindu Family. Having a common ancestor is a pre-requisite to form a HUF' (Dhole, 2019).

Scheduled bank is a bank which 'adheres to various ordinances, monetary policies and guidelines formulated by the Reserve Bank' (Verdhan, 2020).

Hundi/Hundee is 'a medieval Indian financial instrument used in trade and credit transactions as an unconditional order in writing made by a person directing another to pay a certain sum of money to a person named in the order' (Kumar, 2022).

Comptroller and Auditor-General of India (CAG) acts as the 'head of the Indian Audit and Accounts Department and also the guardian of the public purse. The entire financial system of the country at both levels – that is the Centre as well as the state – is controlled by the CAG. The CAG's duty is to uphold the Constitution of India and the laws of Parliament in the field of financial administration' (Amruta, 2022).

5. CONCLUSION

Terminological units in general and accounting terms become semantic units of the official document. They represent a system of notions structuring the legal act and ensuring features like consistency, unambiguity, and functionality. The Act's vocabulary acquires properties of the system due to the interrelation of the notional classes and their hierarchical structure. Terminological accounting system provides for regulatory functions of the legal document when applied in a given field.

The subject category Company Accounting is not an isolated component of the Company Operation macro domain. It intersects with other subject categories as legal regulation of a company, company setup and dissimilation procedures, company management, human resources, remuneration, etc.

One of the principal structural properties of the accounting terminology system is its dynamic nature. That accounts for variability, polysemy, synonymy and functioning of the country-specific business realities of The Act. As a result of the study the specifics of the realities in the document have been analysed. Moreover, the composition of the terms and their formation, their structural patterns and occurrence have been revealed. Predominant structural types are single-component/double-component/triple-component, etc. The models with N+N and A+N structure account for approximately 20% each in the sample. The other part (approximately 40%) includes multicomponent models. The rest of the selection is borrowings from Latin, abbreviations, and culturally marked vocabulary. Furthermore, such

properties of the accounting terminological system as complexity and dynamicity have been revealed. On one level, the legal document standardises and unifies the term system with globally accepted lexemes ensuring its structural and semantic stability. On another level, the reviewed system has its own specific features and unique national and cultural realities. Thus, the terminology system transforms and adapts to the application conditions due to extralinguistic factors.

Therefore, the terms in the legal document play a semantic role, have the unification function, reflect the current realities and peculiarities of the establishment and operation of the company. Comprehensive structure of the conceptual framework of accounting terminology conveys the conditions and specifics of the various activities of Indian companies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This publication has been supported by the RUDN University Scientific Projects Grant System, Project No. 050734-2-000.

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Original Research

The changing role of English in Bangladesh

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Article history Received October 28, 2022 | Revised November 25, 2022 | Accepted December 1, 2022

Conflicts of interest The author declared no conflicts of interest

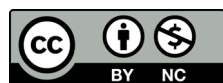
Research funding No funding was reported for this research

doi 10.22363/2521-442X-2022-6-4-20-30

For citation Rahman, M. M. (2022). The changing role of English in Bangladesh. *Training, Language and Culture*, 6(4), 20-30.

The importance of English as the dominant global language, the language of communication, technology, academia, economics, and entertainment is undeniable. Based on the steady economic growth throughout the country during the previous decade, Bangladesh was classified as a lower middle-income nation in a report published by the World Bank in 2016. Given these facts, it is undisputed that English plays an essential role in ensuring the continuation of economic development and the cultivation of skilled labour force that is compatible with international standards and highly demanded to meet the local needs of the employers. The purpose of this article is to situate the case of Bangladesh among other contexts of English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as a lingua franca (ELF) with reference to the (dis)similarities between language policy and planning-related events. The article provides a detailed understanding of the language policy and planning of Bangladesh as a postcolonial society. Although Bangladesh had embraced a nationalistic approach after its independence, the discussion of this study highlighted recent changes in the English language policy initiatives in the country and the increasing use of English in different domains. The current emergence of English in Bangladesh resulted from internal and external forces, needs, and aspirations.

KEYWORDS: language policy, language planning, language attitude, English as a lingua franca, English as a foreign language, Bangladesh



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1. INTRODUCTION

English is a common language of communication among Asian countries and, in many cases, an official language (Kirkpatrick, 2012). The significance of English in Asian countries did not emerge in a vacuum (Rahman & Pandian, 2018b). According to Crystal (2003), English is the dominant (if not the sole) language of communication, technology, academia, economics, and entertainment. Due to its increasing use in the last two decades, the status of English in various contexts has changed from English as a foreign language (EFL) to English as a lingua franca (ELF). ELF and,

at various points in history, other lingua francas such as Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Arabic, and Portuguese have served as contact languages used by people who do not share a common first language (Jenkins et al., 2011). English has become the lingua franca of Asia, the language of trade and commerce, and an essential skill for getting a job in many Asian countries' fastest-growing private sectors, as well as the language of research and education, where English literacy is more valuable than ever (Doan & Hamid, 2021; Kirkpatrick, 2011; Luo & Hyland, 2019; Rahman & Singh, 2021; Zainuddin et al., 2019; Rahman & Singh, 2022b). The role of ELF has

impacted the way English is taught in Asia. For example, the importance of communicating in English has resulted in a substantial reform in language policy and planning, as well as a curriculum that includes the communicative language teaching approach (Nunan, 2003). The early introduction of English was based on the idea that it is better to start learning a language at an early age (Zein, 2017). Furthermore, the widespread use of English as a medium of instruction in schools and higher education resulted in an unplanned bilingual or parallel medium of instruction (MOI) in the context of Asia (Rafi & Morgan, 2022; Rahman et al., 2021; Rahman & Singh, 2022a; Sah, 2020). Therefore, the use of English as a lingua franca or international language in society and education must be contextually analysed through critical sociolinguistic lenses.

Based on its consistent growth over the previous decade, Bangladesh was labelled as a lower middle-income country in a World Bank report published in 2016 (Rahman & Pandian, 2018a). It can be assumed that the global situation in relation to the role of English mentioned above is also relevant to the context of Bangladesh. Internal and external forces, such as economic needs and aspirations (Hamid & Rahman, 2019), technological advancement and social media (Sultana, 2014a, 2014b), the need for English-proficient graduates in the local private sector (Roshid et al., 2022), and English's dominance as the global lingua franca in higher education (Islam & Stapa, 2021; Rahman et al., 2020a) all played an important role in the growth of English in Bangladesh. The unmatched dominance of English in the contemporary global language order provides its users with several benefits in society and education, which are highlighted in language policy documents as the driving force behind prioritising English in society and education in Bangladesh (Hamid, 2022). Furthermore, despite the newly born state's initial forceful subordination of English through language policies and planning, recent educational policy reports show that English has remained a top priority at all levels of education (Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014; Rahman et al., 2019a, 2019b). The use of English has gained momentum in Bangladesh, where it is widely considered a prestigious language by various segments of the population (Seargent et al., 2017). Given these circumstances, the importance of the English language in ensuring the continuation of economic expansion and the formation of a skilled labour force compatible with international standards cannot be belittled (Hamid, 2010). Despite being one of the world's largest English-speaking coun-

tries, research on the sociolinguistics of English and English education in Bangladesh has received very little attention due to low expertise among local scholars, researchers, and practitioners (Hamid & Baldauf, 2014; Rahman et al., 2020b). There is a scarcity of academic discourse that examines the adoption of macro-level language policies, which are no longer solely the prerogative of individual nations (Spolsky, 2009), but rather the state has loosened its control to determine the choice of language and allows English to function more dominantly (Hamid & Rahman, 2019), and how the role of ELF is growing and impacting society, the economy, and education. Given the gatekeeping role that English plays in the world today, it is also important to investigate the role that English language resources play in society, employment in the private sector, and education in Bangladesh, where English has been the dominant or preferred medium of instruction or communication.

The article first offers a historical account of the place of English (status planning) in education policy documents to provide a detailed understanding of the language policy and planning of Bangladesh as a post-colonial society, as well as to situate Bangladesh among other EFL and ELF contexts to discuss the (dis)similarities between the language policy and planning-related events. Following that, the current shift in the role of English as a global lingua franca in Bangladesh, as a result of the growing importance and use of the language in society and the economy, including the private sector, trade and commerce and virtual spaces has been discussed. This article concludes with a discussion from the perspective of ELF, highlighting issues from other regions where English has been used as a lingua franca, as well as the implications for language policy and planning issues in Bangladesh through critical lenses.

2. NATIONALISTIC PHASE OF LANGUAGE POLICY IN BANGLADESH

The legacy of British colonial rule in the Indian subcontinent is at the root of the dominance of the English language in Bangladesh (Rahman & Pandian, 2018b). The Indian subcontinent became a centre for English language teaching after Macaulay's famous *Minutes on Indian Education* was published in 1835 devising a comprehensive plan to integrate English culture and language into the educational system (Rahman & Pandian, 2018b). Since then, English has been used as the official language of instruction and communication

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by both the British colonial governments of the Indian subcontinent and the independent governments of India and Pakistan. Bangladesh, which used to be called Bengal during the British era, but later became East Pakistan, also had English-language schools (Rahman & Pandian, 2018b).

It should be noted that Bangladesh had been subjected to two consecutive colonial occupations at the time of independence (Alam, 2018). As a result, the nation's policymakers had an automatic reaction to resisting any foreign language and defending Bangla, the country's dominant language. It was manifest when Bangladesh's then head of the newly formed state, the Father of the Nation, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, adopted the policy of 'one state, one language' in 1972 by amending the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh by approving Bangla as the state language via Article 3 (Rahman et al., 2019a).

Given Bangladesh's social, political, and historical circumstances, the nationalistic discourse in selecting the national language is predictable. There is no denying that the nation's predominantly monolingual identity is repeatedly emphasised in its nationalist discourses (Alam, 2018), and it was a dominant force even when Bangladesh was a part of Pakistan (as East Pakistan). However, during the period of undivided Pakistan, where multilingualism and linguistic diversity have historically been viewed as liabilities rather than assets, a similar type of monolingual language planning to elevate the status of Urdu met with strong opposition, particularly from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and other language-speaking communities (Manan et al., 2019). Even though nearly everyone in East Pakistan spoke Bangla, it was designated as a second language. This was done to lower the language's status while raising the status of Urdu. This linguistic deprivation triggered a violent outburst in East Pakistan on February 21, 1952, killing several East Pakistanis (Alam, 2018; Rahman et al., 2019a). It is not an exaggeration to say that Bangladeshis inherited their nationalistic sentiments

through their language, and this is not a post-independence phenomenon. In comparison, soon after independence, Malaysia implemented a language policy of elevating Malay to the status of the official language (Rahman & Singh, 2021). The policy of establishing a single system of national education with Malay as the medium of instruction was met with strong opposition from the socioeconomic and educational domains and it was not implemented in education until the riot of 13 May 1969 (Ali et al., 2011; Rahman & Singh, 2021). However, due to the monolingual identity of most Bangladeshis, such retaliation did not occur in Bangladesh.

As a result of the new constitutional act, the use of English in Bangladesh's official, social, and educational spheres has been restricted, while the use of Bangla, the country's official language, has been significantly elevated. On the contrary, English was used at a disproportionately higher level during the previous two colonial regimes (Hamid & Baldauf, 2014). Whether feasible or not, this policy of using more Bangla and little or no English was supposed to be implemented in all public domains (Hamid & Baldauf, 2014; Rahman et al., 2020a). As a result, most of the population of the generation after the 1970s was unable to communicate effectively in English (Alam, 2018). Furthermore, after Military Dictator General Ershad decided to use language as a negotiating tool with the country's citizens to gain their support, the situation deteriorated (Alam, 2018). He decided to reclaim control of the English language and declared that English would no longer be taught in degree colleges (Rahman et al., 2019a). According to Alam (2018), this was a significant blow to Bangladesh's already deteriorating language teaching and learning practice because the decision had an immense impact on the quality of English teachers. This is because those degree programmes were used to produce a significant number of primary and secondary school teachers. Furthermore, the decision also impacted on the quality of English teachers immensely (Rahman et al., 2019b). In the context of pre-independent and independent Bangladesh, there has been a sudden shift in the role and prestige of English.

A similar situation could be found in other colonial contexts, such as Malaysia, where proficiency in English 'brought privileges, esteem and wealth' (Hanewald, 2016, p. 183) in Malaysia and the population who could speak it during the colonial period. However, after independence, an anticolonial sentiment toward English and Malay or mother tongue-based language

policy has been elevated in various domains of language use (Rahman & Singh, 2021). This drastic and planned reduction in English results in a general lack of English use in society, as well as the language acquisition planning of English for the next generations of Malaysians, failed (Rahman et al., 2021; Rahman & Singh, 2021).

However, due to the country's postcolonial history, Kachru's (1986) model of concentric circles placed Bangladesh in the Outer Circle. However, the English language is not yet officially recognised in Bangladesh. Furthermore, as discussed earlier, from the country's independence until 1991, when democratic government was re-established, the use of English in daily life outside of the classroom was limited to elevating Bangla's status as the official language. As a result, the population of Bangladesh, according to Sultana (2017), does not use English extensively for communication, especially in rural areas. As a result, Bangladesh can be included in the Expanding Circle concept based on a concentric circle. Due to the ambiguity surrounding the status and usage of English in different domains of language in Bangladesh, it is difficult to divide the status of English into circles.

3. CURRENT SHIFTS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH

In the last 70 years, most colonial countries in Asia have seen a frequent shift in adopting language policies and planning the language in society and education (see Gill, 2006; Rahman et al., 2021). For example, in the case of Malaysia, several policies have been taken on the status of languages in Malaysia, mainly Malay and English (Rahman & Singh, 2021; Rashid et al., 2017). However, it should be mentioned that although teaching in Bangla was related to the consolidation of national identity in Bangladesh (Hoque, 2018), the importance of English never lost relevance due to its gate-keeping power regarding global education, career opportunities, and international exchanges.

From the perspective of language policy, at the beginning of the democratic era in 1991, a steady change in English language policy and planning was evident. In 2010, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina specifically established the Education Policy Formulation Committee. The most important initiatives of this committee were to gather the opinions of people of different social classes and to draft an education policy. The committee finalised the policy in 2010. In the new policy, English was considered an integral and essential tool for

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Bangladesh's development of a knowledge-based society. Furthermore, the new policy emphasised the importance of productive English skills such as speaking and writing, from the beginning of primary education.

In addition to restoring the importance of English, the new policy made it a mandatory subject in all academic disciplines. In addition, the policy proposed to implement English as a medium of instruction (EMI) at the secondary level. The new policy recommends that English be a required subject in all post-secondary colleges and universities. The significance of translation, particularly English-to-Bangla book translations, is emphasised.

English is currently in high demand at all educational levels in the country (Rahman & Pandian, 2018a; Rahman et al., 2020a). Because of this, the two most recent language-in-education policies that Bangladesh has adopted have made clear references to the significance of English for the country and the importance of linguistic competence for its population. English is introduced to the students as early as in Class 1. This key reform is unique to Asian countries where English is spoken as a second language or foreign language. Such an early introduction to English has been adopted in many Asian countries with the view that early exposure to the language is better. For example, in Turkey, English was introduced as a compulsory subject for the whole population at all levels of education, from primary to tertiary (Kırkgöz, 2009), to address the communicative needs of learners from an early age. A similar view among stakeholders was reported in Indonesia in the study of Zein (2017).

In higher education, since English has become a need in the market, it has propelled English education together with other global educational reforms based on English. In non-native English-speaking countries, English has become the international language and lingua franca of higher education globally (Macaro et al., 2018). English learning has become a primary option

for a country like Bangladesh that aims to improve its economy by providing a skilled workforce locally and internationally, where English plays an important role (Rahman et al., 2019a, 2019b). These developments are linked to EMI in Bangladesh in private schools and universities. With the passage of the Private University Act in 1992, the federal government formalised its intention to facilitate the founding of private universities. When the idea of private universities was first conceived, there was no provision in the University Grant Commission (UGC) Act for direct or supplementary instructions regarding the language policy (Rahman et al., 2020b). However, the findings obtained from the research on the language policies that are implemented in higher education institutions show that English is the predominant language in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and medicine, whereas Bangla is the predominant language in the fields of humanities and social sciences (Rahman et al., 2020b; Hamid & Baldauf, 2014).

In public universities, it is generally accepted practice to employ a language combination consisting of English and Bangla (Hamid et al., 2013; Karim et al., 2021; Rahman & Singh, 2022a). On the other hand, the MOI policy in private universities is different because these universities have adopted EMI as part of their policy. By doing so, these universities have taken into consideration the regional needs for the supply of English-speaking graduates and have produced graduates who are capable of being internally competitive for jobs and higher studies (Rahman et al., 2020b). A parallel EMI policy has also emerged in Bangladesh to serve the elite group of Bangladesh at all educational levels (see Jahan & Hamid, 2019; Rahman & Singh, 2022a; Rahman et al., 2020a, 2020b). It is also important to note that this expansion of EMI in higher education has a top-down impact on the school system, where English-medium schools are growing rapidly to equip students with English and prepare them better for higher studies and the job market (Jahan & Hamid, 2019).

This growing use of English, perhaps, is an indication of the sociolinguistic and educational evolution of English in Bangladesh as the language of international influence and communication, which was absent in the past few decades due to the strong nationalistic sentiment in language policy. This shift in approach towards English as a medium of instruction or teaching English as a compulsory subject is highly influenced by the global order of English and growing economic interest at that time. Communicative competence in English had become essential to supply the skilled workforce in

the private sector and to cope with the technological revolution of that time. During the nineties and the beginning of this century, such a changing wind of English was evident in other contexts as well. For example, in Indonesia, English has become the MOI of several schools and universities (Pritasari et al., 2019).

The case study by Pritasari et al. (2019) revealed the interlink between the utility of English in the job sector and the adoption of EMI in an Asian business school. Rahman and Singh (2022a) reported an identical finding in their study in the context of Malaysia, where participants from an English-medium programme explicitly pointed out the importance of English in securing a job. Communicative competence in English has been found to play a crucial role in the development of skilled personnel.

4. THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE AND USE OF ENGLISH IN BANGLADESH

The significance of learning English was piercingly articulated by not only the people in the urban population but also the common people of rural Bangladesh (Seargeant et al., 2017). In the study by Seargeant et al. (2017) participants from rural areas highlighted that the knowledge of English is a powerful tool that would give the future generation the freedom to act on their own, and the lack of it inhibits people's capabilities and contributes to their lack of agency. A similar situation could be observed in the case of Pakistan, where English is assumed to be the passport to a better life, higher studies, a job, and social status (Haidar & Fang, 2019).

In the workplaces, largely private sector, graduates with strong English backgrounds are highly demanded. In one of the earlier studies, Banu and Sussex (2001) examined the spoken and business uses of code-switched English in Bangladeshi society, despite the linguistic maintenance of Bangla by the nation. The reason behind the desire for English is forced by the necessity in the economic market locally and globally. It has become widely accepted that the lingua franca of international business is English and has been termed the business ELF (BELF) (see Jenkins et al., 2011). The use of English in business in Bangladesh is evident in the study by Rashid et al. (2017), who explored how non-native English-speaking business personnel in Bangladesh use English extensively as their medium of communication while interacting with both native and non-native speakers in various countries. They also indicated the growing social interaction, often through the exchange of email in English, which carries the features of BELF,

which has become a popular communication medium in global business settings. Such uses of English document that ELF in Bangladesh gained momentum simultaneously since the prestige, utility, and use of English are high.

See Table 1 for the current situation and demand for English in the job sector of Bangladesh. (This data was generated from a larger study and the advertisements were searched using keywords such as English communication; verbal and written English; reading

and writing English on the largest online job site, bdjobs.com). Numerous sectors in the job listings were found to demand English as a mandatory requirement for getting a job. This situation is similar to Malaysia and Vietnam. In Malaysia, through the content analysis of the job advertisement, the study by Pillai and Ong (2018) revealed that English was explicitly mentioned as the desired candidate for jobs in business and sciences noting a sharp increase in the demand for English-speaking graduates.

Table 1
English language requirement in job advertisement

ENGLISH LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS STATEMENTS	JOB SECTOR
Excellent oral, written, English communication skills	Engineer/Architect
It goes without saying that a person applying for the job must be fluent in English	Marketing/Sales
Good knowledge of English and local language	Driving
Reading and writing in English fluently	Banking
Candidate should have excellent verbal English communication skills	Driving
Good command on spoken & written English	Garments/Textile
English communication skill must be international grade	Human resources
English communication skill must be good otherwise no need to send resume	Human resources
Have a good command in writing and speaking English	Medical/Pharma
Strong communication skill in English and Bengali	Secretary/Receptionist

Another major factor that may be related to the rapid growth of language use in society is the influence of English as a language of technology, particularly on social media sites. ELF does not refer to a single, uniform variation of English, but rather to a social practice centred on meaning-making processes. As a result, as Sultana (2017) points out, ELF is not geographical locations, such as countries from the inner, outer, and expanding circles, which, according to Cogo (2010, 2012), may occur in the virtual space due to the spread of human interaction on social networks.

Based on the potential of virtual space as a context of lingua franca (see Canagarajah, 2007) in the context of Bangladesh, Sultana (2014a; 2017) explored the English language practice of young adults in Bangladesh. In

the study by Sultana (2014a), young adults from a Bangladeshi university use linguistic and semantic forms of both English and Bangla creatively, strategically, and pragmatically to bring diversity to Bangla not only from English but also from different genres of discourse by transgressing the boundaries of the language. One of her more recent studies called the sociolinguistic situation of Bangladeshi young adults in virtual spaces as ELF users and argued the importance of viewing English with other semiotic resources in meaning-making (Sultana, 2017). The creative use of language by young adults in transgressing the boundaries of language, culture, and locality questions the appropriateness of terming them as EFL/ESL speakers because of their rootedness in the expanding circle according to

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the Kachruvian paradigms of three concentric circles. The situated use of English in Bangladesh in the virtual sphere also highlights the issue that English is no longer the sole property of native speakers. Such creative use of language by young adults in transgressing the boundaries of language, culture, and locality constructed their identity as a World Englishes speakers and increased the functionality of ELF in the context of Bangladesh. Therefore, English in Bangladesh can be claimed as a southern language (Hamid, 2022), since the conceptualisation of the southern language represents the *'creative and meaningful ways of using English regardless of its formal properties, highlighting the plurality, multiplicity, and localness of English in a globalised world'* (Hamid, 2022, p. 3).

5. CONCLUSION

This article discussed the situation of English in Bangladesh in light of a conceptual analysis of the issues and related instances from other contexts. Since independence, there has been a nationalistic approach to language policy and planning that has been adopted to preserve the mother tongue, Bangla. In this situation, the most important question to answer is whether or not those in charge of running the country and responsible for policy adoption and implementation want the country to have a language policy that is both comprehensive and practical.

However, policymakers in Bangladesh have recently recognised the importance of English in education which is evident in their recent language policy recommendations. In the most recent language policy in 2010, the policy documents reveal a major shift from a Bangla-based language policy recommendation to a more English-friendly one informed by the role of English as the global lingua franca (Hamid & Rahman, 2019). Furthermore, the role and use of English in various domains of language in Bangladesh have begun to

grow, including everyday conversations, education, workplaces, and virtual spaces. However, in the case of Bangladesh, policy adoption necessitates extensive planning, which did not occur.

The relationship between the English language and economic development is not always linear, such notion has been questioned by the researchers from global south, including Bangladesh (Ali, 2022; Ali & Hamid, 2022; Chowdhury, 2022). Many countries around the world have achieved economic success despite using little to no English (Phillipson, 2018). According to Phillipson (2018), when referring to India's language policy, the spread of English through these projects is a new form of imperialism through various wings, such as the British Council.

The popular rhetoric about the benefits of learning English for a country and an individual to compete in the modern, globalised economy (see Batthacharya, 2013) has created unhealthy competition among learners and their parents. The phenomenon was explained by 'linguistic capital' (Bourdieu, 1992), which discusses the relationship between language and power as well as the role of language in placing people with different linguistic repertoires in different social hierarchies (see Sah & Li, 2018, 2020). Since the aforementioned international organisation plays a parallel role in Bangladesh and influences policymaking (see Karim et al., 2018), these issues must be questioned and challenged immediately in the context of Bangladesh.

The scenario of English as the preferred language is reflected in the much-discussed trend of English as a global language (see Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1996) and Asia's lingua franca (see Kirkpatrick, 2012). However, lingua franca needs to address the issue of the 'sustainability of language' (García, 2011, p. 7), which would bring a balance between the mother tongue and ELF in the context of implementation. Canagarajah (1999) has critically positioned himself on this matter: *'The powerless in post-colonial communities may find ways to negotiate, alter, oppose political structures, and reconstruct their languages, cultures, and identities to their advantage. The intention is not to reject English, but to reconstitute it in more inclusive, ethical, and democratic terms'* (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 27). In line with what Canagarajah (1999) indicated, while Bangladesh has prioritised access to English for all stakeholders at all levels of education (see Sultana, 2014b; Rahman et al., 2019a), and there is an increasing belief in the relationship between English and social status, job, and opportunity in higher education, there

is still an issue of equal dissemination of English. In particular, the access policy is one dilemma that may result in a disproportionate status for English as a linguistic capital (see Bourdieu, 1992). English must be equally distributed throughout the population if it is to be effective. In contrast, as previously stated, a subset of elites who attend English-medium schools and universities (see Jahan & Hamid, 2019) have a distinct education and class-based identity that distinguishes them from the identity of a Bangladeshi (Sultana, 2014a, 2014b), should be challenged.

The practical premise of the article is to emphasise the importance of giving every citizen equal access to English as a lingua franca because it is considered ben-

eficial to the country's development (Rahman & Pandian, 2018a, 2018b). It is essential to maintain consistency among policies when it comes to language policy adaptation. There is no denying that Bangladesh has a rich history tied to its language, and the country is proud of it (see Albury, 2016 for the impact of national ideology on language policy).

However, the existence of English as a global language in today's globalised world is a reality. The importance of English in people's lives has never been greater than it is in today's globalised world. As a result, it is critical to have a balanced language policy that preserves and nurtures mother tongues (Bangla and other indigenous languages).

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Original Research

The effectiveness of flipped classroom in the hospitality education

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Article history Received August 21, 2022 | November 16, 2022 | Accepted December 1, 2022

Conflicts of interest The authors declared no conflicts of interest

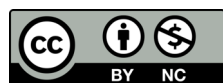
Research funding No funding was reported for this research

doi 10.22363/2521-442X-2022-6-4-31-49

For citation Ermolaeva, P., & Barron, P. (2022). The effectiveness of flipped classroom in the hospitality education. *Training, Language and Culture*, 6(4), 31-49.

Focussing on a particular Swiss Hotel School, this research evaluates the student acceptance and overall effectiveness of the flipped classroom approach. The paper aims to evaluate the preference of adopting such an approach as the main teaching method for a range of undergraduate and postgraduate hospitality focused programmes and develop an understanding of students' awareness of the flipped method. Adopting a quantitative approach, 167 students took part in this study and specifically provided their perspectives of the flipped classroom approach, compared it with a more traditional teaching method and identified the benefits and drawbacks of flipped learning. The findings of the study suggest that students appreciate the reversed classroom as it appears that learners felt safe, engage, and motivated in a student-oriented environment under the guidance of a teacher. However, respondents also highlighted the importance of appropriate guidance and facilitation of the flipped classroom as well as recognising the additional engagement in material prior to attending class.

KEYWORDS: *flipped classroom, flipped learning, hospitality student, zone of proximal development and scaffolding, student-oriented teaching, hospitality and tourism*



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1. INTRODUCTION

The hospitality (and wider – tourism) industry is a major contributor to most economies and has shown sustained and consistent growth in recent years. However, the global pandemic and associated lockdown and travel restrictions demonstrated the industry's vulnerability to external events. Most industry sectors are now showing signs of recovery and the demand for employees at all levels is growing rapidly. From a higher education perspective, impression of the industry as one that offers meaningful careers is slowly returning

and the demand for education programmes in this area is rebounding. The role of hospitality and tourism educators remains to fully prepare industry-ready graduates who possess the appropriate skills, knowledge, and attitude. The reality of continuing to provide higher education during the global pandemic, coupled with issues such as globalisation, technological advancement and generational shifts, have caused educators to reflect on how they develop graduates and caused a re-evaluation of teaching practices (Perman & Mikinac, 2014; Kim & Jeong, 2018). This has resulted in hospitality education

institutions considering moving away from traditional pedagogic practices and adopting alternative approaches (Deale et al., 2013; Rodriguez et al., 2019).

The Flipped Classroom approach was originally proposed by the USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences in 1984 and practically applied in 2007 by Bergmann and Sams (2012). However, the pandemic acted as a catalyst to alternative methods and so a Flipped approach to delivering learning and teaching has increased in its popularity across various academic disciplines. A number of studies have been undertaken regarding the effectiveness of the Flipped approach and a number of positive impacts of flipped methods for students and teachers in specific educational areas have been identified (Murillo-Zamorano et al., 2019; Valero et al., 2019).

Nevertheless, given the resurgence of this approach, there has been a call for additional research into its effect and impact (Comber & Bos, 2017; Lo & Hew, 2017) and that this research should focus on particular fields or disciplines (Ozdamli & Asiksoy, 2016; Nouri, 2016; Tan et al., 2017; Awidi & Paynter, 2019). Therefore, the aim of this paper is to evaluate the impact of adopting a Flipped learning approach amongst a cohort of students undertaking undergraduate and post-graduate programmes in a hotel school in Switzerland. The paper will initially discuss the theoretical concept of flipped learning and then apply this in the context of this particular group of students.

1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1.1. Theories of learning acquisition

Teaching styles and methodologies have been derived from the philosophical judgements of a learning function. It is generally considered that Watson (1913) introduced the concept of behaviourism in learning and concluded that simplistic learning through observation resulted in thoughtless repetition. Whilst it could be contended that this approach is still relevant, some authors opine that knowledge is obtained not merely by observation but by the deliberate usage of learning strategies and processes where individuals utilise their brain, focus on meaning and make connections on given information (Sincero, 2011; Ertmer & Newby, 1993, Fryling et al., 2011; Nabavi, 2012).

In addition to this perspective, Bandura (1971) manifested that learning is a process of social interaction rather than an individual effort and along with other researchers (see Vygotsky, 1962; Bandura & Walters, 1963; Bandura, 1971; Nabavi, 2012) asserted that

group discussions, negotiations and problem-solving activities serve the purpose of most thorough learning (Bandura, 1971).

Vygotsky (1978) further introduced a perspective of learning and teaching through the development of the Zone of Proximal Development and Scaffolding theory highlighting the importance of a guidance in learning on top of the personal abilities and social presence (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Essentially, this approach states that challenging interactive tasks along with the competent coaching enhances students' ability to comprehend faster and more efficiently (Duane & Satre, 2013; Olusegun, 2015; Mo & Man, 2017; Xu & Shi, 2018). This concept has been further elaborated by Downes (2020) claiming that the process of learning should be networked and digitalised to establish better and quicker connections amongst learners by means of sharing structured diverse opinions and facts in a variety of information sources for easier access (Herlo, 2017; Utecht & Keller, 2019; Corbett & Spinelo, 2020).

1.2. Traditional learning through the prism of Bloom's taxonomy

In 1950s, the psychologist and theorist Bloom (1956) established the structure of learning which is often associated with and applied in traditional schooling (Guy & Marquis, 2016; Chandio et al., 2017; Mohan, 2018). The idea behind the theory is that the deepest levels of learning one can achieve are analysis, synthesis and evaluation, prior to which general knowledge of the subject, understanding of the notions and applicability to the cases should be solidly established. However, Anderson et al. (2001) extended the view on learning construction and proposed that creation is the higher level of learning which originally is the outcome of in class explanation, understanding followed by the analysis and evaluation at home (Soozandehfar & Adeli, 2016; Wang et al., 2017; Mohan, 2018).

This traditional approach has received a level of criticism and subsequent development. For example, Paristiowati and Fitriani (2017) broke the learning experience into pre-, during and post-class periods reversing the vision of Blooms Taxonomy. The scholars underlined that pre-class activities can be given to students as a means of encouraging remembering and understanding the content. This, then, leaves in-class activity able to be focused on application, analysis, and evaluation of the content. They further argue that the post-class period is when learners create new meanings and synthesise concepts on their own. However, Guy and Marquis

(2016) present a different perspective and indicates that students begin to establish their understanding by creating an uninformed idea in a form of pre-reading, given lectures or case studies and that, only after these occur can they begin to compare, analyse and evaluate their assumptions based on professional instances. Lastly, the experience happening in class with other group members, through discussions and observations, creates knowledge formation, the remembering and under-

standing of a subject. This perspective has given rise to the idea of a different ‘flipped’ approach to learning that adopts the key aspects of Blooms Taxonomy whilst recognising that learning may occur at different times and circumstances that place emphasis on the responsibility of the learner to understand and contextualise, thus leaving space for high level conceptualisation in the classroom. See Figure 1 below for a comparison of traditional versus flipped approaches.

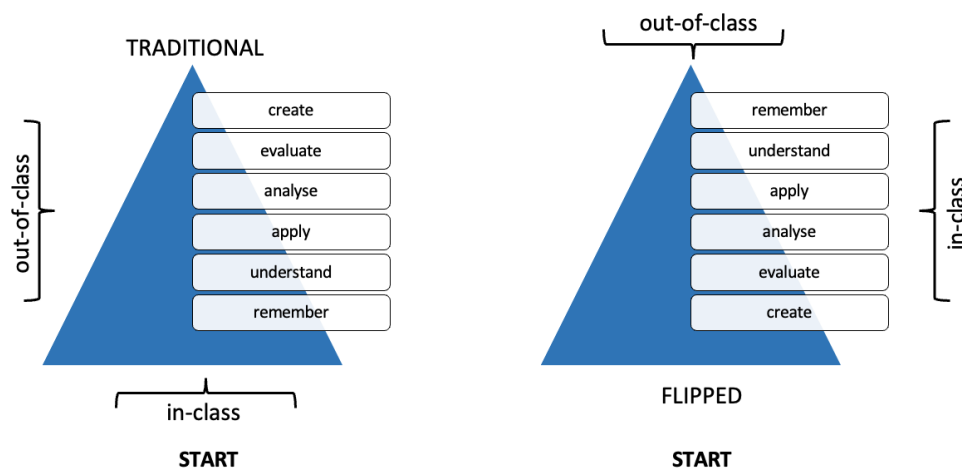


Figure 1. A comparison of traditional vs flipped approaches

1.3. The flipped classroom approach

It might be suggested that the Flipped Classroom (FC) is an innovative opposite to the traditional learning paradigm of conveying instructions which moves conventional classroom to home activity and homework to in-class exercise. This model provides innovative methodology and changes traditional classroom environment and dynamic (Tan et al., 2017; Awidi & Paynter, 2019; Goh & Ong, 2019). The method is founded on fewer formal lectures, sometimes minimised to zero, and on provision of many active learning opportunities during the class, including videos, lecture slides or case studies (Lombardini et al., 2018; Sojayapan & Khlai-sang, 2018). Flipped classrooms can be categorised in a variety of types and styles based on the subject, student cultural expectations and norms, increased group-based activity, the use of demonstration rooms, a focus on discussion-oriented activity and, increasingly, the use of virtual environments (Mohan, 2018).

It has been suggested that this approach is beneficial for teachers in terms of improved communication and the development of a greater understanding of learning experience and progress of every individual in class. Thus, Papadakis et al. (2017) found that students

are fond of pre-organised materials due to flexibility in learning duration since every individual requires different timing to prepare for class and understand the topic. In addition, this approach required students to come to class well-prepared which encouraged meaningful questions and requests for clarification if an element of learning was unclear (Papadakis et al., 2017). Furthermore, the flipped classroom has been found to support teachers in being more creative, spontaneous, and diverse by leaving more time in class for activities and discussion and encourage students' empowerment of self-learning and enhancing in class (Gilboy et al., 2015; Betihavas et al., 2016; Nouri, 2016).

Nevertheless, Lo and Hew (2017), have identified several obstacles that such an approach can cause. Firstly, to fully engage students in this approach it has been found that the pre-class preparation that teachers often have to undertake may be more significant. Secondly, and crucially, this approach is reliant on the students' involvement, and it has been suggested that students may completely disregard the pre-class activity (the core of flipped concept) due to its amount and complexity which may result in learning failure (Lo & Hew, 2017). In addition, Comber and Bos (2017) raised

the issue of digital poverty and suggested that whilst access to technology is essential for this to be successful not every learner can afford devices and internet access, thus leading to issues regarding equality and inclusiveness. Lastly, Lieberman (2018) stated that even though the flipped classroom approach is no longer a new concept, many learners remain oblivious to the fact that they are being taught by it.

In recent years, the flipped classroom has become increasingly popular because of the pandemic and the requirement for teachers and students to approach learning in a different way. The flipped approach allowed learners to become more involved in their education through and opportunity to engage with pre-developed material online. This then was able to be applied and discussed online sessions and small group discussions (Campillo-Ferrer & Miralles-Martinez, 2021). Moreover, in recent studies, flipped classrooms were viewed as the most possible and suitable teaching method during the Covid-19 which providing a comprehensive digital education (Lundin et al., 2018; Campillo-Ferrer & Miralles-Martinez, 2021). Nevertheless, the question of its effectiveness still stands (Weiß & Friege, 2021).

1.4. The four pillars of flipped learning: F- L- I- P

The term 'Flipped Classroom' has been developed to describe the process of the organisation learning and is considered to be a pedagogical tool that assists the learner in creating new knowledge (Nwosisi et al., 2016). The main purpose of flipped learning is to engage students more fully in class activities and transform didactic teaching into a more dynamic learning environment. Indeed, the idea of inverted learning is closely connected to social constructivism and connectivism theories whereby communication and application of concepts, learning becomes more understandable, involving and engaging (Bandura, 1971; Harinie et al., 2017). To achieve the primary goal for flipped learning, Flipped Learning Network (2014) introduced four main pillars (F-L-I-P) to be incorporated in any learning environment.

Flexible environment is the first aspect of a successful flipped learning organisation. The essence of this pillar is to offer students a great opportunity to flexibly rearrange the learning space according to individuals' preferences (Zainuudin & Halii, 2016; Nwosisi et al., 2016; Petrosyan & Grishechko, 2021). Demirel (2016) found that this flexibility creates a stress-free environment for both students and teachers and conclude

that learners are not placed in traditional learning environments (such as lecture theatres), but rather they are allowed to individually adjust the environment according to the task in hand. Instructors are also free from a standardised method of teaching, they can reveal creativity and more effectively utilise the available time (Demirel, 2016).

Learning culture is the second pillar of inverted learning. The main principle is to establish a student-based platform with minimal involvement from the tutor and maximum participation of learners. In fact, during the in-class time, students are encouraged to avoid passive behaviour and create an opportunity for themselves to explore the subject deeply and from their individual perspective (Demirel, 2016). Instructors provide their learners with freedom, support, and appropriate quick feedback (Nwosisi et al., 2016).

The third pillar of the effective flipped learning is intentional content. According to Walsch & Rísquez (2020), while reversing the traditional idea of classroom and home assignments, the content provided by instructors appears to become more meaningful and central. Instructors are encouraged to focus on creating pre-recorded lectures, case studies and videos and students, in turn, are expected to engage with this material prior to the scheduled class. Lawton (2019) added that intentional content enables instructors to provide structured information through the creation of materials that learners can consume at their convenience thus maximising face-to-face interactions in class. This approach has the added benefits of being attractive to both visual learners and learners who need extra support. Furthermore, the content guides students through the learning process, however, does not determine the learning methods (Lawton, 2019).

Lynch (2015) claimed that flipped learning requires more presence, awareness, sophistication, and analysis on the part of the educator comparison to a more traditional approach. In fact, the instructor is a core multi-tasking facilitator that observes, assists, and provides feedback to every individual (Lynch, 2015; Lawton, 2019). Moreover, flipped learning cannot occur without the presence and functions of educators even if their role is not visible.

In the assessment of flipped classrooms in higher education, many scholars have found that FL receives a favourable effect on student knowledge, satisfaction, and engagement (Murillo-Zamorano et al., 2019). Indeed, González-Gómez et al. (2016) found a significantly positive change in students' performance and

identified that the opportunity to pause, review and rewind lectures increased individual's learning, and the increased opportunity to ask questions in class gave students more chance to comprehend the content. Tan et al. (2017) assessed the effectiveness of this approach in nursing studies in China and highlighted that FL strengthened students' self-learning skills as well as improving both teacher and student satisfaction which had a positive impact on attitude towards subjects. Steen-Utheim and Foldnes (2017) revealed from their studies the effectiveness of flipped classrooms amongst mathematics students that demonstrated significant improvement in performance between a flipped classroom approach and traditional teaching. They found that there was a much-improved learning experience, higher engagement, increased commitment to peers, better relationships with their instructors and an increase in feelings of safety during a flipped learning experience. Additionally, Hartianyi et al. (2018) discovered a variety of cases with positive outcome from flipped education such as in the school of Architecture Engineering and Design, in Spain, and a history class in Hungary where a very high rate of satisfaction and improved grades was achieved.

Valero et al. (2019) also identified positive learning outcomes as a consequence of providing pre-recorded sessions and then implementing participative discussions and problem-solving activities in class. It was found that this resulted in increased motivation and easier comprehension of theories and practices (Valero et al., 2019). From an educator's perspective, Väisänen and Hirsto (2020) found that students were more likely to participate and collaborate, thus making the educators job more rewarding and fruitful.

However, FL does have downsides and there have been examples of students expressing low satisfaction due to the enhanced workload even through the result showed a decrease in student withdrawal and poor grades (Lombardini et al., 2018). Awidi and Paynter (2019) also emphasised a drawback in the approach and claimed that some tasks were less regarded and understood by students due to their lack of preparation, comprehension of pre-recorded lectures and self-discipline. Raba and Dweikat (2019) assessed teachers' perception on flipped education and found that on the one hand instructors were in support of the approach but only with adults and university level students, but also felt that the increased workload, higher level of responsibility and less control over learning added to anxiety and stress. Earlier, Kirschner et al. (2006) completely

opposed this approach to learning suggesting that minimal guidance establishes chaotic knowledge and misinterpretation of the subjects. Additionally, some researchers opine that the average capability of an intermediate student is not well enough formed for self-regulation and self-study which is necessary for FL. Lastly, there is a large amount of evidence of successful controlled teaching with positive outcomes whereas the unguided learning is still unknown and questionable (Kirschner et al., 2006).

Whilst there are a number of perspectives regarding this approach to learning and teaching, it could be argued that FL is considered to be the most contemporary and prominent student-centred learning method which can be effectively combined with active learning and can establish a stronger connection students of all ages and also assist an education system survive crises such as the pandemic (Murillo-Zamorano et al., 2019; Collado-Vallero et al., 2021; Liu & Qi, 2021). Indeed, the advent of Covid-19 has resulted in this approach being brought into sharp relief become a focal point for research. Birgili et al. (2021) identify Flipped Classrooms as a global teaching trend and claimed that it has enhanced students' cognition, self-discipline, and improved technological skills of learners, while Collado-Vallero et al. (2021) identify this approach as becoming more and more common. The pandemic has caused reflection on earlier studies that identified motivation, the use of technology and the development of cognition factors as being the future of education – all vital elements of adoption in more recent years (Abeysekera & Dawson, 2015). Nevertheless, the challenge in supervision, tech skills, learning autonomy and emotional resistance is still present as a disadvantage of the approach.

1.5. Students' preferences in teaching and learning methods

Students appear to enjoy this approach to learning. Mehta et al. (2016) found that most students they studied felt very positive with interactive lecture sessions and considered the opportunity to discuss and debate and resulted in higher level knowledge acquisition. Pechenkina and Aeschliman (2017) also investigated students' opinions on teaching approaches and found that learning could be enhanced by using up-to-date external technological tools (educational and practical technologies) rather than focussing on purely theoretical components. Much attention has recently been focused on online learning (Humphries & Clark, 2021;

Muthuprasad et al., 2021; Ong et al., 2021; Al-Salman & Haider, 2021). Ong et al. (2021) found that students were keen to take control of their learning and proceed at their own pace with some centrally provided support. It has also been found that some students found pre-recorded classes very effective which as a result boosted their results. Muthuprasad et al. (2021) and Humphries and Clark (2021) identified that students they surveyed preferred shorter lectures delivered in a pre-recorded format.

1.6. Application of teaching styles in hospitality education

Fox (1998) stated that hospitality education consists of a variety of approaches, Colluci and Flannery (1965) highlighted, that hospitality students learn effectively through a shared experience between a teacher and a learner and that this shared experience may occur verbally and by means of practice. Moreover, Deale et al. (2013) evaluated current hospitality and tourism teaching methods and identified the most preferable technique from both the teacher and student and found that, due to practical limitations, the idea of abandoning lectures seemed unreasonable, claiming that the lecture (with discussion) method offers a means to present content material to large numbers of students and, therefore, is efficient as a teaching method. However, recent research has identified three main approaches: traditional, active, and experimental (Ahmad et al., 2018).

Hospitality traditional learning normally consists of lectures, case studies, assessments, and exams. Active-based learning is focused on analytical thinking and creativity with the help of stimulation games, speakers' visits and trips. Experimental learning is about consulting, mentoring, practical trainings, and project-oriented learning (Ahmad et al., 2018). Hsu et al. (2013) emphasised that hospitality educational system in Taiwan is based on active learning which enhances presentation skills and students' engagement. A variety of activities such as group discussions and problem-solving tasks sustain the interest and create understanding. Both examples would indicate the appropriateness of adopting FL for hospitality education.

However, it is important to recognise cultural differences and it has been found that some hospitality students in China reject active learning method due to a fear of misunderstanding and a change from the more traditional teacher-oriented approach (Aynalem et al. 2015). However, Penfold and Pang (2008) claimed that

blended learning in Chinese hospitality is widely practiced and accepted, and the reality of teaching and learning is often a combination of traditional and innovative methodologies. Furthermore, the approach increasingly adopted internationally (Revi & Babu, 2016). In fact, online learning has increased resource accessibility, improved teacher-student communication and learners' efficiency in task accomplishment. However, the scholars raise an issue towards technological inconsistency and unavailability in many countries (Revi & Babu, 2016). To conclude, the author introduced a selection of methods practiced in the hospitality education in different countries and moves towards the investigation of one recently invented innovative method.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

2.1. Approach

Guided by an objectivist research perspective and thus adopting a quantitative approach to gathering data, this study aimed to evaluate the impact of adopting a flipped approach to learning. It further aimed to develop an understanding of students' preferences between such an approach and the more traditional methods of teaching hospitality management at a Swiss Hotel School. The adoption of a quantitative method of gathering data for this study allowed for measurement and the analysis of variables (Apuke, 2017) and reflects objectivity, high representativeness, demands the inclusion of a large group of participants and allows some form of generalisability amongst the group in question (Zikmund et al., 2013; Eyisi, 2016; Queiros et al., 2017).

Data were gathered via an online survey that was sent to all 236 students who were enrolled on one of the five full-time undergraduate and post graduate programmes by the school. The online survey comprised a total of 23 multiple-choice questions based on issues identified in the literature review. The survey commenced with general questions concerning personal preferences regarding teaching approaches and this was followed by questions that addressed the various elements of the flipped classroom and thereafter elicited responses regarding the advantages and disadvantages of such an approach. Finally, respondents were asked for a range of demographic data, such as age, nationality, and an indication of any prior educational experience. The survey was preceded by a covering letter that introduced the study and explained the concept of the flipped classroom. The survey was administered via email on the 20th of January 2020 and a reminder

‘Guided by an objectivist research perspective and thus adopting a quantitative approach to gathering data, this study aimed to evaluate the impact of adopting a flipped approach to learning and develop an understanding of students’ preferences between such an approach and the more traditional methods of teaching hospitality management at a Swiss Hotel School’

email was sent to all students on the 4th of February 2020. In total 167 useable responses (out of a possible 236 students) were which achieves the appropriate response rate threshold for quantitative studies in order to achieve reliability and validity of findings (Fincham, 2008). The surveys are produced and sent to the respondents as a Google form to where they could select the most preferable answer and leave a short comment. After collecting the data, the results of each survey were analysed via Excel. This allowed for the development of descriptive statistics and a series of cross tabulations that provided opportunities for the creation of a series of graphs and charts that both highlighted collected data and allowed for an understanding of viewpoints on flipped classroom effectiveness.

2.2. Ethical issues

Given that this study was undertaken with students who were enrolled on a full-time programme at the hotel school, the researchers were particularly cognisant of ethical issues pertaining to gathering data from students. Particular attention was paid to ensuring that collected data were confidential and anonymised. Potential respondents were provided with appropriate information that allowed them to make an informed choice as to whether to take part in the study and all participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study without any penalty.

2.3. Limitations

Whilst every effort was made to ensure that the appropriate approach was adopted and that participants were treated in an ethical manner, the researchers fully understand that any type of research will have its limitations. This study is no different and is limited by the commonly accepted issues associated with quantitative methods. Such an approach can only ever ask leading

and closed questions that may lack nuance and detail but do provide hard and reliable data. In addition, it is understood that the research focussed on students studying in one institution in Switzerland at a particular time. Students enrolled on programmes are considered a fairly unique group in that there were no domestic students in the cohort and all students were international. Whilst such a study would not achieve the threshold of generalisability, it is contended that sufficient surveys were completed to allow the development of general findings, at least amongst this cohort of students. It could therefore be argued that the findings from the study may allow for the development of some general indicators of good practice.

2.4. The research context

The Swiss hotel school that is the location of this study is typical of similar Swiss schools in that all students who are attracted to undertake their qualification are international. The school is accredited by the Swiss Association of Quality and Management Systems and British Accreditation Council and provides both Swiss and UK accredited undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications.

The educational culture of the school focusses on student-centred and active learning and classes will typically utilise a blend of lectures, tutorials with presentations and discussions. The main goal of the institute is to encourage students to become independent learners and thus provide the skills necessary to become hospitality professionals. This organisation was chosen as the research site for a number of reasons. Firstly, the researchers were familiar with the institution and were granted access to students. Secondly, the institution is transitioning from a traditional approach to learning to the introduction of a more student-centred focus that includes the adoption of the Flipped Classroom philosophy – therefore students will have experienced a variety of learning and teaching methods. Finally, the institute is relatively small and represents a microcosm of teaching at all educational levels.

2.5. Summary of respondents

The following section covers the demographic characteristics of the students: their gender, age, year of education and nationality. Stated genders were split fairly evenly with slightly more female respondents (51%) than males. Most respondents indicated their age as being between twenty-one and twenty-five (61%) with a further 31% stating their age as being between

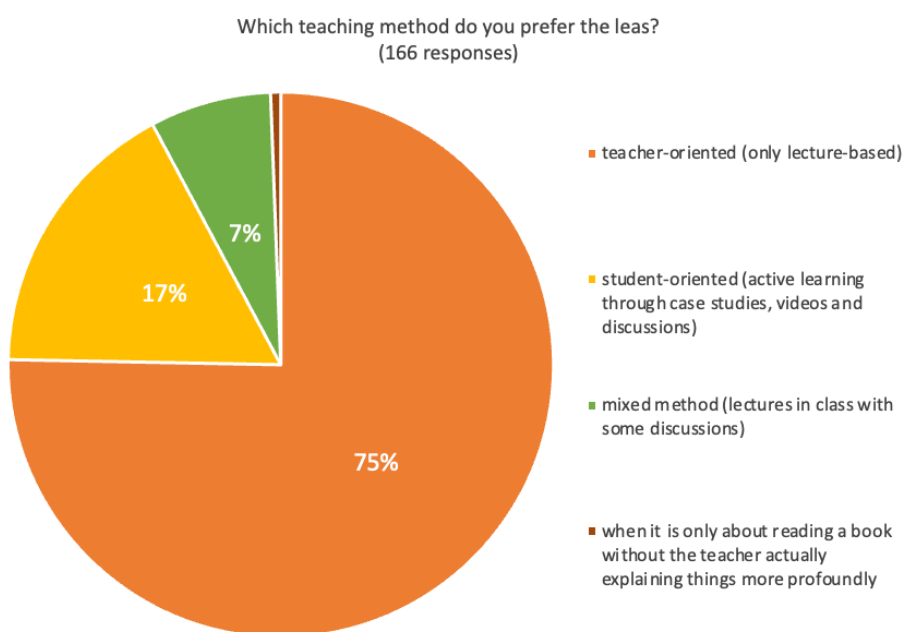
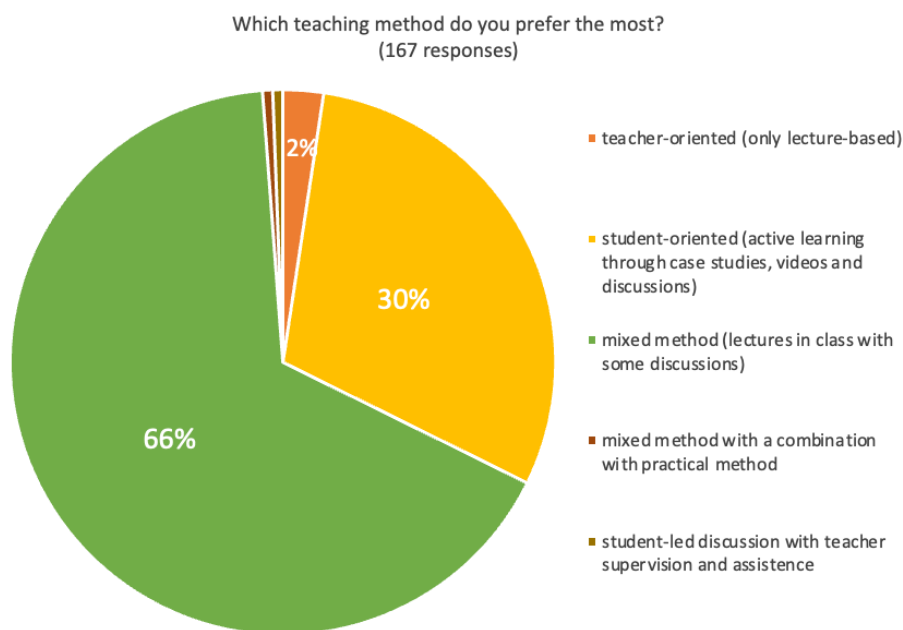
eighteen and twenty. Students were enrolled on several programmes with the majority (92%) studying at undergraduate level. Some 69% of respondents identified as being of Asian nationality and 31% European.

3. STUDY AND RESULTS

3.1. Personal preferences of teaching approaches

The students were asked to choose the most preferable teaching method amongst those taught in their courses such as teacher-oriented, student-oriented, mixed methods or to provide any further suggestions. 66.5% of respondents selected the mixed method

which lecturing and discussions not specifying how the lectures should be introduced. 29.9% identified student-oriented method as the most effective highlighting such as aspects as case studies, videos, and deep discussions with active practical learning. Only 2.4% gave their votes to the teacher-centred learning (Figure 2). Reading books, listening to the lectors with no further explanations were considered as least effective in learning. Additionally, a handful of respondents described their most liked approach being students sharing the knowledge after studying home while being supervised and assisted in class by a tutor.



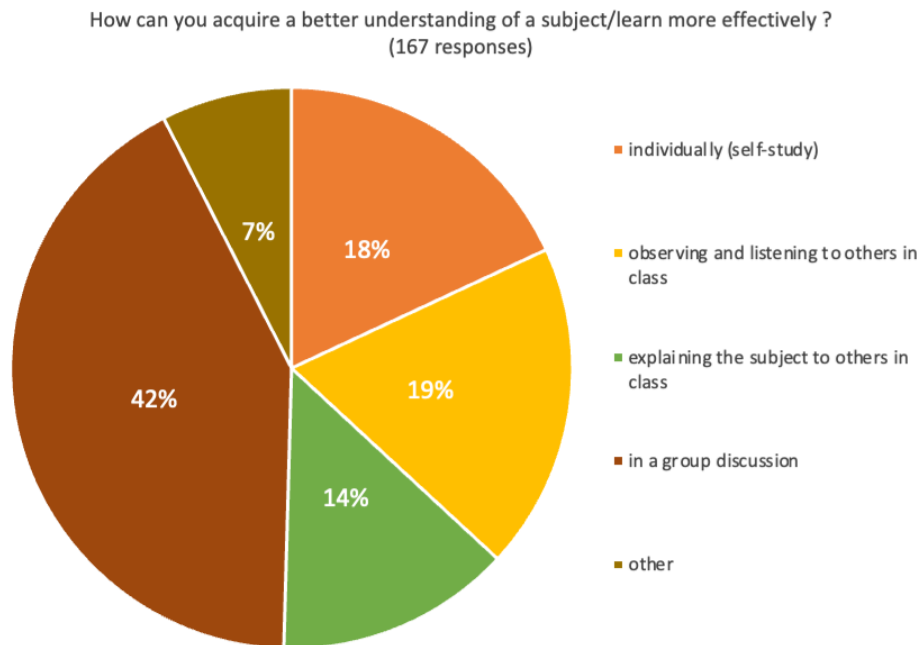


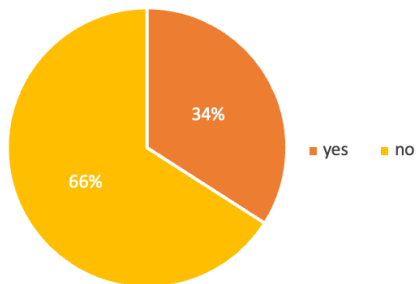
Figure 2. Teaching methods preferences and disliking

3.2. Teaching methods assessment and preference

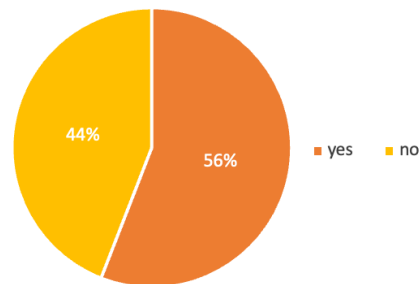
The participants of current study were asked about their awareness of the flipped classroom method used in a number of hospitality subjects at their school. 65.9% were fully aware of the approach whereas 34.1% had little idea. Nevertheless, those who experi-

enced the approach rated it as acceptably effective to very effective (78%) and those with little knowledge were interested to try. All participants were divided in their opinion on the most effective flipped class approach varying from classic flipped room to the video analysis, discussions, case studies (Figure 3).

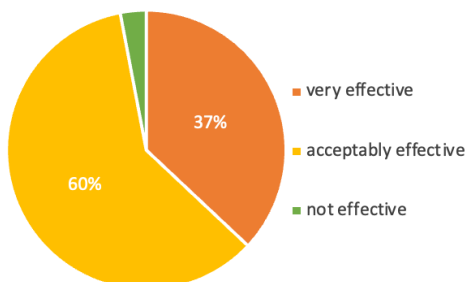
Have you heard of the term 'Flipped Classroom' before? (164 responses)



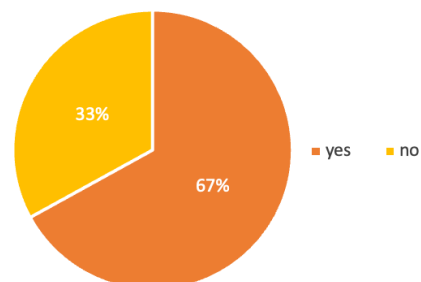
Have you been taught by the use of this approach? (120 responses)



If the answer is yes, how would you rate the effectiveness of this method? (91 responses)



If the answer is no, would you be interested in experiencing the method? (148 responses)



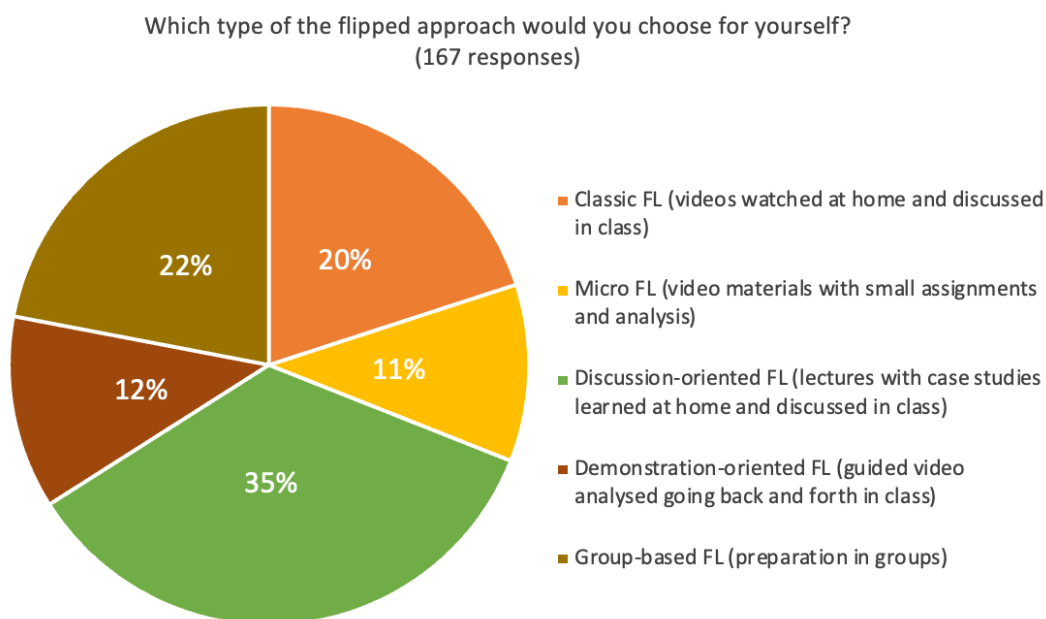


Figure 3. Assessments and preferences

3.3. Motivation, engagement, and empowerment

In the second section of the questionnaire, students were asked to evaluate a specific statement related to the flipped classroom approach and flipped learning based on the F-L-I-P theory which is presented in the theoretical chapter. Questions for assessment included:

I like the idea of flipped learning: schoolwork at home and homework at school.

I may be more motivated to learn more through flipped learning.

Flipped learning may help me to improve my social skills and cultural peculiarities.

The flipped approach can enhance my sense of responsibility and improve my self-awareness.

I prefer to explore topics in depth and create rich learning opportunities.

I prefer learning content prior to class and use the class time for applied learning/

Through flipped learning I may be able to manage my time and have full control over my studies.

Flipped learning may provide an opportunity for me to be engaged in deeper classroom discussions.

I may feel less determined about what I need to learn and which materials I need to prepare for the flipped class.

I feel that teachers' feedback and support only throughout discussions in class cannot help me to understand the topic better.

In my opinion, teachers' involvement should not overpass students' participation.

Thus, many students (58%) were interested in studying through FL, agreeing to the fact that this approach may enhance their social skills, level of independency and cultural peculiarities. In fact, 57% were positive about an increase of motivation to study. Moreover, FL was strongly associated with self-awareness and responsibility with over 80% of positive responses. 77% of participants stated that they prefer the type of learning which will explore all topics in more depth and create rich learning possibilities for discussion. At the same time, 71% of students added that before-class preparation and content learning is more effective than acquiring information in class for the first time. Instead, they acknowledged that class time could be used for applied learning.

Nevertheless, one fourth of participants claimed that FL could be challenging for people with poor skills in time management and self-organisation. Moreover, half of the participants believed that it might be confusing for learners to understand what to study and which materials to prepare before class as information complexity could be encountered as a challenge.

The role of a teacher has also been analysed and students' opinions were twofold. 41,6% positively reacted on teacher's feedback and support only in class during the discussions, however, some students required more explanation and full presence of the tutor (20,5%). The rest stayed neutral assuming that either way could work for them. In terms of teacher's involvement in class, 30% of participants identified a necessity

in teacher’s constant interaction whereas other 30% liked the idea of self-study in class and little guidance from the teacher.

Consequently, the participants were asked to assess FL in terms of its benefits and drawbacks. As seen below, most students singled out a challenge of topic’s full comprehension, especially being at home and learning on your own. Moreover, a big discussion was raised on the time management and self-motivation. The participants claimed, that when there is a choice to not learn with little explanation and only guidance in class, any student will be demotivated to engage. At the same time, the percentage of those not preparing prior to the class will considerably increase. As a result, there may be little interest in class participation and respect towards teachers (Figures 4 and 5).

On the contrary, there are several meaningful perspectives on the effectiveness of this method. Many respondents believed that a deeper understanding and critical thinking may occur if a student comes to class already prepared and gets into details in class with teacher’s help. Furthermore, FL enhances communicational and presentational skills. Some participants stated that openness can be improved by practicing the approach. What is more, flipped classrooms teach students self-management, organisation and creativity. The novelty of this approach is debatable. Some students assumed that not everyone is able to be taught by this teaching method whereas other liked the idea of innovativeness. Lastly, flexibility – practicality, freedom of choice and structure – were mentioned as advantages of the approach (Figure 6).

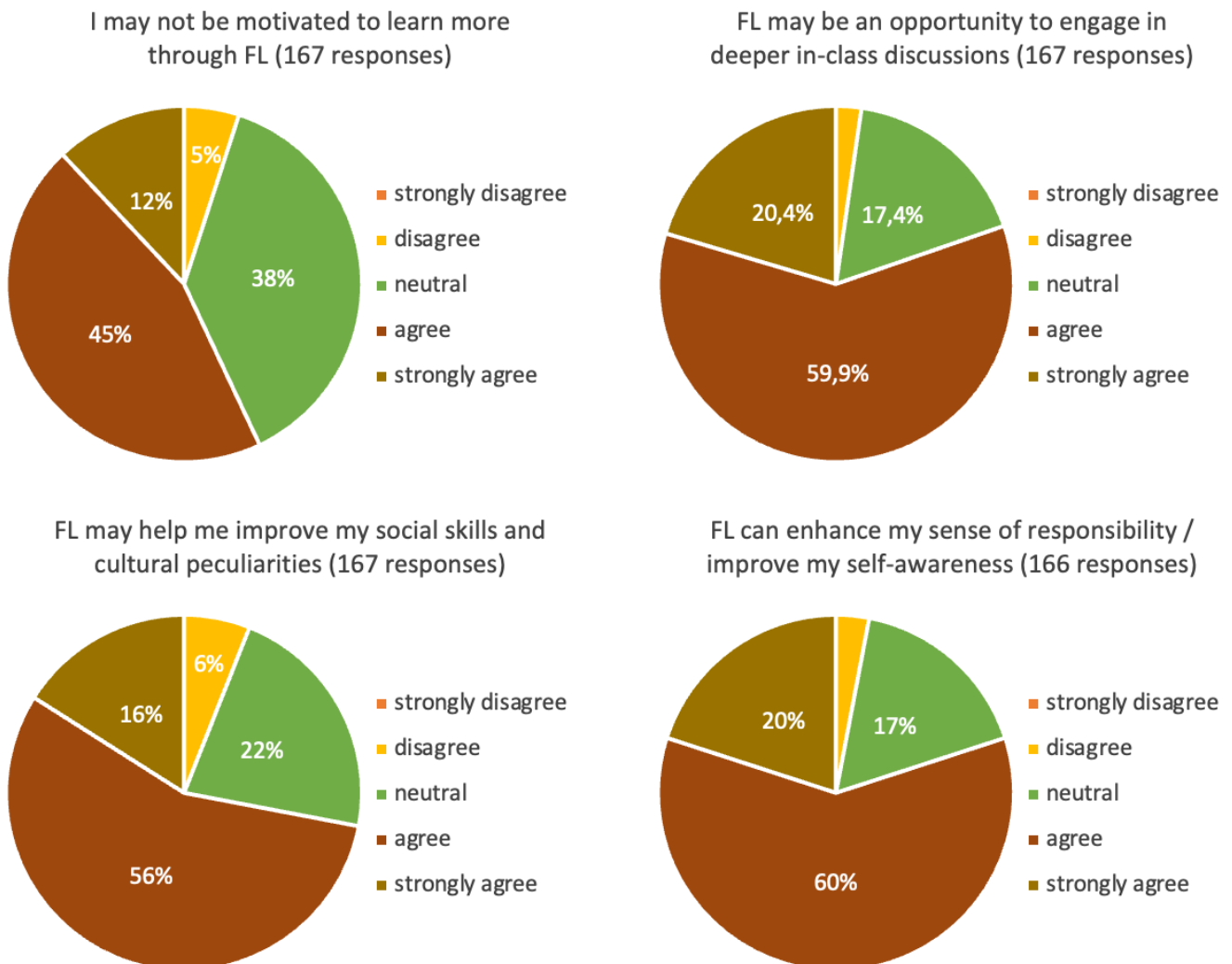


Figure 4. Motivation, engagement, self-awareness

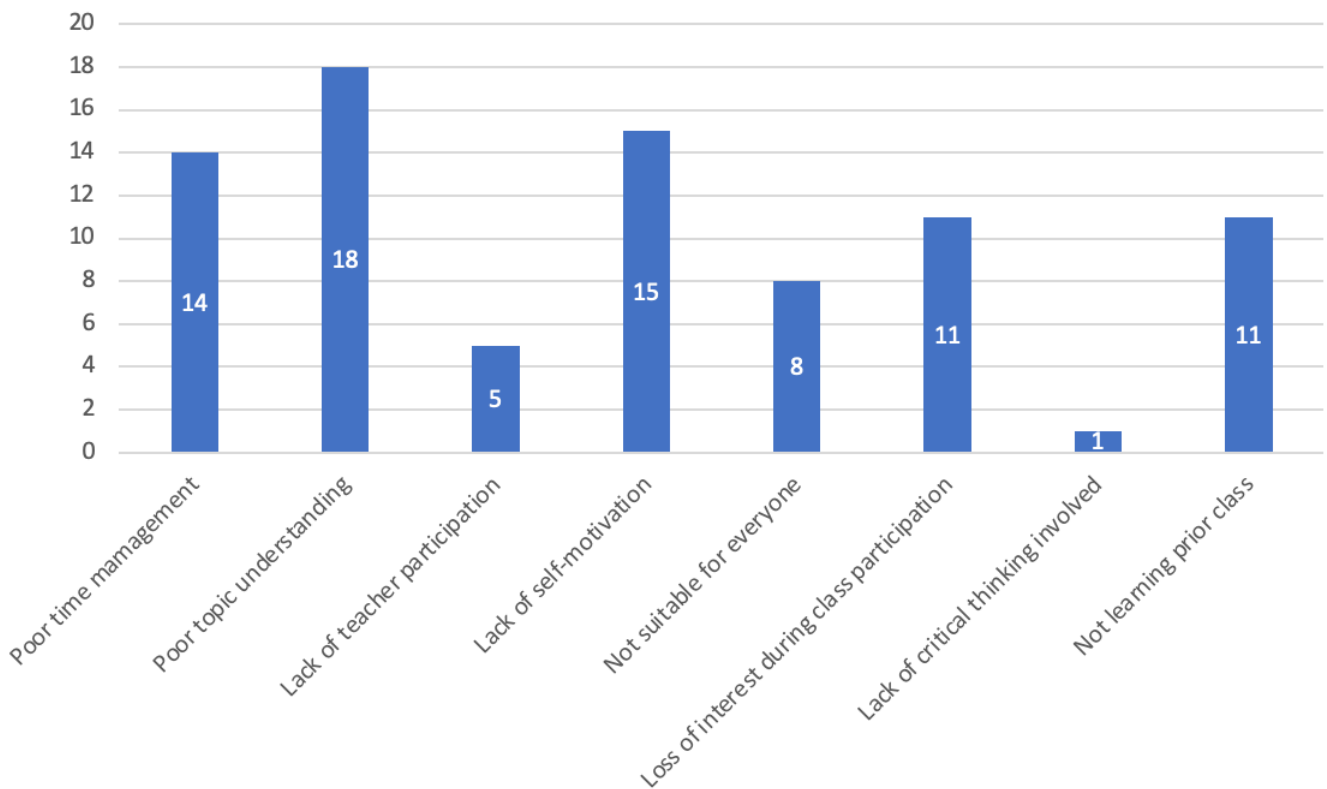


Figure 5. Drawbacks of flipped classrooms

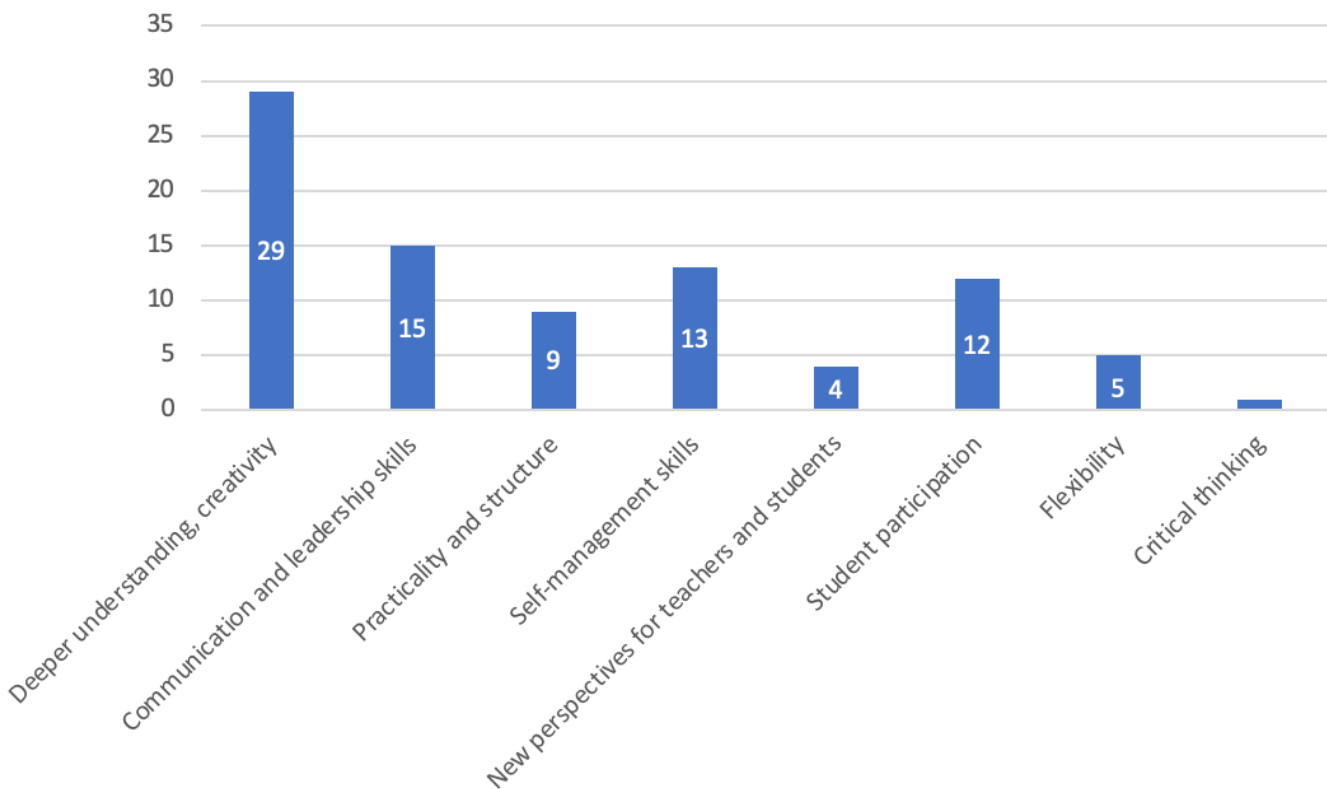


Figure 6. Benefits of flipped classrooms

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. Teaching methods assessment/preferences

Colucci and Flannery (1983) highlighted that hospitality students learn effectively through a shared experience between a teacher and a learner. This shared experience may occur verbally and by means of practice. Moreover, Deale et al. (2013) established a study on current hospitality and tourism teaching methods and identified the most preferable technique from both teacher and student perspectives. The results demonstrated that the idea of abandoning lectures seemed unreasonable, as with class sizes increasing and resources becoming scarce, the lecture (with discussion) method offers a means to present content material to large numbers of students and, therefore, is efficient as a teaching method. Aynalem et al. (2015) identified students' teaching preference in the tourism field, where a blended method of lecturing and in-class activities was discussed and acknowledged as the most positive. Furthermore, lecture/discussion and case study/team project were identified as the most prominent mixture. Our study has also shown that about half of participants were not aware that they had been taught in a flipped format but were highly interested in this approach considering it fairly useful. Additionally, the answers demonstrated that Ahmad et al.'s (2018) experimental learning had little relevance to students' interest, only in terms of practical training and project-oriented learning which were highlighted by a handful of students. Some participants strongly agreed on the necessity of sharing the experience and providing examples for a bigger and understandable picture. Others added that a formula of an individual study or group discussion plus practical activities with teacher support as a mentor would benefit students' learning. At the same time, no correlation has been found from Chinese hospitality students who preferred traditional teaching. Only a handful of respondents preferred lectures and full explanation in class followed by the exercises given as homework. Most respondents concluded that blended learning could be the most efficient one along with more practical exercises in class applicable straight to the industry and discussions (Deale et al., 2013; Aynalem et al., 2015).

4.2. Student perceptions on FL

The study showed that flexibility of time and the environment were highly acknowledged and rated by students. Therefore, the first pillar can be fully related to hospitality learning organisation. Flexibility creates a

stress-free environment for both students and teachers. Students are not put in the frame of rushed and compact lectures but are offered help from their mentors. Instructors are also free from a standardised method of teaching, they can reveal creativity and put precious time in real practice (Demirel, 2016). From the results, the value of teacher support and mentoring is very high. Moving on, students have not demonstrated any sign of cultural influences or the impact of classmates' skills and abilities on their learning process. Nevertheless, they have acknowledged the importance of deep meaningful discussions and a full teacher presence.

The content of a subject appeared to be the most important among participants in the flipped environment. Students fully agreed on this but mentioned that content must be explained properly either before the lesson in a recorded form or during. Otherwise, it would not be able to create true knowledge. A variety of responses concluded that different people request different approaches. Current study of the hospitality students in Switzerland has shown no correlation between students' learning and teachers' personality as was found in Liasidou's (2016) research earlier. Also, many students did not require their hundred percent presence or full explanation as previously addressed. In fact, teacher involvement with feedback and support if something is misunderstood was requested. Consequently, the idea of professional educator could be related to the results of this research.

4.3. Effects of flipped classroom teaching

Steen-Utheim and Foldnes (2017), Sun (2017) and Hartyanyl et al. (2018) have received the same results as participants of this research pointing out a favourable effect of FL on communication skills, levels of motivation, self-awareness, responsibility, empowerment and engagement. The only difference was that students could view positive effects only during class and were concerned about the practices outside the school premises. Guerrero et al. (2020) pointed to the same suggesting that overall rating of FL is still questionable even though communication skills, learning experience, level of motivation, empowerment and engagement are positive outcomes. Furthermore, the research has found no relevance to performance improvement and higher grades as Butzler (2014) who did the same research but in scientific context. At the same time, students raised multiple concerns about time management, organisation, and procrastination prior to the lesson. Finally, the actual understanding of the topic was

questioned in this inquiry. To add on, one fourth of respondents stayed neutral seeing no effect in engagement, motivation, and empowerment variances.

5. CONCLUSION

Flipped classroom method has been gaining popularity in different educational fields both in scientific and humanitarian domains. Many participants demonstrated the positive effect of flipped methods for students and teachers in specific educational areas (Murillo-Zamorano, 2019; Valero et al., 2019). Nevertheless, some inquiries have been questioning the results (Comber & Bos, 2017; Lo & Hew, 2017) and requesting a thorough investigation on this matter with a focus to a particular field (Ozdamli & Asiksoy, 2016; Nouri, 2016; Tan et al., 2017; Awidi & Paynter, 2019). Therefore, this study intended to analyse the success of flipped learning in the hospitality and tourism education and took a case of a hotel school in Switzerland.

The study demonstrated that social learning is the strongest method for hospitality students which in case of hospitality might be influenced by the personal traits as well as the level of class involvement, teacher expertise and explanation ability. The results also showed that hospitality students do prefer a student-oriented method over traditional teaching referring to Bloom's Reversed Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956). At the same time, their particular interest is on the mixed approach, but with less teacher involvement and more student participation. The best way for students to learn and for teachers to educate them was recognised as a combination of some explanation in class and group discussions for the rest of the class time.

Flipped learning was considered by many as an effective tool for self-organisation, group discussions, deep meanings, time management, social skills enhancement, self-development, and high level of engagement. Moreover, half of the students were aware of this method, and more than half have been taught by it. Nonetheless, flipped learning didn't do well in helping students to understand the material better. The participants were concerned about the motivation to prepare beforehand and lack of control from teachers. What is more, a great apprehension is for the novelty of the approach, which cannot be universal for everyone.

On reflection of this research project the researcher suggests that current inquiry does not fully reveal the effectiveness of flipped learning through an actual performance, for instance, before and after the application. Since some uncertainty has occurred in the results of

this research, an additional study could be conducted as an examination of the motivation and engagement improvement techniques in the context of flipped classes. Furthermore, such topic as true knowledge development in flipped education, its strategies and procedures could cover the gap of a current matter. The authors also believe that younger group can be examined once again since every generation has its individual peculiarities and struggles. This type of research should be conducted among a different nationality group with Europeans as the core cohort. Current research had more Asian representatives, therefore, the results might vary. The investigation can also be looked from the qualitative study or a different quantitative approach such as of examination tests with flipped and traditional teaching or simply pre and post evaluation. Finally, the author suggests conducting a study for a hospitality school in another country. This might provide a wider perspective on flipped learning.

Based on study results, the authors strongly recommend revising the teaching methodology utilised in the hospitality schools. Apart from that, hospitality schools should monitor the upcoming trends and directly implement them in the educational process. Many students have quite some theoretical disciplines with case studies and discussion, however, the true knowledge of the subject is not ensured. Therefore, a necessity in practical implementation is highly required not only for service or front office subjects, but also for human resources, sales and marketing and other theoretical subjects. In current contexts, more research should be focused on potential changes in educational filed in a relation to Covid-19 and how these changes will influence the future of education.

Overall, the institutes may come up with a strategy of how to strengthen the knowledge and understanding from students' perspective. For instance, to have a separate expert to analyse the industry and work on student satisfaction level. Moreover, it might be beneficial to introduce a thorough evaluation form for both students and teachers and to frequently brainstorm new ideas and suggestions. In addition, instead of flipped learning, the mixed method can be applied in all subjects to examine the improvement and performance rate. Furthermore, to improve student qualifications, the internships provided by hospitality organisations are encouraged to open more opportunities and positions in different departments to gain benefits on both sides. Students can stay permanently in the hotels and hotels can minimise the expenses by decreasing employee wages.

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Original Research

Perfection as a concept of hyperbolisation in English promotional discourse: A multi-dimensional linguistic analysis

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Article history Received July 6, 2022 | Revised November 15, 2022 | Accepted December 1, 2022

Conflicts of interest The author declared no conflicts of interest

Research funding No funding was reported for this research

doi 10.22363/2521-442X-2022-6-4-50-61

For citation Filyasova, Yu. A. (2022). Perfection as a concept of hyperbolisation in English promotional discourse: A multi-dimensional linguistic analysis. *Training, Language and Culture*, 6(4), 50-61.

The article considers the descriptive attribute 'perfect' and its derivatives as a commonly used abstraction for creating persuasive emotional texts that encourage potential customers to make purchases and satisfy their needs. The study analyses the objects of reference, semantic field, and syntactic functions of the concept through the prism of its functioning in promotional brochures devoted to passenger automobiles belonging to 44 brands. The material included 115 brochures over the previous decade, 22,000 words of minimal contexts and 520 contextual occurrences of 'perfect' and its derivatives. The obtained results show that 'perfect' tends to reveal two meanings – excellence and compliance to a standard – which historically go back to its original meaning in Latin 'per factum' (made thoroughly). Over the period of the decade, there has been a shift from idealisation to practicality in the automotive industry under the influence of economic and environmental factors. The semantic mapping of contextual associative adjectives also indicates that 'perfect' is currently more oriented to highlighting practical utility of the cars rather than their excellence. In effect, such practical aspects as technological advancement, technicality, customisation, reliability, comfort, dynamics, style, noiselessness, sound, and price outnumber abstract qualities which express positive impressions, elevation, idealisation, and exaggeration of relevance, by 30%. Semantically, the concept 'perfection' follows the promotional principle of combining rational and emotional arguments. 'Perfect' is applicable to any car part – be it the exterior, interior or engine. The derivational paradigm has no limitations in syntactic distribution; however, in promotional discourse it typically occurs in nominative structures. The results contribute to the theoretical development of the linguistic worldview through the lens of valuable marketing concepts and can be practically useful in training professional writing skills to students specialising in PR and advertising and learning English for specific purposes.

KEYWORDS: *descriptive adjective, semantic mapping, referent, significative meaning, English for specific purposes, writing skills, syntactic collocability*



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1. INTRODUCTION

Language plays an essential role in advertising activity which pursues economic, social, marketing and communicative goals. The use of language is determined by the specifics of marketing communication,

promotional objectives, and the necessity to create certain cognitive mechanisms for generating demand, promoting sales, inspiring consumer motivation and behaviour. In higher education, the language of advertising is referred to as language for specific purposes and

an autonomous functional style which possesses a system of verbal instruments for expressing socially relevant relations in public speech practice. The language of advertising is predominantly considered as discourse immersed in functional context characterised by intentionality, targeting, interactivity, and descriptiveness.

Advertising language encourages consumer activity through promise, anxiety, approval, praise, assertion, and admiration. Along with pragmatics, communication, information and semiotics, language is an integral element of advertising discourse based on the communicative intentions of informing and persuading which are indispensable in a competitive marketing environment. Notably, persuasion is meant to be positive due to the social nature of advertising which involves creating axiological models and norms. The selection of vocabulary with the positive connotative meaning and modern derivation is aimed at achieving the pragmatic effect of attractiveness for potential customers.

Brochure as a genre of promotional text is a communication medium between a company and its customers and is characterised by two major facets – visual and verbal – which fulfil relevant functions for delivering advertising messages aimed at attracting attention, raising interest, stimulating desire, generating motive, and encouraging action. The visual facet consolidates the image of products and services in customers' minds, forms strong connections between the quality of products and the company image and emphasises product advantages as well as their key features. The verbal component informs potential customers about goods and services, advances arguments for their benefit, and reinforces associative links between trademarks and their advertising concepts. Brochure often emphasises image advertising and branding. The language of brochure reflects current social trends, cultural norms and traditions and serves as a powerful tool for promotion.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The aim of this paper is to study the conceptual paradigm *perfect* and its derivatives based on language material from promotional brochures, devoted to automotive industry products – passenger cars. The objectives of the research included the following:

- definition analysis of the word family *perfect* and the significative aspects of their lexical meaning;
- specification of those objects of reference (parts of passenger automobiles) which the lexemes are related to;

- semantic mapping based on contextual *perfect*-associative descriptive and evaluative adjectives;
- syntactic analysis of the derivational paradigm *perfect*, its combinability and valency potential.

Automobile brochures (n = 115), each devoted to the description of a particular passenger car model, over the period of the previous decade served as a corpus for this research and were searched for the lexemes *perfect* (adjective and verb), *perfectly* (adverb), and *perfection* (noun). The range of automobile brands (n = 44) included Acura, Alfa Romeo, Alpine, Aston Martin, Audi, Bentley, BMW, Buick, Bugatti, Cadillac, Chevrolet, Chrysler, Dodge, Ferrari, Fiat, Ford, Genesis, GMC, Gumpert, Honda, Infiniti, Jaguar, Jeep, KIA, Koenigsegg, Lexus, Lincoln, Maserati, Maybach, Mazda, McLaren, Mercedes, Mini, Mitsubishi, Porsche, RAM, Rolls-Royce, Spyker, Subaru, Tesla, Toyota, Vencer, Volkswagen, and Volvo. On average, three brochures of each brand were examined. The brochures contained on average four lexemes under analysis; however, the relative share varied significantly. The brochures were composed of verbal and creolised texts with the visual dominance of the latter.

Ultimately, the material for the research included 22,000 words. The occurrences (n = 520) of the target lexemes were analysed from following perspectives: 1) objects of reference; 2) semantic field; 3) syntactic positions. Minimal contexts as long as one paragraph were studied for identifying associative adjective chains and types of syntactic relations, characterising contextual functioning of *perfect* and its derivatives. For the objectives of this study, the following methods were used: continuous sampling, semantic and syntactic categorisation, quantitative clusterisation, and descriptive linguistic analysis.

3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

3.1. Literature review

Advertising language has certain stylistic features which indicate that advertising represents an individual genre of text (Morozova, 2020). Advertising language possesses persuasive and manipulative power due to implicit communication strategies (Vallauri et al., 2022). Advertising employs two types of persuasion strategies – rational and emotional – which are processed by the conscious and unconscious mind. Linguistic markers and strategies are used for encoding and decoding emotions rooted in the language, emotional effects, identities, and appeals (Bhatia & Kathpalia, 2019). Persuasion in advertising metadiscourse is

‘Generally, marketing discourse is characterised by the cognitive metaphor; discursive characteristics include agonality, theatricality, commodification, personification, marketisation, and conversationalisation. The study of multimodal marketing discourse reveals discourse-generating addresser intention, audio-visual techniques in nonverbal content, global ideologeme, manipulating function, thematic constituents such as theme, tonality, chronotope, and the abundance of metaphor and antithesis’

achieved with the use of visual elements, chunking, convention, consistency, engagement markers and directives (Al-Subhi, 2022).

Promotional strategies rely upon pervasive language resources such as rhetorical macrostructure, informational-persuasive linguistic features, emotion-laden and reason-based strategies (Izquierdo & Blanco, 2020). The discourse of corporate annual reports contains direct persuasion, impersonal stance, concealment strategies, and high concentrations of co-occurring linguistic features (Bu et al., 2020). The study of promotional texts on a social networking site suggests that grammar can be indicative of genre by virtue of functionally motivated, transparent and compositional multimodal choices, encoding idioms, and discourse-grammatical constructions (Fischer & Aarestrup, 2021). The use of words with diminutive suffixes in social networking services creates positive subjective judgement in relation to the environment and facilitates the aestheticisation effect (Grigoryan & Strelchuk, 2021).

Additionally, advertising discourse uses strategies of argumentation, manipulation (Cherkass, 2021), warning, argumentation and persuasion (Popova, 2018). Advertising text contains gender-specific advertising strategies, specifically, elaborate product descriptions with a semi-scientific emphasis for female customers and terse descriptions dominated by disjunctive grammatical structure for male readers (Koteyko, 2015).

Generally, marketing discourse is characterised by the cognitive metaphor; discursive characteristics include agonality, theatricality, commodification, personification, marketisation, and conversationalisation (Murashova, 2021). The study of multimodal marketing

discourse reveals discourse-generating addresser intention, audio-visual techniques in nonverbal content, global ideologeme, manipulating function, thematic constituents such as theme, tonality, chronotope, and the abundance of metaphor and antithesis (Sokolova, 2020).

The structure of PR discourse, its communicative and pragmatic features, in particular the selection of lexical content and syntactic models, are determined by the addressee competence (Kazieva, 2015). PR discourse demonstrates a high potential for developing new terminological systems denoting actors of online public communications, promotional texts, and media products due to extralinguistic factors (Kiuru & Krivosov, 2018).

As part of advertising language, brand linguistics is proposed as an individual branch studying brand-related managerial concerns about consumer behaviour manipulation (Carnevale et al., 2017). The compulsion effect of brand posts on social media is achieved through a combination of linguistic features such as post length, language, visual complexity, and emotional, interpersonal and multimodal cues in rich media (Deng et al., 2021). However, the iteration of brand name in a short film or a written text creates the effect of irritation instead of persuasion when repeated several times (Avramova et al., 2021).

Advertising research exposes cross-linguistic differences which are differently processed in native versus non-native language (Weijters et al., 2017). Advertising discourse is abundant with metaphoric mappings and metonymic structures which create implicit and explicit viewpoint structures for persuasion purposes (Sweetser, 2017). Specific research of conceptual representation in various advertising and promotional contexts shows some interesting results:

- *fascination* aimed at manipulation through the use of figurative lexical elements, iteration, and axiological nomination bearing a supreme conceptual value (Ivanov & Pogoretskaya, 2021);

- *tourism* as in a multimodal genre of tourist booklets complicated by various intentions and multimodal resources (Dubrovskaya, 2021);

- *money* seen as a polysemantic concept through the human perspective in application to the traditional economic thinking (Goddard et al., 2022);

- *human capital* composed of several semantic components which include resources, monetary relations, and production factors at the personal, organisational, and national levels (Filyasova, 2019);

– *antonyms* as in the metaphorical dichotomy of good vs bad and unattainable vs real in the German linguistic worldview represented through ups and downs (Denisova, 2021);

– *bridge* associated with transition, increase, possibility or impossibility of returning, dependability or un-dependability based on the contextual and axiological analysis of the concept (Karasik & Milovanova, 2021).

Advertising texts can be used in developing communicative competence with students studying English as a second language since it contains useful patterns of speech behaviour and effective strategies for implementing communicative intentions (Komarova, 2021).

3.2. Discourse competence development in marketing and professional writing

The awareness of marketing discourse specifics is necessary for the purposes of training. Marketing discourse is based upon the classic AIDA model: attention, interest, desire, and action. Attention is gained when the title of a marketing text, in tandem with visuals, is appealing and catchy. An effective title switches viewers' attention over to a longer advertising text – usually, the first paragraph (lead) – and arouses their interest. The next step involves prompting a desire and inspiring a decision to buy the advertised product or service, which is achieved through emotional impact, logical argumentation, and counterarguments management. Finally, customer intention is transformed into designed action such as filling out a form and executing a transaction. Reasons and arguments which express benefits and advantages of products and services need to be provided in a promotional text to grab the attention of potential customers. However, the decision is often made if certain emotions are involved and the desire to purchase the product is created. Abstract adjectives and nouns with positive connotation are the linguistic classes of words facilitating perception of marketing discourse through personal knowledge, experience, and intentions. Despite their ambiguity and disparity in writers' and customers' views on the same concepts, certain abstractions can anchor in the customer mind and generate a purchasing intention. Abstract adjectives and nouns are universal features of marketing discourse which can be suitable for any target audience. Abstract words do not add any specific information; however, they produce the effect of emotional engagement, which is crucial for making purchasing decisions, e.g., *high income, beautiful dress, effective communication, quality service, powerful car*, etc.

Historically, promotional activity has been aimed at persuasion, interest generation, public approval, and social recognition. Producers have always been striving to create a positive image, which makes customers perceive their products and services as impeccable regardless of their quality. Therefore, the knowledge of abstract adjectives and nouns is of high value. Notably, the abundance of abstract words and phrases may have an adverse effect as it dilutes the unique selling proposition and organisational image. The classic AIDA model becomes disproportionate and difficult to read. Reading a marketing text with too many abstractions is time-consuming and poses the risk of losing customers.

From the linguistic perspective, training the skills of creating effective marketing texts to students who study English as a second language (English for specific purposes) involves practicing many abstract and evaluative adjectives and their derivatives based on the communicative and competency-based approaches. Professional writing skills in the marketing area can be useful for future copywriters, PR managers, as well as PPC specialists, email marketers, SMM specialists, brand managers, and SEO specialists.

4. STUDY AND RESULTS

4.1. Conceptual basis

The analysis of dictionary definitions in Merriam-Webster Dictionary, McMillan Dictionary, Cambridge Dictionary, Oxford Dictionary, and Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English shows that *perfect* as an adjective embraces a wide semantic field ranging from abstract attributes such as *flawless* to application areas such as music and botany. Despite its similarity to the signifier *the best of its kind*, *perfect* is more focused on practical domains, e.g., *with no part missing, damaged or spoilt* rather than idealistic categories. Nearly half of 33 semantemes indicate purposefulness, suitability (*exactly right for somebody or something*), correctness, accurateness, completeness. Only four semantemes are synonymous with *excellent*. Thus, *perfect* is mainly about *compliance* to a standard (cf. *faithfully reproducing the original*); occasionally, of an extreme kind. Personified semantic features can be traced in such meanings as *expert, proficient, contented* and *satisfied*. Additionally, *perfect* can emphasise how much someone has of a quality. The noun *perfection* has a narrower semantic scope (14 semantemes) and is mainly about excellence, unsurpassed quality, and accuracy. *Perfect* as a verb (6 semantemes) means improvement to a highest degree, refinement and completion.

As a philosophical term, *perfection* originates from the Latin *per facere* (made through) or *per factum* (made thoroughly); it is a transcendental concept, realisable on different levels of being (Hill, 2022), associated with omnipotence, will power, intention and purpose (Zagzebski, 1998), knowledge, achievement, and creation (Hurka, 1993).

In marketing discourse, *perfect* and *perfection*, being abstractions, can be perceived differently, depending on a target audience, their preferences, experience, and interests. *Perfect* as an abstract term constitutes the third step in the logical process of generating the Desire component in the AIDA model (attention, interest, desire, and action), following the first three steps such as

benefits, needs to be satisfied, properties, focus on attributes typical of products or services, and their quantitative characteristics.

4.2. Objects of reference

The brand which heavily relies on *perfect* as an effective abstract adjective is Volkswagen. Its brochures contain the highest number of realisations of this lexeme and its derivatives (96). The second cluster includes Volvo and BMW with about 50 occurrences each. The other brands demonstrate a gradual reduction in number (Figure 1). The rest of the 28 brands do not rely much on *perfect* as an abstract descriptor of their automobile qualities.

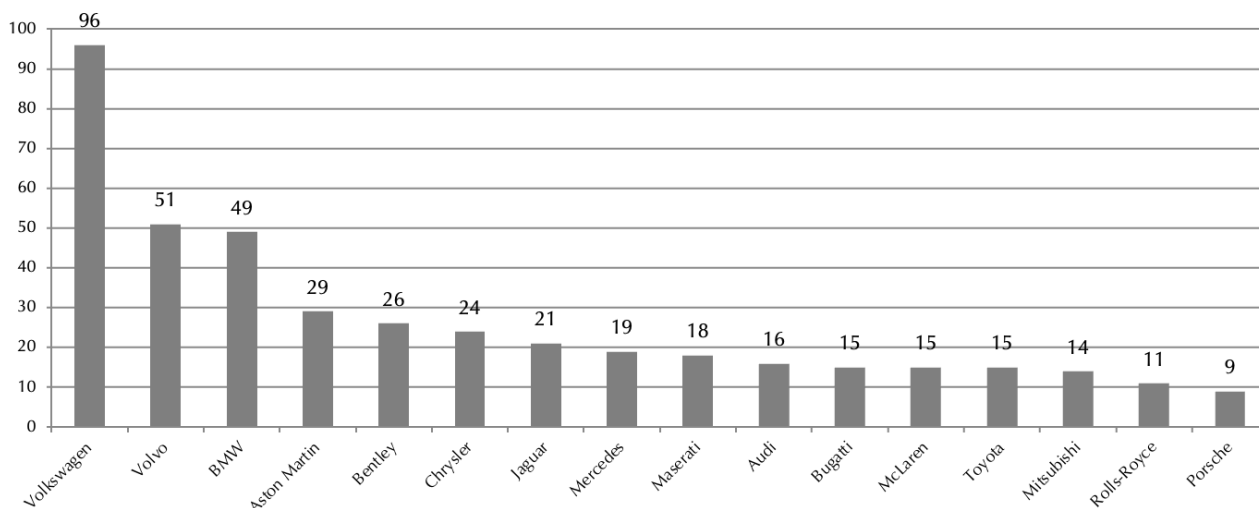


Figure 1. Occurrence rate of the lexeme *perfect* and its derivatives

The contextual use of the concept *perfection* depended on the time periods within the previous decade, both quantitatively and qualitatively. From 2011 to 2015, its occurrence rate was twice as low as in the period 2016-2021.

Additionally, there has been a slight change in meaning. In the first half of the decade, the concept *perfect* was mainly synonymous with *luxurious* and was mainly applicable to top-grade cars. However, in the second half it had more semantic similarities with *fit* and *suitable* for practical purposes. The trend might be explained by the shift to environmentally friendly green technologies and the rise in production of electric motors which create zero-emission cars. The refusal from heavy gas guzzlers resulted in the disappearance of many premium car brands and some car models. Therefore, *perfection* is likely to be communicated more as a functional term rather than posh high-end property.

The objects attributed to as *perfect* embraced a wide variety of technical parts (n = 138) which can be divided into three major groups with almost equal distribution of the derivatives under analysis – the exterior (n = 41), interior (n = 44), and engine (n = 45).

The exterior: vehicle itself, design, coupé design, body, silhouette, sedan, SUV (sport utility vehicle), shooting brake, boot, boot space, roof, carrier bars, doors, tail lamps, LED lights (light-emitting diode), rear wheels, wheels, wheel finish, protection, rubber powder rear, sill protectors, frameless windows, rear light clusters, headlights, LED headlights, door mirror, mascot, wing feathers, cargo space, load area, cargo mat, carbon fibre, injection moulding, metals, platinum effect metals, exterior colours, veneer, paint, specialist paint, special cracklè finish, lustrous finishes.

Sometimes, just two colours are all it takes to create a perfect composition. Paint finishes can be chosen individually to give the distinctive profile of the Maybach

the look you want. ... To choose a Maybach is to choose automotive **perfection** and timeless aesthetic quality, secure in the knowledge that this is a saloon whose sophisticated details – now more refined than ever – make it unlike any other (Maybach).

The interior: cabin, moon roof, steering wheel, thermoelectric refrigerator, interior colours, accessories, materials, fabrics, suede cloth, leather, aniline leather, leather colours, Windsor leather, Alcantara, Nappa leather, faux fur, cloth side bolsters, details, aerials, audio system, acoustics, speakers, sound, driver-oriented dashboard, temperature, mats, rubber mats, foot mats, seats, alignment of seat, display, touchscreen monitors, luggage compartment, inlay, plastic tray, design, interior lines, digital rpm indicator, cocoon, driver-focused cabin, window blinds, rear passenger compartment, interior rear view mirror, three feet of legroom for rear seat passengers, automatic climate control, ventilated front seats.

*The purity of the materials used in the car emphasises the aesthetics of **perfection** that is so essential for Bugatti. For example, the polished and anodised aluminium components in the interior are made of a premium alloy specially created for Bugatti. **Perfectly customisable** surfaces, materials and colours consummately adjust to the driver's preferences (Bugatti).*

The engine: torque, biturbo torque, engine itself, mid-engine, driving machines, EV powertrain, drive, drive mode, all-wheel drive, dynamic drive, iDrive, remote engine start, electric powertrains, turbochargers, automatic transmission, manual gearbox, exhaust note, weight balance, weight distribution, controller, EDC-C damper control, pneumatic suspension, spring, wheel drive, splash guards, carbon footprint, gas pump, handling, load liner, running gear, drive train, chrome grille, front grille, torque, TSI technology (Twincharger Stratified Injection), chassis, aluminium chassis, engineering, craftsmanship, technology, gears, channels, production facilities, threads, rear wheel drive architecture.

*With the **perfect** balance between performance and efficiency, every Volvo engine gives you on-demand power with low fuel consumption (Volvo).*

In addition, a few processes were referred to the driving process itself (n = 8): dynamics, aerodynamics, race car dynamics, control, fingertip control, performance, comfort, and acceleration.

Individually, each Phantom model stands out on the road with its own distinctive style and commanding presence. Together they echo the legendary words of

*Sir Henry Royce: 'Take the best that exists and make it better.' The result, a fusion of enhanced engineering and master craftsmanship, is sheer **perfection** (Rolls Royce).*

4.3. Semantic field

The contextual analysis of the adjective *perfect* and its derivatives showed that they occur in conjunction with a vast number of abstract adjectives (n = 361) which add some qualities to the image of the automobiles. The co-occurring adjectives were categorised into 14 groups in accordance with their semantics: personal impression (n = 70), elevation in evaluative meaning (n = 47), idealisation (n = 27), relevance (n = 7), advancement (n = 43), technicality (n = 35), customisation (n = 30), reliability (n = 27), comfort (n = 26), dynamics (n = 18), style (n = 10), noiselessness (n = 9), relevance (n = 7), sound (n = 7), and price (n = 5).

As it was mentioned above, the conceptual analysis points at the two major semantic components of the adjective *perfect*: one related to excellence, and the other referred to compliance to a standard (dominant). The co-occurring adjectives can also be divided into two large categories: the first denoting qualities indicative of the meaning *the best of a kind* (n = 151), and the second describing certain *technical features* and *marketing specifics* (n = 210), thus, exceeding the first category in number by 30%.

Category 1: the best of a kind (excellent).

Personal impression: enjoyable, exciting, favourite, refreshing, sensitive, pleasant, exhilarating, blissful, irresistible, enthralling, inspiring, enriching, totally undiluted, harmonious, restorative, deployable, charming, assertive, direct, spontaneous, instantaneous, thoughtful, enthusiastic, aggressive, painstaking, spine-tingling, savage, ferocious, rule-breaking, unconventional, bold, adventurous, challenging, graceful, dedicated, intuitive, happy, graceful, glamorous, charismatic, passionate, successful, brilliant, persistent, intelligent, realistic, youthful, addictive, qualified, clever, evasive, emotional, sensuous, natural, cossetting, vivacious, evolutionary, resourceful, unique, legendary, steeped in history, traditional, unforgettable, learning, informative, inventive, intense, meticulous, obsessive, clear.

Elevation in evaluative meaning: remarkable, exquisite, emphasised, accentuated, finest, beautiful, glorious, embellished, stunning, breath-taking, exclusive, elegant, aesthetic, starry, excellent, soaring, distinctive, sleek, outstanding, extraordinary, eye-popping, fabulous, magical, lustrous, wonderful, refined, striking,

masterpiece, sublime, thrilling, sensational, formidable, tremendous, impressive, awe-inspiring, eye-catching, spectacular, admirable, panoramic, dazzling, dramatic, expressive, sensational, magnificent, significant, impactful, compelling.

Idealisation: ideal, iconic, supreme, immaculate, superb, superior, impeccable, the best, ultimate, premium, exceptional, absolute, greatest, highest, unmistakable, unmatched, unsurpassed, unparalleled, uncompromising, unreachable, unrivalled, incomparable, unprecedented, seamless, flawless, virtually limitless, beyond imagination.

Relevance: important, prime, necessary, crucial, relevant, eminent, essential.

Category 2: complying to technical and marketing standards.

Advancement: automatic, fully controlled, multifunctional, coordinated, commanding, controlled, enhanced, developed, integrated, immersive, integral, versatile, ground-breaking, enhanced, progressive, high-tech, high standard, high definition, high-quality, efficient, technological, well-appointed, well-designed, streamlined, ingenious, edgy, pioneering, technologically advanced, innovative, original, newest, brand new, state-of-the-art, advanced, enhanced, sophisticated, savvy, ultra-efficient, intelligent, computer-generated, computerised, specialised, expertly crafted.

Technicality: ventilated, heated, pure, crash-tested, lockable, immersive, exacting, all-round, polished, fold-flat, upholstered, stain-resistant, spotless, compact, multilink, road-gripping, well-oiled, lightweight, tight, precise, precisely dimensioned, precision-tailored, rigorous, extremely unified, cohesive, combined, well-balanced, balanced, in the golden ratio, finely honed, highly skilled, multichannel, upright, crystal-clear, transparent.

Customisation: optimal, optimised, just-right, acceptable, tuned, suitable, adjustable, adjusted, flexible, fit, organic, individual, authorised, aligned, synchronised, specifically designed, easy fitting, custom-designed, personalised, private, special, focused, custom-made, customisable, easily customisable, model-specific, specially created, carefully chosen, infinitely varying, clearly defined.

Reliability: safe, secure, confidence-inspiring, simple, easy, effortless, effortlessly opened, responsive, utterly responsive, ultra-responsive, reliable, qualitative, credible, stable, resistant, substantial, robust, extremely robust, durable, rigid, tested, solid, consistent, practical, purposeful, functional, experienced.

Comfort: comfortable, comfort-orientated, softest, convenient, ergonomic, luxurious, prestigious, plush, sumptuous, extensive, spacious, extended, complete, full-scale, 5-star, exclusive, rich, opulent, plentiful, privileged, first-class, intricate, exquisitely crafted, carefully crafted, meticulously constructed, crisply sculpted.

Dynamics: sporty, athletic, sculptural, dynamic, speedy, agile, crisp (quick and accurate), nimble, race-inspired, fast, fast-acting, powerful, potent, rugged, taut, strong, muscular, relentless.

Style: retro, classic, contemporary, timeless, fashionable, trendy, stylish, genuine, true, global.

Noiselessness: remarkably quiet, ultra-smooth, smooth, smooth-surfaced, quiet, tranquil, peaceful, soothing, whisper-quiet.

Sound: ubiquitous, subtle, endless, inconspicuous, exceptionally discreet, unheralded, entire.

Price: economical, cost-efficient, minimalist, available, budget friendly.

Obviously, Category 2 comprising the co-occurring abstract adjectives matches the original Latin meaning of the modern *perfect* – *per facere* (made through) and *per factum* (made thoroughly) when characterising technical and marketing features.

4.4. Syntactic structures

Perfect and its derivatives have unequal representation in different syntactic structures: *perfect* as a subordinate attributive in nominal phrases (n = 231); *perfectly* as an adverbial modifier of manner in active structures (n = 109); *perfectly* as an adverbial modifier of manner in passive structures (n = 53); *perfection* in nominative phrases (n = 52); *perfect* as predicate nominative (n = 43); *perfectly* as a subordinate adverbial in nominal phrases (n = 18); *perfect* as a verbal (n = 14); and *imperfections* (n = 3).

The prevalence of nominal phrases is indicative of the descriptive nature of the contextual entities related to *perfect* and its derivatives. Technically, the aim of the text creators was to make a portrait of an automobile pursuing the informative, advertising and imaging functions. Since brochures are quite extensive in comparison with press releases in newspapers, magazines and other media channels, text creators are free to use vast descriptive structures to reach their target of persuasion.

As a subordinate attribute in nominal phrases, *perfect* collocates with unison, basis, interplay, fusion, combination, harmony, system, gift, tempo, location, fit, landing spot, balance, mix, match, travel compan-

ion, vehicle, exhaust, space, instrumentation, paddle shifts, reach, temperature, world, example, insulation, whole, representative, sports car, protection, ambience, formula, conditions, compromise, setting, parking, experience, performance, aesthetics, safety, ambience, environment, synthesis, sound, etc. For example: *the **perfect** basis for a range of Mercedes-Benz transport accessories; computerised technology works in **perfect** sync with the Anti-lock Brake System (ABS); the perfect combination of precise handling and first-class comfort; the **perfect** blend of sophistication and true freedom; a **perfect** blend of TSI technology, direct injection, down-sizing and sophisticated turbocharging; the **perfect** environment to work, enjoy a host of entertainment options, or simply stretch out and relax; the **perfect** combination of cutting edge technology, sporting vehicle dynamics, and opulent luxury; the **perfect** balance between the power of the engine and the grip from the tyres, **perfect** alignment of seat, steering wheel and pedals.*

As an adverbial modifier of manner in active structures, the adverb *perfectly* describes states and expresses evaluative aspects of technical features. Typical verbs that collocate with *perfectly* are as follows: balance, blend, suit, embody, stow away, represent, highlight, fit, match, work, complement, combine, sit, capture, look, interact, level, integrate, perform, understand, and conform, among others. For example: *the XCEED Plug-in Hybrid **perfectly** balances efficiency with dynamic driving; **perfectly** blends the centre and surround channels; **perfectly** suits your personal preference; **perfectly** embodies your idea of true inspiration; **perfectly** represents the dual personality of Rapide S; the door mirror caps in Bright Silver matt finish **perfectly** match the Silk Metal window trim; the Genesis G70 Shooting Brake **perfectly** combines elegance with the practicality of an extended boot space; this light, flexible and washable custom-made loadliner fits **perfectly** to the vehicle boot contours; a rear diffuser sits **perfectly** within the bumper; this system adapts **perfectly** to even the most challenging road conditions; the equipment specialists at the Maybach Manufaktur have understood **perfectly** how to convey a sense of the Saloon's dynamism in the interior; Novuna **perfectly** captures the proposition of our business.*

In passive structures, the adverb *perfectly*, as an adverbial modifier of manner, assists in redirecting the focus onto the action rather than the actor of the sentence. The range of verbs occurring in passive constructions is proportionally narrower: round off, place,

execute, position, dampen, integrate, prepare, shape, design, frame, equip, tune, mate, align, proportion, coordinate, etc. For example: *each high-efficiency speaker is **perfectly** tuned to your G90's acoustic signature; **perfectly** synchronised with a welcoming glow from the headlamps; the XC90 is **perfectly** executed and contemporary, yet timeless; the overall package is rounded off **perfectly** with progressive aerodynamics; important controls are **perfectly** placed within easy reach of the driver; vibration of the body is **perfectly** dampened; BMW ONLINE is **perfectly** integrated into the iDrive concept; high-definition 12" touchscreen monitors are **perfectly** placed for fingertip control; two turbochargers are **perfectly** positioned in the centre of the engine; this Sports Activity Vehicle is **perfectly** prepared for all challenges on the road.*

The noun *perfection* was preceded by such adjectives and adjectivals as acoustic, aesthetic, technical, engineering, driving, ergonomic, automotive, and sheer. For example: *a synthesis of design and performance, it has become the symbol of **acoustic perfection**; we strive for **engineering perfection**; technical precision combined with **aesthetic perfection**; the result, a fusion of enhanced engineering and master craftsmanship, is **sheer perfection**; unsurpassed in its **technical perfection**; choose **automotive perfection** and timeless aesthetic quality.*

The range of prepositional phrases with *perfection* was comprised of such nouns as strive, drive, level, pursuit, artistry, limit, appearance, demand, standard, among others. For example: *this drive for **perfection** is at the core of BMW's brand identity; a level of **perfection** never seen before; most have been in the pursuit of **perfection** or preventative maintenance, rather than seeking greater performance; the sporty thrill of driving a Maserati to the limit of **perfection**; this synergy between man and machine, rigorous quality control, and demand for **perfection** make every Acura that rolls out its doors a masterpiece of Precision Crafted Performance; our team's dedication to push beyond accepted standards of **perfection** to achieve an unheralded level of dynamic and aesthetic precision is truly unique.*

The noun *perfection* contextually collocated with such verbs as hone, reach, tailor, enhance, meet, achieve, yearn, improve, finish, seek, and strive. *Perfect* also functioned as predicate nominative being in coordination with such nouns in the position of the subject as refrigerator, LED lights, accessories, result, tear-proof net, vehicle, cabin, shifter, proportions, and others. For example: *the thermoelectric refrigerator box*

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was practically **perfect**; side bed-mounted led lights are **perfect** for night loading; available all-wheel drive (AWD) performance gives you peace of mind for days that are less than **perfect**; this tear-proof net is **perfect** for preventing things sliding around; create a Volvo that's **perfect** for your life; the proportions between dimensions must be **perfect**; fit, function and finish are **perfect**.

The adverb *perfectly*, as a subordinate adverbial component in nominal phrases, took a second position in the left context with reference to the main noun. The intermediate position was occupied by such verbal adjectives as proportioned, arranged, matching, placed, tuned, balanced, connected, personalised, and coordinated. For example: **perfectly** proportioned exterior; **perfectly** arranged interior; **perfectly** matching exterior colours; **perfectly** placed steering wheel controls; **perfectly** tuned multichannel Surround Sound; **perfectly** tuned by sound specialists; **perfectly** personalised surfaces.

Perfect functioning as a verbal (part of predicate, infinitive, or gerund) had the meanings – improve, refine, and complete. For example: Subaru has been **perfecting** it for decades; they've built and **perfected** the most powerful and commanding MINI; master painters first **perfect** their technique by hand; its comprehensive driver assistance systems are **perfecting** the ride experience; you can **perfect** your surroundings while sitting back in the comfort of your seat.

5. DISCUSSION

Training professional writing skills in promotion and advertising involves multifaceted student practice which includes developing writing, communication,

technical, creative, problem-solving, interpersonal, and research skills. Training the communicative competence is among relevant aims in marketing communications, especially for students who study English as a second language for specific purposes (PR and advertising). Language is a key to creating engaging content and providing attractive product description. The selection of appropriate vocabulary and syntactic structures, on the part of a writer, contributes to generating viewers' interest, stimulating them to take action and converting them into customers. Strong language skills in the field of professional business writing can provide graduates with sustainable career advantages in terms of building productive relationships with customers.

Promotional brochures contain useful language material for students specialising in public relations and advertising. Students' exposure to promotional discourse facilitates learning specific vocabulary that is essential for creating the right image and achieving the ultimate goal of writing selling texts. Positive emotional connotations are absolutely necessary for delivering a selling message to the target audience that matches their expectations of the product, depending on the type of need customers have.

Studying socially relevant concepts in promotional discourse can help reveal extensions and shifts in the meaning of well-known terms and uncover hidden or historically forgotten connotations (Denisova, 2021; Filyasova, 2021; Ivanov & Pogoretskaya, 2021; Goddard et al., 2022). Research into automobile advertising implies disclosure of potentially multilevel marketing strategies which are focused on various social needs. Young and narcissistic consumers prefer such car features as style and performance, whereas mature and responsible drivers tend to opt for safety and practicality (O'Connor et al., 2022). Automobile advertising is characterised by covert communication and implicit linguistic metarepresentation (Diez-Arroyo, 2018). Although upmarket car models are known for their added value, increasing public concern over aggravating environmental conditions makes producers and advertisers create nature-oriented promotional texts (Chen, 2016).

The research showed that the use of the adjective *perfect* is aimed at creating the image of an automobile that matches all possible expectations of the targeted market segments – social grades A, B, and C. Integrating two major categories of meaning – excellence and fitting standards – *perfect* can be described as a universal adjective for almost any brand irrespective of its marketing mix specifics. In addition, the concept of per-

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fection is applicable to most vehicle parts – the exterior, interior, and engine. The study has also shown that the semantic field of the concept *perfect* is comprised of three important areas – emotions, technicality, and marketing. Judging by the number of identified semantic groups in each area, *perfection* is a complex term in which technical and marketing semantemes tend to outweigh emotional connotations (advancement, technicality, sound, noiselessness, style, reliability, comfort, dynamics, customisation, and price vs impression, elevation, idealisation, and relevance). Therefore, *perfect* can be regarded more as an adjective of practical rather than emotional nature.

Perfect and its derivatives function mainly in nominative phrases; this fact is explained by the descriptive nature of brochure-based promotional texts. They mainly function as an attribute in nominative phrases, which is the most frequently occurring syntactic position (58%); as an adverbial modifier of manner (31%); occasionally, *perfect* functions as predicate nominative (8%) and a verbal (3%). On balance, the probability of contextual occurrence is various, but the scope of syntactic positions is almost unlimited.

Relying upon the numerical correlation between the quantity of brochures and the number of contexts analysed, it can be inferred that *perfect* is not the most frequently used adjective, except for certain brands such as Volkswagen, Volvo, and BMW, but it is gaining popularity with its meaning of practicality. The study into the semantic structure of this term helped reveal in-

herent significant characteristics that are indicative of the preserved Latin original meaning 'made thoroughly' pointing at the practical nature of *perfect*. The analysis of contextual perfect-associative descriptive and evaluative adjectives verified the syncretic semantics of *perfect* which combines the idealistic element of excellence and practical actualisation of compliance to a standard. The results of the research will be useful for developing communicative skills necessary for students learning English as a second language for specific purposes in application to public relations and advertising. From the theoretical perspective, the results can be of interest for the development of linguistic worldview through the lens of promotional axiological models and norms.

6. CONCLUSION

Considering the increased relevance of promotional text in the era of globalisation and digitalisation and the importance of creating the right image of products in the global digital world, the present study used a corpus-based analysis to investigate the semantic structure of the conceptual paradigm *perfect*, integrated into promotional context, to unveil its historical traces and modern perceptions. The research revealed a trend towards the prevalent role of practical meaning over abstract ideation, which is especially important in relation to the automotive industry products, such as passenger cars, for the purposes of sustainable economic and environmental development. The study of the concept *perfection* showed changes in its functional meaning over the recent decade – in alignment with the industry transition to efficient and environmentally friendly vehicles with electric drive motors. Highlighting practical values, corroborated by technical features of the car exterior and interior, currently seems to be more persuasive for the target audience than saturating promotional text with idealistic abstractions. Considering all mentioned above, the concept *perfection* is among those abstractions that match two types of persuasion strategies employed in advertising – both rational and emotional.

This study involved some limitations as it was confined to the previous decade and one industry – passenger car production. Obviously, it undergoes salient transformation and so does the field of promotion and advertising. Exponential growth of digital data and language material makes it possible to do future research and analyse development and modifications of the concept in other areas of human activity in the long run.

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Original Research

Language aggression in virtual professional communities

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Article history Received August 3, 2022 | Revised November 20, 2022 | Accepted December 1, 2022

Conflicts of interest The authors declared no conflicts of interest

Research funding The study is supported by Russian Science Foundation Project No. 20-68-46003 'The semantics of unity and animosity in Russian lexis and phraseology: Language system and discourse'

doi 10.22363/2521-442X-2022-6-4-62-72

For citation Dubrovskaya, T. V., & Yuskaeva, E. I. (2022). Language aggression in virtual professional communities. *Training, Language and Culture*, 6(4), 62-72.

The study focuses on language aggression as it is enacted in virtual professional communities. With the aim to reveal the dominant forms and mechanisms of aggression in the virtual environment, the authors explore data retrieved from Russian social media. Theoretically, the paper is informed by social identity theory and linguistic pragmatics. Adopting a methodology that draws on an inferential model of communication, the study analyses aggressive utterances and their meanings in situational contexts. The findings distinguish between two principal forms of aggression: insulting aggression and aggression of exclusion. Although both perform the function of social control, they differ in terms of triggering situations, pragmatic mechanisms as well as linguistic resources employed. Insulting aggression makes use of dehumanising, negative evaluation, blaming, social deixis, 'reductio ad absurdum' and references to one's emotional involvement in the situation of conflict. Such mechanisms are enacted through the linguistic tools that convey the semantics of aggression more or less directly. These include pejoratives, depreciative epithets, colloquialisms, informal expressions, lexemes with semantics of emotional state, imperatives, means of deontic modality and a shift in using polite/impolite forms of address. On the contrary, aggression of exclusion involves meanings that require inferential efforts of the recipient. The interplay between literal meanings of speech acts and the underlying intentions results in conversational implicatures. Exclusion is manifested through drawing a boundary between 'us' and 'them', terminating a conversation, talking about somebody present in the third person. Its linguistic forms comprise lexemes with semantics of exclusion, lexis with negative connotation, interjections, and irony.

KEYWORDS: aggression, virtual professional community, group identity, social media, linguistic resources



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1. INTRODUCTION

Experts contend that human beings are social species living and interacting in different types of communities (Hofstede, 1984; Yuki & Brewer, 2013). Hofstede (1984) argued that 'some animals, like wolves, are gregarious, and others are solitary like tigers. The hu-

man species should no doubt be classified with gregarious animals, but different societies show gregariousness to different degrees' (Hofstede, 1984, p. 149). People are adapted to living together, which is why they organise themselves into a vast variety of groups – family groups, work groups, national groups, etc.

Owing to the development of modern technologies, thousands of communities have emerged on social networking platforms, which are huge and densely populated. The ability to manage contacts does not protect users from other individuals who can be hostile towards them. Sharing opinions on social media, people risk receiving aggressive comments from other users, proving that *'language use has the potential to be harmful and hurtful'* (Sparby & Reyman, 2020, p. 21). Aggression, hostility, hate speech and harassment in digital spaces are complex communication issues which come under scrutiny by experts working in different fields including philosophy, sociology and linguistics. Because aggression is realised through language, the current study seeks to investigate the linguistic dimension of aggression as it appears in situations of conflict in professional online communities. The aim of the study is to reveal the forms of aggression and the linguistic means of their actualisation in virtual communities.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Virtual communities

As social species, human beings cannot live without grouping. Yuki and Takemura (2013) have argued that groups are crucial 'tools' for human adaptation. In Hofstede et al.'s (2010) research based on the theory of cultural dimensions it has been proved that collectivism dominates in rule in our world.

Grouping is typical of both physical and virtual environments, and experts tend to discuss virtual communities in terms of real groups existing in physical settings (Herring, 2004; Yus, 2011). Virtual communities are defined as *'groups of people with common interests and practices that communicate regularly and for some duration in an organised way over the Internet through a common location or mechanism'* (Ridings et al., 2002, p. 273). According to Herring (2004), to be categorised as a 'virtual community', a group existing in virtual settings should meet six sets of criteria: (1) active, self-sustaining participation; a core of regular participants; (2) shared history, purpose, culture, norms and values; (3) solidarity, support, reciprocity; (4) criticism, conflict, means of conflict resolution; (5) self-awareness of group as an entity distinct from other groups; and (6) emergence of roles, hierarchy, governance, rituals (Herring, 2004, p. 339).

Some scholars (see Brewer & Yuki, 2013) discuss groups in terms of essentialism and entitativity, which are two dimensions of group cognition. Essentialism is the *'extent to which members of a given social group or*

social category are perceived to have some immutable underlying characteristics ('essence') in common that defines their group membership', while entitativity defines *'the extent to which a particular social group is perceived to be a meaningful, cohesive collective entity (as opposed to a loose aggregate of individuals)'* (Brewer & Yuki, 2013, p. 6-7). In terms of entitativity both physical and virtual communities can be divided into common-bond (members have close interpersonal ties) and common-identity (members are united by the shared collective identity) groups (Carr, 2021; Prentice et al., 1994).

Collective social identity is characterised by the process of depersonalisation (Brewer & Gardner, 1996) or deindividuation – *'the loss of awareness of one's self as an individual, often while in a group'* (Carr, 2021, p. 69). The social identity of virtual group members is constructed discursively, which has already been argued in many studies (see Dubrovskaya & Yuskaeva, 2021; Herring, 2004). Scholars study axiological and linguistic aspects of identity construction (Dankova & Dubrovskaya, 2018; Dubrovskaya, 2019), the genres of association and disassociation in professional online communities (Dankova & Dubrovskaya, 2019) and support exchange strategies (Maestre et al., 2018).

Virtual community is an important source of social support (Carr, 2021; Wellman & Gulia, 1999). However, group interaction is not limited to positive, supportive representations. In the situation of threat to a group, the collective self is activated (Lee et al., 2013; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). As Lee et al. (2013) have argued, *'harm to anyone in one's group is felt as harm to all and motivates the defence of the group through harming an (undifferentiated) outgroup member'* (Lee et al., 2013, p. 248). Protecting one's own and the group's honour is highly important for its members and a reason for consolidation.

2.2. Language aggression

There have been debates concerning the definitions related to research on language and conflict. Janicki (2017) points to *'the lengthy discussions often expressing dissatisfaction and worries concerning the definitions of the central concepts such as conflict, aggression, hate speech and insult'* and argues against the essentialist views that require a single acknowledged definition of any concept (Janicki, 2017, p. 156). Therefore, it would be expedient to specify that in our understanding of aggression, we draw on a claim that it is *'any behaviour directed toward another individual, carried out*

with the proximate (immediate) intent to cause harm' (Anderson & Bushman, 2002, p. 28). Depending on the pragmatic context, aggression may perform various functions: in a right context it is a means of social adaptation. Exaggerated aggression or aggression expressed out of context can be considered as 'pathological' (Bedrosian & Nelson, 2018).

Language aggression as a phenomenon of daily communication has been under scrutiny (Sedov, 2005; Zhelvis, 2001). As Sedov (2005) argued, aggression takes place in situations of conflict and depending on numerous factors it can be expressed in various forms. Sedov's (2005) classification of language aggression types is based on ten binary oppositions, such as verbal vs non-verbal, direct vs indirect, initiative vs reactive, instrumental vs noninstrumental, initial vs reactive, active vs passive, spontaneous vs prepared, emotional vs rational, strong vs weak, hostile vs non-hostile. The nature of language aggression has been investigated in numerous studies which include discussing aggression in the context of digital ethics (Sparby & Reyman, 2020), studying the forms of digital aggression by means of relevance-theoretic approach (Padilla Cruz, 2019), examining aggression within (im)politeness theory (Tenekedzi, 2022). Aggression is intervened in different social practices and takes place in various types of discourse – political, media, family discourse among the rest (Baldi et al., 2018; Georgalidou et al., 2020; Johnson, 2018). It has been argued that offensive language can be a tool of violent rhetoric depicting new symbols and new social sensitivity (Baldi et al., 2018). Some studies (Padilla Cruz, 2019; Steksova, 2013) have been devoted to the linguistic and discursive manifestations of aggression. Analysing different ways of aggression actualisation in online environment, Steksova (2013) concludes that language aggression affects the strategies of communicative behaviour in a negative way and provokes reactive aggressive comments.

3. MATERIAL AND METHODS

Professional communities can be studied as the communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) – 'a collection of people who engage on an ongoing basis in some common endeavour' (Eckert, 2009, p. 109). In the course of its development a community of practice establishes the ways of doing things together, common values, power relations, attitudes to other communities and ways of talking. A community of practice is the locus of identity and its linguistic construction (Eckert, 2009). Theoretically, the paper is informed by social

identity theory and linguistic pragmatics. Adopting a methodology that draws on an inferential model of communication, we analyse aggressive utterances and their meanings in situational contexts. Thus, we turn to Grice's (1975) cooperative principle, implicatures, and politeness theory. To some extent we also draw on CDA which sees 'language as social practice' and emphasises the crucial role of 'context of language use' (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). Discourse 'constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people' (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 258).

For this study, we have selected 400 posts containing the situations of conflict and aggression published from January to March 2022. These posts were retrieved from three professional online communities established for the collegial communication between teachers in the VKontakte network: (1) *Подслушано у учителей / Secrets of Teachers* (SoT, 2022); (2) *Злой учитель / Angry Teacher* (AT, 2022); (3) *Учителя истории и обществознания / Teachers of History and Social Studies* (THSS, 2022).

Russian speaking audience forms the core of participants in VKontakte communities. We keep the writers' original spelling and punctuation in the original examples while at the same time offering translations of the original posts from Russian into English.

The data are analysed qualitatively, and the analysis consists of the following steps: (1) defining the main actors of professional group communication; (2) revealing the situations that trigger aggressive comments; (3) specifying the forms of aggression actualisation; (4) systematising the linguistic resources of aggression.

4. STUDY RESULTS

4.1. Metacommentary

The individual and collective poles co-exist in the process of group communication. On the one hand, each post is published by an individual who has the right to express their opinion if it does not contradict the basic rules of the community. Members of a given community are fully aware of this fact and may explicitly point it out. The subjective status of personal views is often conveyed through the metacommunicative comments. Following Michael Stubbs, we take metacommunication to be 'verbal monitoring of the speech situation' (Stubbs, 1983, p. 48), which includes speech actions such as controlling the channels of communication and turn-taking, quality and quantity control. In other words, communicants' discourse is the object of

metacommentary. One of the linguistic markers that is indicative of metacommentary is the lexeme ‘opinion’, which is often used to refer to an individual stance in understanding professional issues:

(1) *Такое мое не экспертное мнение [This is my non-expert opinion] (THSS).*

(2) *Моё мнение, что лучше проводить беседы, диспуты, обсуждать что происходит в мире, что происходит в стране. Что в этом плохого? [In my opinion it's better to have conversations, debates, to discuss what is happening in the world, what is happening in the country. What's wrong with it?] (THSS).*

(3) *И учитель тот человек, который сможет авторитетно объяснить многие вещи. Это моё мнение. Вы, конечно, можете иметь своё [And a teacher is a person who can authoritatively explain many things. It's my opinion. Of course, you may have yours] (THSS).*

On the other hand, the collective identity is the phenomenon that keeps the professional community together and is constructed in the course of professional communication. This principle is displayed verbally, as in Example (4), whose author emphasises the collective power drawing a conclusion on the character of relations in the community. In Example (5), when sending congratulations on the professional holiday the writer wishes ‘health and patience to all of us’, thus, constructing a collective identity:

(4) *Прекрасно, так и надо. Вместе мы сила! [Great, that's right. Union is strength!] (AT).*

(5) *Коллеги! С прошедшим! Дай Бог всем нам здоровья и терпения! [Colleagues! Belated holiday greetings! May God bless us all with health and patience!] (THSS).*

Both metacommunicative references to subjectivity of an opinion and discursive indications of grouping help to maintain a harmonious environment. Yet, aggression is not rare in online communities, and in what follows we will reveal its principal patterns. It is important to note that aggressive comments are usually reactive in their nature, since they emerge when a member undermines the basic axiological standards of the community, which leads to an argument. A virtual community as a balanced mechanism embraces a few categories of participants which comprise in-group members including group admins, who moderate the community, and members of out-groups. All of them can become objects of aggression. Our analysis has shown that aggression in professional online communities is shaped predominantly in two ways: through insulting aggressive comments and aggression of exclusion. We discuss them in what follows.

‘In-group member can become an object of assault in case of their violating the norms of the community. In one of the previous studies, it has been shown that competence is one of the key values for teachers’ professional groups. Incompetence is harshly criticised by the speakers, very often in an impolite manner’

4.2. Insulting aggression

In-group member can become an object of assault in case of their violating the norms of the community. In one of the previous studies, it has been shown that competence is one of the key values for teachers’ professional groups (Dubrovskaya & Yuskaeva, 2021). Incompetence is harshly criticised by the speakers, very often in an impolite manner. The comments in Example (6) were posted under a novice teacher’s post who confessed that she did not perform her duties in an appropriate way and had no motivation to teach.

(6) Answer 1: *И как после такого учителей уважать? Я не про всех огульно, а про таких ‘особей’.* Answer 2: *Гнать Вас поганой метлой надо из образования – что государственного, что частного.* Comment 1: *Какая патетика! Там на диване лежало ваше белое пальто.* Comment 2: *И корону не забудьте прибить посильнее – не свои короны обычно падают [Answer 1: And how can one respect teachers after this? I am not talking indiscriminately, only about such ‘species’.* Answer 2: *You should be kicked out of education, both public and private.* Comment 1: *Such pathos! Your white coat was lying on the couch over there.* Comment 2: *And don’t forget to fix the crown better – others’ crowns usually fall] (SoT).*

In terms of language, insulting aggressive comments contain specific markers, including the lexis with negative connotations, deontic modality, dehumanising nominations. All of these can be found in Example (6). The idiom *гнать поганой метлой* (literally – drive out with a filthy broom) is used to show contempt towards the unprofessional group member, to treat her as an unnecessary part of the professional circle. The statement is structured through deontic modality, which indicates an action that is desirable in the author’s view (*You should be driven out with a filthy broom*). The word *особь* (species) is used as a pejorative to dehumanise a colleague and to show disrespect. However, as this community serves as a platform for social support, the victim of a verbal assault is defended by other members of the in-group. This case is illustrated in Comments 1

and 2 of Example (6). The expression *белое пальто* (a white coat – a phrase indicating a person who is trying to look better than others) and the metaphoric expression *прибить корону* (to fix a crown) are used to criticise the teacher who demonstrates her superiority.

Showing off, which contradicts the collective spirit, is tacitly forbidden in the community and, thus, provokes resistance:

(7) Дмитрий, 'я' последняя буква в алфавите (с) [Dmitriy, 'я' is the last letter in the alphabet (c)] (SoT).

(8) Ира, согласна, что учителя сами портят свой имидж и стали вести себя не как когда-то уважаемая интеллигенция, а как базарные халды (простите за выражение) – злобные, заносчивые, всезнающие про других и про другую работу всё-всё. Стыдно за таких коллег [Ira, I agree that the teachers themselves are destroying their image and have begun to behave not like the once respected intelligentsia, but like market shrews (pardon the expression) – malicious, arrogant, omniscient about others and about others' work. I am ashamed of such colleagues] (SoT).

(9) Вы слишком высокого о себе мнения. Вы никому ничего дать не можете, самовлюблённый нарцисс! [You are too high on yourself. You can't give anything to anyone, you self-serving narcissist!] (SoT).

(10) Агата, какая вы невоспитанная. Учите своих детей в классе, а не взрослых незнакомых людей [Agatha, how rude you are. Teach your children in the classroom, not adult strangers] (SoT).

The Russian expression 'я' – последняя буква в алфавите refers to the position of the letter я, which is at the same time a first-person singular pronoun and demonstrates a collectivist approach to group relations. The expression *слишком высокого о себе мнения* in Example (9) is used to remind of the equality principle adopted in a community. The denigrating noun *narcissist* in its meaning referring to Greek mythology in Example (9) is used to criticise a colleague for showing off. A colloquial pejorative *базарные халды* (used for nominating rude, arrogant women in Russian) (8) and depreciative epithets *злобные, заносчивые* (8) give a negative assessment and openly manifest aggression. The author of the comment contrasts rude, illiterate teachers with the respected intelligent elite of the past, while the marker of the emotional state (*стыдно* – ashamed of) indicates the author's personal involvement in the situation. The patronising position (Example 10) is not accepted by the community members. The writer in Example (10) marks a social distance between the group members (*незнакомых людей* – strangers), uses a depreciative epithet *невоспитанная*, and gives a command by means of the imperative sentence.

'The individual and collective poles co-exist in the process of group communication. On the one hand, each post is published by an individual who has the right to express their opinion if it does not contradict the basic rules of the community. Members of a given community are fully aware of this fact and may explicitly point it out. The subjective status of personal views is often conveyed through the metacommunicative comments'

Joining the discussion and not being able to prove one's point of view can be regarded as ignorance and causes harsh reactions:

(11) А: Лида, жду цитату, а не ваши измышлизмы. В: Ирина, жди, я ничего тебе не обещала [A: Lida, I'm waiting for a quote, not your speculations. B: Wait, I haven't promised you anything] (SoT).

(12) Дарья, ну ты и бред сказала, История России – это часть мировой истории, как вообще можно изучать и знать историю России, не зная основ Всемирной истории [Daria, what nonsense, the history of Russia is part of world history, how can one study and know the history of Russia without knowing the basics of world history] (THSS).

A shift in grammatical forms in Russian, specifically the so-called T/V distinction, may signal a change from harmonious communication to aggression. Normally, in Russian academic communication colleagues address each other with a second person plural pronoun *вы* (polite form), while the form *ты* (second person singular) is reserved for informal communication. In Example (11) the teacher insults a colleague using the word *измышлизмы* (the ideas which are untrue) while at the same time keeping the polite form of you. To repel this attack the second teacher shifts from *вы* to *ты* pronoun, which is considered rude and inappropriate in communication between strangers. Similarly, in Example (12) the combination of the impolite *ты* (second person singular pronoun) and a dismissive lexeme *бред* (nonsense) construct an aggressive statement. Thus, the elements of social deixis establish and change social distance as well as the degree of harmony or hostility in communication.

Expressing doubts concerning the intellectual abilities of a member is particularly denigrating in the context of an academic community, where critical thinking and reason are viewed as the main virtues:

'All groups tend to protect their boundaries, and professional online communities are no exception to the rule. If a group member is being offensive or 'toxic', others may try to stop this kind of behaviour, and the person becomes ostracised. Such group behaviour has now received the label 'cancel culture'

(13) *Адекватным должен быть УЧИТЕЛЬ. Вы уверены, что вы такая? У вас, уважаемая, большая проблема: вы хотите денег и комфорта. Но без работы [A TEACHER must be reasonable. Are you sure that you are such a person? You have a problem, dear, you want money and comfort without work] (SoT).*

(14) *Вы о чём сейчас вообще? Вы внимательно читаете комментарии? Речь о том, что бухгалтер не начисляет по журналу ЗП, начисления идут совсем по другим документам, андестенд? [What are you talking about? Are you reading the comments attentively? The point is that an accountant does not charge salary according to school register, but according to other documents, understand?] (SoT).*

In Russian the word *уважаемый* is used when addressing the opponent if a person wants to express a respect. If this lexeme is not followed by a noun, it gains a negative connotation. In the situation of conflict (13) the isolated word *уважаемый* conveys disrespect. The misunderstanding of the topic and teachers' comments is also regarded as a sign of ignorance. In Example (14) a group member blames a colleague in an insulting manner. She marks her opponent's misunderstanding and explains the situation once again. Interrogative sentences in Examples (13, 14) are offensive because they are used to express the doubt that the opponent belongs to the professional group (13) and to emphasise the failure to understand correctly (14).

The language of aggression is often based on flouting the cooperative principle (Grice, 1975), specifically the maxim of quality and the maxim of relation. In Examples (15) and (16), the commentators to the original posts choose the tactic of 'reductio ad absurdum', when the literal meaning of their statements does not meet the criteria of being true or relevant. Therefore, the addressees have to take additional efforts to make the utterances meaningful, and even then, the meanings revealed are not flattering to them. On the contrary, the poignant comments imply a complete absurdity of the original posts. In Example (15), a teacher suggests cancelling the current system of school exams, to which she receives a counter proposal to wear bast shoes:

(15) *А: И ЕГЭ и ОГЭ отменить... Экзамены вступительные как было раньше. В: Людмила, и в лаптях ходить, как было раньше. [A: To cancel The USE (the Unified State Exam) and the MSE (the Main State Exam)... To pass entrance exams, as it was before. B: Ludmila, and to wear bast shoes, as it was before] (AT).*

Apparently, the proposal to wear bast shoes implies getting back to old times, which would be as impossible and meaningless as would cancelling the modern system of school exams. In Example (16), the writer suggests that the opponent should 'wash their brain with water from a well':

(16) *Марина, промойте мозги колодезной водой [Marina, wash your brain with water from a well] (AT).*

To interpret this utterance one needs some insight into Russian folk culture, where water from a well was ascribed healing qualities and the power to exorcise the evil. Apparently, one cannot wash their brain, as it is not physically doable. Yet, taken in the context of background knowledge, the advice conveys in an aggressive form an implicit evaluation of the addressee's poor mental capacities, which need some magic help.

4.3. Aggression of exclusion

All groups tend to protect their boundaries, and professional online communities are no exception to the rule. If a group member is being offensive or 'toxic', others may try to stop this kind of behaviour, and the person becomes ostracised. Such group behaviour has now received the label 'cancel culture' referring to *'the popular practice of withdrawing support for (canceling) public figures and companies after they have done or said something considered objectionable or offensive; generally discussed as being performed on social media in the form of group shaming'* (Ng, 2020, p. 621).

In example (17) a group member is excluded explicitly for being toxic through giving reasons for the following exclusion:

(17) *Это вы засунули свой нос в мой комментарий. Кыш отсюда со своим негативом [It was you who stuck your nose into my comment. Scram with your negativity] (SoT).*

The idiom *совать свой нос* (stick one's nose in) showing disapproval and the interjection *кыш* (which is employed in Russian to shoo birds, animals, etc.) are used to protect the personal boundaries.

While arguing the members use an extended metaphor of political debates:

(18) *Ой, давайте без лозунгов, без вас ораторов хватает [Oh, let's do without slogans, there are enough speakers but you] (SoT).*

(19) *Ваш сарказм не совсем уместен, поупражняйтесь в красноречии в другом месте [Your sarcasm is not entirely appropriate, practice your eloquence somewhere else] (SoT).*

Lexemes with the semantics of disassociation (*без вас, в другом месте*) present the opponents as unnecessary and make them redundant.

The out-group members and their comments are often dismissed as irrelevant to the community, sometimes with an explicit reference to their supposed place of belonging. A direct indication of ‘the parents’ group’ draws a sharp boundary between teachers and parents, constructing the opposition ‘us vs them’:

(20) *Вы можете выражать своё мнение в группе родителей. Меня ваше мнение не интересует [You can express your opinion in the community for parents. I’m not interested in your opinion] (AT).*

If a participant in the discussion is not willing to continue an argument, they put a verbal stop to it through an explicit refusal to be involved: *let’s agree to disagree, отвечать больше не буду (I won’t answer you)*. Imperative structures as part of good wishing followed by hostile remarks gain negative connotations in context:

(21) *Попутного ветра. Только уж не удаляйте больше так трусливо свои сообщения [Wishing you fair winds! Just don’t delete your posts so cowardly anymore] (SoT).*

(22) *А: Выпейте уже чайку и оставьте мою персону в покое, и всё. В: Ой, да и вам счастья-здоровья [A: Have a cup of tea and leave me alone, that’s all. B: Oh, I wish you happiness and health too] (SoT).*

A phraseological unit *попутного ветра* in Example (21) is a case of conversational implicature. The maxim of relevance has been flouted, since the literal meaning of the speech act (wishing good luck) is different from the underlying intention (getting rid of the opponent). Similarly, a polite imperative *выпейте уже чайку* (have a cup of tea) in Example (22) is not a sign of care, but a marker of exclusion, which is correctly interpreted by the opponent who returns good wishes.

Irony is yet another technique that is based on conversational implicatures and often serves as a means of disassociation. According to the classical view, irony can be understood as ‘a special form of language use, by which what is said (sentence meaning) is used to communicate what is unsaid (speaker’s meaning)’ (Giora, 1998, p. 2). The ironic comments in Example (23) were posted as a reaction to a parents’ post about two cards of her child – a banking card and a Pushkin card. The latter contains a sum of money provided by a state, which can be spent on different cultural events. The

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parent does not understand a difference between the two cards and expresses concerns that the money can be stolen.

(23) *Answer 1: Учителя в розыск. Уверена, что все средства с пушкинских карт выведены в офшоры. Деньги вернуть нереально, опека бессильна. Answer 2: А какое отношение Пушкинская карта имеет к счету в банке и опеке? Comment 1: Ну, видимо, автор боится, что теперь Пушкин понаберёт кредитов, понакупит имений, а платить за это придётся родителям. Comment 2: Точно, про Пушкина я и не подумала) карта же его имени. Comment 3: Бедный Пушкин. Answer 3: Пушкинская карта и счет в банке – это вообще разные вещи. Comment 1: Неважно. Яжмать вспомнила слово ‘опека’ [Answer 1: The teacher should be put on the wanted list. I am sure that all funds from Pushkin cards have been transferred to offshore accounts. It is impossible to return the money, custody office is powerless. Answer 2: [And what does the Pushkin card have to do with a bank account and custody office? Comment 1: Well, apparently, the author is afraid that Pushkin is going to get loans, buy estates, and parents will have to pay for it. Comment 2: [exactly, I didn’t even think about Pushkin. The card wears his name. Comment 3: Poor Pushkin. Answer 3: A Pushkin card and a bank account are absolutely different things. Comment 1: It doesn’t matter. ‘Iamamother’ remembered the ‘custody office’] (AT).*

The members of the in-group interpret the parent’s post as an insulting one. School staff is indirectly blamed for being dishonest and the members of professional community use absurd comments (23, Answer 2) to protect their face. In the comments teachers intentionally attribute potentially criminal activities to the deceased poet. The pragmatic function of such ironic comments is to emphasise the narrow-mindedness of the opponent. Talking about a group member in the third person is the aggressive way of behaviour. It is not appropriate and can be treated as a sign of exclusion. The neologism *яжмать* (used to talk about a mother who

behaves in the arrogant way) in Example (23, Answer 3) emphasises a group member's contempt for this representative of the out-group. These implicit aggressive comments are based on flouting the principle of cooperation.

5. DISCUSSION

The analysis has demonstrated that language aggression is pervasive in professional virtual communities and can be aimed at both in-group and out-group members, who violate the norms of the community based on the shared values and beliefs. In this respect aggression constitutes a form of social control.

Depending on how explicit aggressive comments are, and whether they aggravate argument or put an end to it, we distinguish between insulting aggression and aggression of exclusion (Table 1). The former is usually enacted in a direct way and messages can be easily interpreted by the object of aggression. The main tactics and mechanisms include dehumanising, negative evaluation, blaming, social deixis, 'reductio ad absurdum' and references to one's emotional involvement in the situation of conflict. The linguistic resources that enact these tactics embrace pejoratives, depreciative epithets, colloquialisms, informal expressions, lexemes with semantics of emotional state, imperatives, means of deontic modality and a shift in using polite/impolite forms of address. As for aggression of exclusion, it results in a visible termination of argument. Yet, it happens at the expense of 'cancelling' a group member

through dismissing them as unimportant, unintelligent or not belonging to the community. The following tactics are employed to exclude a member: opposing this member to the group and drawing a boundary between 'us' and 'them', putting a verbal stop to the conversation, talking about somebody present in the third person. Such techniques as irony and 'reductio ad absurdum' reveal their great potential in the aggression of exclusion.

The interplay between the literal meaning of speech acts and the underlying intention results in conversational implicatures, whose interpretation depends on cultural and educational background of the communicants, who tend to exceed the semantic information available and rely on pragmatic clues to a great extent. The linguistic forms of aggression of exclusion comprise lexemes with semantics of exclusion, lexis with negative connotation, excluding interjections, and irony.

Aggression in the virtual environment remains a phenomenon that needs further studies both in terms of triggering situations, people's behaviour and linguistics forms, and we hope that the findings of the present study have contributed to illuminating some of these aspects.

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Table 1

Language aggression in virtual professional communities: Forms and linguistic resources

FORM	AIM	PRAGMATIC MECHANISMS AND TACTICS	LINGUISTIC RESOURCES
Insulting Aggression	to re-establish group values	flouting the cooperative principle; referring to one's emotional state; 'reductio ad absurdum'; deontic modality; social deixis	pejoratives, depreciative epithets, colloquialisms, informal expressions, lexemes with semantics of emotional state, imperatives, modal verbs, a shift in using polite/impolite forms of address
Aggression of Exclusion	to protect group boundaries excluding a member who is being offensive	cancelling an opponent; providing reasons for exclusion; 'reductio ad absurdum'; constructing 'us –them' opposition; conversational implicatures	lexemes with semantics of exclusion, words and phrases with negative connotation, excluding interjections, irony, a shift to the 3rd person

6. CONCLUSION

The study presented in this paper analyses the language aggression in virtual professional communities. These groups are established for constructing, maintaining and defending collective identities. Nonetheless, aggressive behaviour is quite common to community members. The analysis has proved that language aggression in virtual communities may perform the constructive function of social control, which helps to preserve the cohesion of a group.

In the course of online interaction, community members resort to different forms of language aggression. Insulting aggression is implemented to re-establish group values, whereas aggression of exclusion is used to protect group boundaries through excluding a mem-

ber who is being offensive. As can be seen, not only do they differ in the pragmatic mechanisms of their actualisation, but also in the linguistic resources employed.

As virtual communities display high level of aggression, while at the same time remaining loci for unity and solidarity, it would be relevant to investigate the linguistic mechanisms of confronting the aggressive online behaviour as well as the interplay between aggression and communal solidarity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The study is supported by Russian Science Foundation Project No. 20-68-46003 'The semantics of unity and animosity in Russian lexis and phraseology: Language system and discourse'.

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Original Research

This can be made more student-centred: Asynchronous mediation in in-service teacher professional development

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Article history Received August 26, 2022 | November 28, 2022 | Accepted December 1, 2022

Conflicts of interest The authors declared no conflicts of interest

Research funding No funding was reported for this research

doi 10.22363/2521-442X-2022-6-4-73-90

For citation Kareva, V., Rasskazova, T., & Leontjev, D. (2022). This can be made more student-centred: Asynchronous mediation in in-service teacher professional development. *Training, Language and Culture*, 6(4), 73-90.

Vygotskian Sociocultural Theory is a powerful foundation for research into teacher professional development. However, while this research has been growing, it has largely been focused on pre-service second/foreign language. Furthermore, there is a lack of research on how the instructional process informed by the principles of Sociocultural Theory, including assessment of candidates' mediated performance, can be orchestrated to promote teachers' conceptual development and induce changes in their classroom practices. The present study explores how asynchronous assessment of in-service teachers' portfolios (with the focus on lesson planning) informed by dynamic assessment framework shaped the tutor's mediation in synchronous online interaction with two teacher candidates. Theoretically, the study was informed by Vygotskian notion of true concepts. Focusing on two candidates in the training, we traced their trajectories regarding their conceptual development and the development of their practices. We will namely, illustrate how the information received in assessment guided the tutor's mediation, and how the synchronous interactions in the course shaped and helped to interpret the assessment of candidates' unassisted and mediated performance on portfolios. We will discuss implications of our study and will argue for shifting the focus beyond single classroom activities in Sociocultural Theory research.

KEYWORDS: *in-service teacher training, sociocultural theory, mediation, Zone of Proximal Development, true concepts, praxis*



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1. INTRODUCTION

The interest towards Vygotskian sociocultural theory (SCT) in research in second/foreign language (L2) teaching and learning in the classroom has only been growing. It has had different foci, including organisation of pedagogical activities leading learner development (see Poehner & Leontjev, 2022; Van Compernelle & Williams, 2013), dynamic assessment (DA) (Poehner,

2008), and dialectical collaboration with L2 pre- and in-service teachers (Donato & Davin, 2018; Johnson & Golombek, 2016).

What also unites these strands of research is their commitment to *praxis*, a dialectical unity of theory and practice fundamental to SCT research. In praxis, theoretical principles and concepts are used to change practice while themselves are validated in it. Veresov (2014,

p. 133) argues that praxis is predicated on the understanding that *'theory without an experiment is a voluntary play of mind; an experiment without a theory is a knife without a handle'*.

One line of research informed by praxis that has recently been gaining prominence is pre-service and in-service teacher professional development, even though the latter is less frequent (Johnson & Golombek, 2018; Lantolf et al., 2021). In this line of research, theoretical concepts and principles are actively used to transform teacher practices, dialectically coming together with teachers' everyday understandings stemming from their experiences (Johnson & Golombek, 2018). We will elaborate on this research below. Here we mention that the sociocultural notion of *mediation* becomes important in teacher development in praxis.

Vygotsky (1978, 1987; see also Wertsch, 1985) argued that human higher mental functions are mediated by cultural and psychological tools. When acting independently, the resources individuals use to regulate the activity are limited to those they have fully internalised. By participating in an activity with others, individuals have access to joint resources available on the interpersonal plane. Vygotsky (1978) discussed this with regard to *Zone of Proximal Development* (ZPD), emerging once others intervene in the psychological activity, allowing the individual to perform beyond their unassisted capabilities (Vygotsky, 1978). For education, this understanding of development is important for several reasons. First, observations of independent performance only reveal matured abilities. A fuller picture emerges when the learner's mediated performance is considered. Second, the teaching-learning process or activity leads development, that is, what the learner can do with support now, this learner will be able to do independently in future. Indeed, novel abilities emerge in collaboration with a more knowledgeable teacher educator in praxis with teachers.

Reports on praxis with teachers have different foci, including developing pre-service teachers' ability to guide their learners' development (see Johnson & Golombek, 2016; Lantolf & Poehner, 2011), merging summative and formative assessment in their classroom practices (Leontjev & Pollari, 2022; Poehner & Inbar-Lourie, 2020), and developing equitable teaching practices building on empathy and theoretical concepts (Smagorinsky & Johnson, 2021). There has been a growing body of research on dynamic assessment (DA), a dialectical unity of teaching and assessment (Poehner, 2008), in L2 (second/foreign language). However, there

is rarely a focus on assessment in teacher development SCT research, and that which exists focuses on single assessment activities rather than on how assessment informs the instructional process. The present study addresses this gap.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Sociocultural theory in teacher education

SCT research on teacher development is strongly informed by Vygotsky's (1998) work on concepts arguing that the major reason for the development of school children is the introduction of scientific concepts in formal education. These are contrasted with everyday (spontaneous) concepts grounded in day-to-day life experiences. Spontaneous concepts are not replaced with scientific concepts but enter into a dialectical relationship with them. In other words, neither an intuitive understanding of how things work nor the decontextualised and systematic scientific concepts alone create optimal opportunities for development. Instruction can truly be called properly organised when a scientific concept *'gradually comes down to concrete phenomena'* and a spontaneous concept *'goes from the phenomenon upward toward generalisations'* (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 148), forming what is called a true concept.

Teachers enter their profession with everyday concepts or understanding based on their experiences and preconceptions, which develop with teaching experience, and which should be transformed into true concepts as academic concepts are introduced through mediated support (Johnson & Golombek, 2018). In SCT research on teacher development, the terms *academic concepts* (see Johnson & Golombek, 2011; 2018) and *pedagogical concepts* (Johnson et al., 2020) are also used. The former is used interchangeably with *scientific concepts* (Johnson & Golombek, 2018). Unlike academic concepts, pedagogical concepts focus on *'how to teach, rather than what to teach'* (Johnson et al., 2020, p. 4). They are defined operationally and are *'modelled in the activity of actual teaching'* (Johnson et al., 2020, p. 6). Johnson et al. (2020) focused on pedagogical concepts, exploring how concepts of *Teach off Your Students, Not at Them* (building on learners' contributions in instructional conversation), *Be Direct, Not Directive* (helping learners construct knowledge, not taking agency away from them), and *Teaching as Connecting* (shaping learners' development while responding to institutional and curricular goals) helped novice teachers move from being teacher-centred.

'Reports on praxis with teachers have different foci, including developing pre-service teachers' ability to guide their learners' development, merging summative and formative assessment in their classroom practices, and developing equitable teaching practices building on empathy and theoretical concepts'

When internalised, concepts become a powerful means for transforming teachers' practices. Reis (2011), for example, in a narrative inquiry, studied the development of the L1 Russian participant's identity as she re-structured her everyday conceptualisation of a native speaker, building her understanding of self as a teaching professional. Nauman (2011) focused on one in-service L1 Chinese teacher's development mediated by the literacy concept (*literacy involves communication*) for two terms. The author argued that classrooms are an important context for teacher development, as it is there that teachers can connect academic concepts with their practice.

The emergence of true concepts and, as a result, changes in teacher practices have been studied with different foci, using different data, in different time-frames, and with various numbers of participants. These include focusing on developing teaching materials allowing pre-service teachers to make sense of their experiences and theoretical knowledge together (Augusto-Navarro, 2015), development of pedagogical content knowledge (Worden, 2015), development of equitable teaching resulting from the internalisation – incorporation of cultural tools to mental processes and their reconstruction to mediate psychological functioning in novel situations and activities – of the *emphatic framing* concept that pre-service four teachers discussed in a reading circle (Smagorinsky & Johnson, 2021), and teachers moving away from teacher-centred practices (Amory, 2020).

Moving away from teacher-centred practices is particularly important in contexts where such practices have long been prevalent. Cirocki and Farelly (2016), for example, investigated to what extent Armenian EFL teachers ($n = 80$) engaged in classroom research, arguing for further exploration of Armenian teachers' understanding of research and reflection. Feryok (2008) discussed divergences of cognition and practices of an in-service English teacher in Armenia who received her

tertiary education in the Soviet times and, by the time of the data collection, had had ten years of teaching experience. The author illustrated that while, for the teacher, encouraging student participation was important, the assistance the teacher gave her students was explicit and limiting.

More recent examples of praxis-informed research include Leontjev and Pollari (2022), focusing on merging formative and summative assessment in the classroom, Johnson (2022) who explored mentoring as mediation leading to a novice teacher creating opportunities for learner engagement and participation, as well as Poehner and Leontjev (2022), and Leontjev and deBoer (2022), who explored how different classroom activities created learner development together.

Informed by these studies, we together with the tutor understand the development of the candidates in the course as their conceptual development which led to changes in their classroom management. In other words, this development implied the candidates' understanding of academic concepts through their practices as well as the interpretation and changes in their practices through and due to the academic concepts.

The guidance, particularly in the formal training environment, requires knowing how to guide. In the SCT research, this guidance depends on the degree of responsibility learners are able to take for their performance, that is, their ZPD. Yet, few studies have explored the use of principles of dynamic assessment (DA) to diagnose teacher professional development. In the following section, we elaborate on the DA framework and on how it can inform teacher development programmes.

2.2. Dynamic assessment

The dynamic assessment (DA) framework emerged from Vygotsky's (1998) discussion of ZPD as a diagnostic tool. The basis for the DA is the understanding that the full picture of learner abilities is revealed when learner performance with various forms of mediation is taken into account (Poehner, 2008). In DA, therefore, teaching and assessment are dialectically related; that is, assessment requires teaching to identify learners' maturing abilities, whereas teaching needs assessment to optimally promote learner development (Poehner & Infante, 2015).

Mediation in DA is informed by the work of Al-jaafreh and Lantolf (1994), who argue that mediation should be provided when needed and withdrawn as learners assume responsibility for their performance

(contingency principle), be implicit enough to give the learner the most responsibility for their performance and explicit enough to create novel ways of thinking and acting (graduated principle) and emerge in a joint activity with the learner (dialogic principle). DA is also informed by the notion of reciprocity stemming from the work of Feuerstein (see Feuerstein et al., 2010). *Reciprocity* emerges from the understanding that mediation both limits and creates opportunities for the learner to react. That is, the mediator's intention to promote the learner's development shapes the way the learner responds to it, which guides the following mediation (see Lidz, 1991; Poehner, 2005).

In interventionist DA, a standardised list of prompts is used, following from implicit to explicit mediational moves rigorously for all learners for greater objectivity of results (Lantolf & Poehner, 2004). As Lantolf and Poehner (2011) state, '*interactionist DA places no restrictions on mediation but instead demands that the mediator do everything possible to help the learner stretch beyond his/her current independent performance*' (Lantolf & Poehner, 2011, p. 15). In other words, in interactionist DA, mediation is flexible and has a greater focus on learner development than on assessment, even though both foci are present.

In the field of L2, DA has been applied, for example, to assess learners' writing (see Rahimi et al., 2015), listening (see Rasskazova & Glukhanyuk, 2018), reading (see Teo, 2012), grammar and vocabulary (Leontjev, 2016), and several competences together. Dynamic assessment has also been used to teach L2 concepts (García, 2019). These implementations of DA, however, have largely focused on L2 learners.

Reports on DA in L2 teacher development have been scarce and focused on synchronous DA implementation. Golombek (2011) reported on a synchronous DA session using Dynamic Video Protocol with an MA student. García (2019) reported on a case study where synchronous DA was employed to assess and promote an in-service language teacher's conceptual development. García (2019) argued for the inclusion of DA in language teachers' in-service training for assessing and promoting their conceptual knowledge about language.

This is not to say that asynchronous mediation has not been employed in teacher development. Reis' (2011) study, for example, exploring the internalisation of the concept of native-speaker vs non-native speaker, involved asynchronous mediation. However, it was not focused on diagnosing teachers' ZPD.

Still, asynchronous DA implementations have been discussed in the field of L2 learner development. Shrestha (2020) described an implementation of asynchronous DA in a university academic writing course in detail. Four undergraduate business studies students participated in two DA sessions with the tutor/author, submitting four drafts in the first DA session and three in the second DA. The author provided their mediation asynchronously via emails. Analysing mediational and reciprocity moves, the author traced how the participants' academic writing developed as they internalised the mediation. Importantly, Shrestha (2020) provided a detailed typology of mediation and reciprocity moves, some of them specific to asynchronous interaction (for other mediation and reciprocity typologies, see Poehner, 2005).

Our paper addresses the lack of studies exploring how assessment informed by SCT can become a part of teacher development programmes. The assessment activity informed by the DA principle of reciprocity was developed in praxis between the tutor (the first author) and the researchers (Authors 2 and 3). We explored what integrating this assessment into the training allowed for, studying how the tutor built her asynchronous mediation to learners in portfolio assignments based on what she learned about her learners by the time of the portfolio activity and how the information obtained from the portfolio assignment activity informed the tutor's classroom interactions. We will refrain from labelling this assessment activity as DA due to the challenges of integrating full DA interactions into separate portfolio assessments. We will, however, demonstrate how the portfolio assessments in the course taken together allowed for tracing the teacher candidates' growing self-regulation as the course progressed and allowed for, together with other course activities, developing their conceptual understanding of learner-centeredness.

Seen this way, the tutor's mediation in the course, as we will elaborate on, differed in that in the portfolio assessments, it focused on assessing, i.e., diagnosing the candidates' ZPD, whereas in the other course activities on the development of the candidates.

3. MATERIAL AND METHODS

3.1. Research questions

In this study, we seek to answer the following research questions: (1) What information about L2 English teachers' conceptual and methodological knowledge and ability to apply it does asynchronous mediation

'We explored what integrating this assessment into the training allowed for, studying how the tutor built her asynchronous mediation to learners in portfolio assignments based on what she learned about her learners by the time of the portfolio activity and how the information obtained from the portfolio assignment activity informed the tutor's classroom interactions'

provide? (2) How does building on the activity whose goal was assessing teachers' ZPD promote the development of in-service teachers' true concepts?

3.2. Context and assignments

The data were collected in a CELT-S course (Certificate of English Language Teaching – Secondary, by Cambridge Assessment English), a six-months in-service teacher training. The purpose of the training was to help L2 English teachers develop their classroom management skills and expand their knowledge of teaching methodology.

Learner-centredness was one of the course foci. The goal was to help teachers *'give learners more say in areas that are traditionally considered the domain of the teacher'* (Thornbury, 2006, p. 115). That is, promoting learner autonomy, including negotiation of a curriculum and classroom activities giving learners agency in pair and group work, was elicited. The focus was on methodologies and discussions of how teachers could involve learners in classroom activities, giving them ownership of their learning (Harmer, 2007). The academic and pedagogical concepts studied under the umbrella of learner-centredness included: (1) learner motivation and engagement – linking the materials to learner experiences and interests and asking open and high-order questions; (2) personalisation – techniques for making the materials relevant for the learners, including connecting the materials to the joint histories with the learners and the local contexts; (3) form-meaning-pronunciation concept, eliciting the need for teachers to focus on all three aspects of the studied linguistics phenomena. Particularly the *meaning* part of the latter concept is relevant, as the teachers tended to focus on form (e.g., of tenses), the meaning conveyed almost exclusively as a formulaic set of rules, void of contextualisation and use.

The assessment introduced into the course whose goal was diagnosing the candidates' ZPDs emerged in the praxis of the tutor and the two researchers and was based on the principles of DA. The challenges of integrating DA into the course largely emerged (1) from the educational and assessment culture the candidates came from and (2) the course constraints. The candidates came from an educational culture where a unidirectional grammar-translation approach taught by an authoritative teacher was common. Hence, as elaborated, the true concepts on which the assessment activity focused had to do with learner-centeredness. There were several constraints associated with the format of the training. First, it had to follow the syllabus. The course was mainly asynchronous, with some Zoom interactions in which the course instructor focused on deepening the candidates' knowledge. Hence, asynchronous assignments were deemed more suitable for the assessment activity, and we decided not to attempt to implement DA in the same way as Shrestha (2020), for example, did, but rather stretch the mediation across the portfolio assessments in the course, commenting on each only once.

The course included online modules completed by the participants, portfolio assignments, where portfolios 4 to 7 were mediated by the tutor and used as data, several teaching practices, of which we focus on the final, third practice, and Zoom interactions. Prior to the study, formative feedback in the course focused on (1) learner agency (including building on the prior knowledge of learner abilities), (2) making the learning manageable (focusing on learner development rather than on covering as much material as possible), (3) ensuring the development of *all* learners, (4) connecting the covered material to learners' experiences and focusing on language use more than form. This feedback had been, generally, explicit and unidirectional. Our goal was to design and implement asynchronous mediation whose goal was to diagnose and develop learners' ZPD.

Due to administrative and time constraints, we were able to start our study in the middle of the course. This, however, benefitted the mediation in the study, as the tutor had an idea of the candidates' abilities. That is, instead of starting from the most implicit mediation, allowing the candidates' struggles to emerge and assessing the candidates' degree of self-regulation (the responsibility for their own performance as opposed to other-regulation), the tutor had an idea of what the focus of the mediation ought to be by the time the portfolio assessment activities started.

While the early portfolios focused on single comprehensively defined tasks, such as introducing a grammar point, in the later portfolios, the candidates were expected to build on the conceptual understanding of strategies, methods, and materials promoting L2 learning (Appendix 1). The last teaching practice assignment focused on candidates writing their own lesson plans and executing them. Teaching practice 3 was considered the transfer assignment.

3.3. Participants

The course participants were L2 English university teachers in Tajikistan, 11 female and one male. Their teaching experience varied from three years to over twenty. The subjects they taught included practical English, phonetics, and home reading. The most commonly cited reasons for joining the course were to learn current teaching methods, improve one's teaching in general, the prestige of the course, and an opportunity to use this qualification to get teaching experience abroad.

In this study, we focus on two candidates in the course who both gave their informed consent – Candidate 1 and Candidate 4. The reason for focusing on these two candidates in this study is that they were the only two who submitted all their portfolio assignments. Both candidates have had over 18 years of teaching experience and taught similar courses as outlined above. Other candidates were present in Zoom interactions and when relevant, we will refer to their contributions in Zoom interactions.

3.4. Data and procedures

The data was collected from four portfolio assignments (Appendix 1), audio-recorded interactions with all the candidates together conducted on Zoom (hereinafter, Zoom interactions), and the final course assignment, Teaching practice 3.

The timeline of the course activities with classroom interactions and teaching practice is presented below in Figure 1.

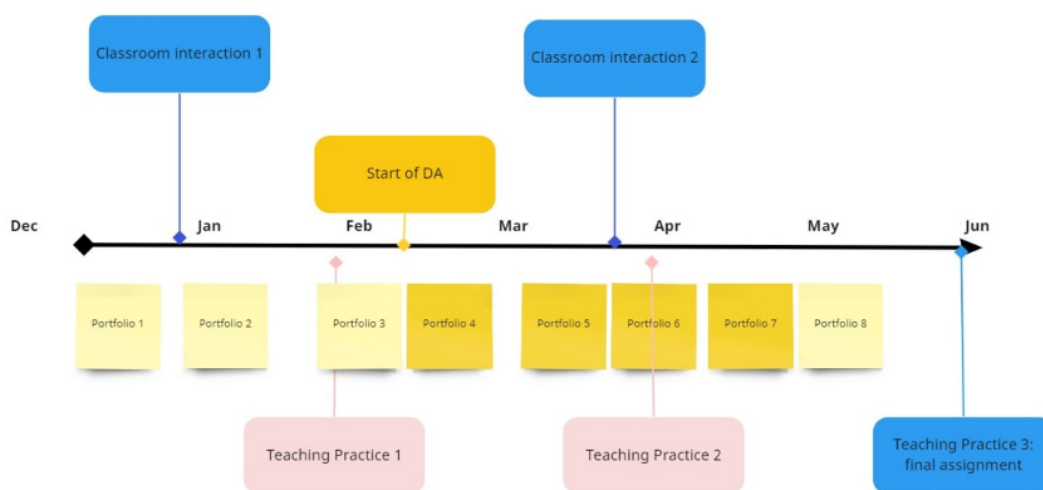


Figure 1. Timeline of the course

As detailed in Appendix 1, the general focus of the portfolio assignments was developing lesson plans, though the specific focus varied. For each portfolio, two versions were submitted, one before the mediation and one after it. The portfolio drafts, mediation and the portfolios modified in response to mediation serve as the data. Upon the anonymisation of the portfolios, mediation in the form of written comments on Google docs was given to the candidates. The anonymisation was conducted by the tutor, who could, therefore, connect various data pieces systematically together. The two researchers only had access to the anonymised data,

where the candidates were referred to by pseudonyms. Once the candidates reacted to the comments by introducing modifications to their portfolios, they submitted the final versions to the tutor.

We adhered to the flexible approach to mediation. That is, upon a discussion, we used the mediational moves we deemed the most appropriate to guide the candidates' development, based on what we, and above all the tutor, knew about each candidate, the previous mediation, and the candidates' reciprocity. As we elaborated, we did not start from the most implicit mediation on the first submitted portfolio in the study

‘There were two reasons for the tutor to focus on the teachers’ classroom practice during the DA: (a) the portfolio assignments elicited the candidates’ practical experience; (b) our intention was to build on this experience while transforming it. Still, the mediation implicitly built on how the academic (including methodological) concepts were discussed in Zoom interactions, creating a bridge between theory and practice’

due to the limited number of portfolio assignments in the course and only one resubmission per assignment allowed in the syllabus. Hence, starting with the most implicit mediation would not create ample opportunities for the candidates’ development. Furthermore, by the time of the study, the tutor had a rather clear picture of the candidates’ recurrent challenges and an idea about their self-regulation. The following principles guided our mediation: (1) it was based on the learners’ reciprocity in the previous sessions; (2) it was linked to the methodological points covered in the training, as we elaborated in Section 3.2; (3) it elicited the teachers’ practices, that is, their everyday concepts; (4) it guided the candidates to build on learner’s histories and experiences when presenting and practising the L2 features; (5) it elicited social interaction among learners.

Therefore, the focus of the mediation was learner-centeredness, though the specific focus, including the concepts forming learner-centeredness, emerged based on the challenges the tutor and the two researchers identified. There were two reasons for the tutor to focus on the teachers’ classroom practice during the DA: (a) the portfolio assignments elicited the candidates’ practical experience; (b) our intention was to build on this experience while transforming it. Still, the mediation implicitly built on how the academic (including methodological) concepts were discussed in Zoom interactions, creating a bridge between theory and practice.

The other data in the study were Zoom interactions prior to and during the portfolio assessment activities and the candidates’ final course assignments. These will be used to illustrate how academic concepts emerged in interactions and connected to the mediation of portfolio assignments and how the true concepts emerged for the two focal candidates in the study. We note that

while concepts were approached differently in the portfolio and Zoom interaction activities, the intention was that these activities form a coherent whole. The tutor, furthermore, used the information from the asynchronous mediation (informed by the DA framework) of the candidates’ performance on the portfolio assignments, adjusting, as we will illustrate, course activities informing and informed by the portfolio assessment.

3.5. Analysis

As the first step of our analysis, for each candidate, we singled out the points we commented on in their portfolios and how the candidates responded to them. We then coded these informed by Aljaafreh and Lantolf’s (1994), Poehner’s (2005), and Shrestha’s (2020) typologies for mediational and reciprocal moves. However, we did not adhere strictly to existing typologies but studied mediational moves that emerged in the data, coding them together and discussing any inconsistencies in our interpretation of the mediational moves. Appendices 2 and 3 briefly describe the mediational and reciprocity moves in the study. This coding allowed us to establish differences among our candidates in terms of their mediated performance and to trace their individual developmental trajectories across the portfolio assignments.

The Zoom interactions were studied as a reciprocity-mediation cycle. We analysed how the tutor used the information obtained in the portfolio assessment to guide the candidates and how the candidates responded to the tutor’s guidance. In the final assignments, we studied how the candidates connected academic concepts to their everyday concepts, discussing their practice using these concepts.

In the following section, we discuss the two candidates’ unassisted and mediation performance across the four portfolios, as well as how tutor-candidate Zoom interactions (with the focus on development) informed the portfolio assessment whose goal was to diagnose the candidates’ ZPD (with the focus on assessment) and vice versa. In fact, the candidates’ development was understood taking into account *both* of these parts of the course. The portfolio assessment allowed us to trace the changes in the candidates’ reliance on the tutor in lesson planning (the focus of the portfolios) operationalised in the changes in explicitness of mediation and the candidates’ reciprocity. The Zoom interactions allowed us to see that the changes that the candidates made to the portfolios were not mechanistic – candidates simply figuring out what the tutor expected them

to do without understanding why – but were the result of the development of their conceptual understanding. Hence while we present the findings in separate sections, these should be considered *together*.

4. STUDY AND RESULTS

4.1. Portfolio assessment to diagnose ZPD

Here we will discuss the developmental trajectories of the two candidates emerging in the portfolio assessment, tracing changes in the mediation given in each portfolio and the ways that the two candidates responded to it.

What made the tutor's assistance mediation, we argue, was that it was informed by (a) the candidates' reciprocity, that is, the changes they made in response to the mediation on the previous portfolios. When the two candidates' unassisted performance was considered (the first draft of each portfolio), it was very similar. Both candidates, from the outset, tended to overestimate the learners' cognitive load, not give their learners much agency, and not connect to learners' histories and experiences. The two candidates' mediated performance, however, was rather different.

We note that while the rest of the participants did not manage to submit all the assignments on time (and hence we did not include them in the portfolio assignment data set), the challenges that C1 and C4 faced were similar for the rest of the group, as will also emerge in Zoom interactions which we will elaborate on later. In addition, as Candidate 1 and Candidate 4 did, as we will illustrate next, the rest of the participants continued to struggle with the concept of learner-centeredness applied to their practice, as their unassisted performance on the portfolio assessment (their lesson plans) showed, but by and large, exhibited growing self-regulation as far as their changes in response to the tutor's mediation are concerned. As we will demonstrate with the performance of the two focal candidates, this general upward trend does not imply that the tutor simply always used a growingly implicit mediation in the subsequent portfolios and neither that the candidates always corrected their portfolios in a satisfactory manner in response to the tutor's mediation. To repeat, the goal of the portfolio assessment was to diagnose the candidates' ZPD based on the principle of reciprocity. We next illustrate this with the common challenges that the two candidates had.

The most common problem for Candidate 1 was that they did not connect to learners' experiences, including example sentences they provided in their les-

son plans. They, thus, elicited mechanistic application of the covered structure. This candidate also tended to provide complex metalinguistic explanations with extensive use of terminology. To illustrate, in Portfolio 4, Candidate 1 provided the following sentences to exemplify the use of present perfect simple tense: *I've known Karen since 1994; She's lived in London for three years.*

Based on the tutor's history with the two candidates, Candidate 1 received the following comment: *I wonder if basing on the learners' experiences or your joint one with them can help them understand the use of the tense better* (Mediational Move 7; Appendix 2). This candidate was also invited to think in terms of their learners' cognitive load and asked to simplify their explanations. Candidate 1 incorporated this mediation (Reciprocity Move 2; Appendix 3), making their example sentences personalised, e.g., *I've taught you since 2019.*

However, in the following Portfolio 5, Candidate 1, introducing the present continuous tense, returned to their old practice, e.g., *What are you writing? – A letter to Jane.* This time, the tutor's mediation is more implicit: *Look back on Portfolio 4 and think how these examples can be made more memorable for your learners* (Mediational Move 6). This time, the tutor opted for more implicit mediation as this candidate had successfully developed their lesson plan in the previous portfolio. This candidate, again, replaced the sentences, e.g., *I am teaching the present continuous right now*, which implies their growing responsibility for performance.

In Portfolio 6, Candidate 1 expected their learners to practice requests and offers using a predefined script. This was not personalised – did not involve techniques relating the materials to the learners' experiences – or engaging; in other words, it was not learner-centred. That is, Candidate 1 continued to focus on morphosyntactic features of a language mechanistically. The tutor's guidance on the framework of Mediational Move 5 was, *Do you think ss might benefit more if they are allowed to change the context and use the target language in a more personalised dialogue?* As the candidate developed their Portfolio 5 following the tutor's mediation, this mediation was less explicit than previously. As a result, the candidate again changed their script, changing, for example, *food and money* into *local money and food* once the learners have practised the initial role plays.

In Portfolio 7, Candidate 1 built an activity around local fast-food restaurants, its lead-in being *I will put the picture of some fast-food restaurants in Dushanbe*

and the learners will guess the location of these restaurants. That is, the candidate was now able to plan classroom activities such that learners could connect their

experiences to language use, attaching personal meaning to them. For Candidate 4, we focus on two challenges, one similar to Candidate 1 (Table 1).

Table 1
Failing to make it learner-centred

PORTFOLIO	FIRST DRAFT	MEDIATION	RECIPROCITY
Portfolio 4	This structure was my scientific research work	Well, it is a good reason, but you need to think why it is relevant for your students? Why do they need to know this tense?	Reason for choosing these tenses is being relevant to the course book and programme of the course.
Portfolio 5	Was the topic of the programme for intermediate level?	Think about the reasons why you chose the Present Perfect Simple tense in the previous portfolio (in addition to it being a part of the course).	Reason for choosing these grammar structures is being relevant to the coursebook and program of the course.

As illustrated, in Portfolio 4, Candidate 4 indicated that their reason for selecting the grammatical structure (present perfect tense) as the grammar focus of the lesson was that it is a part of their research work. However, the concept of learner engagement was a part of learner-centeredness discussed in the training by that time. Hence, the tutor invited the candidate to think about their rationale with reference to their learners, creating an opportunity for the candidate to connect their everyday experience to the methodological and conceptual points covered in the training (Mediational Move 4). However, the candidate, instead, based their rationale on the coursebook and course programme (Reciprocity Move 5), which led the tutor to understand that the candidate still required considerable guidance from the tutor. That is, there is no effort to apply the academic concepts in the course to their lesson plan, showing that this candidate did not even try to think in terms of the theoretical concepts. Thus, in Portfolio 5, the mediation was more explicit, the tutor inviting the candidate to stretch their rationale *beyond* the coursebook (Mediational Move 6). Nevertheless, the candidate copied their modification from the previous portfolio (Reciprocity Move 5). That is, the candidate attended to the first part of the mediation from the tutor but completely ignored the tutor's invitation to think beyond the coursebook. This again showed the tutor that the candidate did not apply the concepts to plan their lesson in the portfolio.

By Portfolio 6, however, Candidate 4 was more self-regulated with regard to this issue, marking the following as their rationale for selecting the focus *Some learners will find it difficult to use modals in deduction for judging people by appearance*. Furthermore, in the post-listening part of the listening activity in the same lesson plan, the candidate focused on the learners' experiences with regard to the listening topic, building it around group work and adding the two questions to guide the group discussion: *How important is appearance in your country? Do people in your country judge by appearance?* This candidate, thus, both linked the grammatical topic with the listening and built the post-listening activity on practising the structure in a context relevant to their students (the concept of *personalisation* but focusing on the everyday concept of it in the classroom. We will suggest how this development occurred in Section 4.2.

Candidate 4 also tended to present a large volume of material in their lesson plans, focusing on covering the syllabus material, thus creating unnecessary cognitive load for their learners rather than beneficial conditions for learning. This also becomes apparent in Portfolio 4, where the grammatical topic was marked as *Present Perfect tense*, but this candidate also referred to other perfect tenses. Candidate 4 was guided in the following way in the framework of Mediational Move 8: *I got an impression that you are mainly focusing on the Present Perfect Simple, however, you have some exam-*

ples of the Present Perfect Continuous... which tense are you focusing on? The candidate responded by limiting the grammar to Present Perfect Simple tense. In Portfolio 5, Candidate 4 decided to cover modal verbs and the first conditional, both novel structures to their learners, to teach them speculation about the future. They, further, did not elicit the meaning part of the meaning-form-pronunciation concept, focusing on the

formation of the structure only. Mediation to Candidate 4 read: *This can be made more student-centred. Think how you achieved this in your previous portfolio* (Mediational Move 6). The candidate’s reciprocity was different this time, as they did not focus their portfolio on one grammar point, instead structuring this part differently. Table 2, the original extract from the portfolio as it was written by the Candidate, illustrates the change.

Table 2
Sample of Candidate 4’s actual and mediated performance in Portfolio 5

PERFORMANCE BEFORE MEDIATION	RESPONSIVENESS TO MEDIATION
<p>1. We use modal verbs for speculating the future with the base form of the verb. May, might, could + verb Ex: Students might understand the new topic. The teacher might not introduce the new student.</p> <p>Note: In negative sentences we use may not /might not. We do not use could not.</p> <p>...</p> <p>3. We use first Conditional to predict the result of a future action. Ex: If students study well, they will take the exam. Note: the modal verbs may, might, can can be used instead of will or will not.</p> <p>...</p>	<p>a. Modal verbs may/might/could/may Ex: She might leave school next year. 1. Are there modal verbs in the sentence? Yes. What are they? may/might/could 2. Are the modal verbs before or after the main verb? before the main verb ... 3. Do they show prediction? Yes they do speculate or predict the future: to talk about the possibility of something happening in the future by a base form. May/might/could + leave (about her leaving school)</p> <p>b. First conditional Ex: If the hotel has WI- FI, I will check my emails. 1. How many clauses are there in the sentence? Two clauses; If- clause Will- clause ...</p>

When interpreting Candidate 4’s reciprocity, it should be considered that there were two areas for development that the mediation targeted: (a) focusing on one grammar point and (b) making the covered material easier to process for learners. As a response, this candidate wrote more about the use of modal verbs and conditionals for predicting and speculating about the future. Therefore, this candidate partially incorporated the mediation, addressing the second point (Reciprocity Move 3). Certainly, the candidate did not connect to their learners’ experiences, failing thus to make the use of structure meaningful to learners. By Portfolio 6, Candidate 4 could focus the lesson, linking it also to the previous Portfolio 5. Namely, they included the formation of the structure, the meaning modals convey in de-

ducing, e.g., *When we are sure something is true: must.* The candidate followed this up by asking learners to speculate based on the information presented in a recording about an individual, using such prompts as *What is his job?* This culminated in a discussion with the learners about the importance of appearance and judgements made based on it in the learners’ home country. This candidate, therefore, demonstrated growing self-regulation, adapting and reconstructing understandings that emerged previously in a novel context. In Candidate’s 4 final Portfolio 7, there were no issues marked by the tutor. This candidate thought about their learners throughout the lesson plan, starting from the lead-in: *Do you argue with your brothers and sisters? What is the usual reason for arguing?*

4.2. Tutor-candidate Zoom interactions

In this section, we will report on how the assessment was informed by the preceding interaction and elaborate on how the tutor used the information that emerged in the portfolio assessment activity in Zoom interactions with the candidates. We will illustrate these using several excerpts from these interactions. Due to the lack of space, we will focus on two episodes where Candidate 4 participated, one prior to the mediated portfolio assessment activities (i.e., before Portfolio 4) and one, in the Zoom meeting happening between Portfolios 5 and 6. We note, however, that Candidate 1, and other non-focal candidates participated in these interactions.

Before the portfolio assessment activities, the candidates could not connect the academic concepts introduced in the course to their classroom practice or, indeed, revealed that the approaches and strategies discussed in the training were not possible to use in their classrooms. To illustrate, Candidate 4, when discussing learner engagement and individual approach, reported the following (Excerpt 1). This interaction occurred right before the Portfolio 4 assignment was due.

Excerpt 1

C4: We have to find an individual approach to the students [...] So, what is the best way for them to learn English? [...] If they choose the profession and they think that English is not needed there so they even don't try [...] at the time they're very sure that there is no need for English, so they don't study. So, in reality it is impossible [...].

T: OK, [...] indeed a more individual approach, finding out what is kind of interesting for them [...] even if they don't really need English, I feel like you can engage them in the activity.

Candidate 4, while using the academic concept of the individual approach and its connection to learner engagement, sees a discrepancy between these and their teaching experience, stating that applying it in the classroom would be impossible. That is, this candidate is knowledgeable of the pedagogical concept of *personalisation* covered in the course as a part of learner-centredness, defining it in this interaction as *individual approach* (that is, a set of assumptions about teaching and learning). However, this candidate reveals there was a tension between these assumptions and the reality of the classroom. The tutor, as a reaction to this, (a) builds on the candidate's formulation, *individual approach*, (b) moves the focus to the operationalisation of assumptions in the classroom, proposing how this and other

candidates can make sure that they personalise the activity by first asking their learners what is interesting *for them*, and (c) emphasises that the tension Candidate 4 has brought is not unresolvable. The tutor, furthermore, connects personalisation with engagement within the specific teaching-learning situation under discussion.

Later in the same session, when an example lesson where the teacher enabled learner engagement in a reading comprehension task through questions was discussed, the tutor decided to guide the candidates' understanding of how they can engage learners (Excerpt 2).

Excerpt 2

T: Why is it important for us to ask questions? How can it affect students' motivation and engagement? [...]

C4: [...] so they help teachers understand the understanding of students.

T: Sure, definitely what else?

C4: [...] So like their understanding of the, I mean, grammar [...] To understand [...] whether they were involved in reading. So did they read the whole text and did they discuss the [...]

T: So, well, [...] actually this [...] would be lead-in in the second activity.

C4: So, I didn't pay attention to that, so she's [...] involved them to reading, so to understand whether they like fast food. So do they like the reading [...]

T: Yeah, what was the topic? [...] So a lead-in is supposed to set the mood to get learners' thinking about the topic. So here the teacher elicited a lot of answers about fast food, whether they like it why it's bad, whether they know it.

C4: Let's see questions asked in lead-in. So probably maybe they can find answers in the reading, so sometimes they can ask exact questions from the reading.

T: So, to motivate them to read.

C4: So, they're prepared, right?

T: Yeah, right, so exactly why to find out the answer if you don't know, that's great, right? [...] So if you see a person who is a bit shy, who's always like I'd rather be silent so you can ask them some questions to help them build up confidence [...].

C4: To ask, to make open questions. Nominating.

CC: Nominating, engaging quieter learners.

The tutor first asks why asking questions is important, linking it to learner motivation (Turn 1). The function of these questions is not simply to inquire from the candidates but to *guide* them using the academic concept of *learner engagement*. We note that as mediation

this is rather implicit (Mediational Move 4, Appendix 2), though we emphasise that the tutor, at this point, did not mediate the candidates consciously and systematically. However, the posthoc analysis of the explicitness of mediational moves and reciprocity we undertook becomes important for the subsequent portfolio assessment. Despite the tutor's effort, the candidate focuses on learners' comprehension of the text (Turn 2) and then on the understanding of grammatical constructions (Turn 4). This demonstrates that the candidate does not think in terms of learner engagement. As the tutor draws the candidate's attention to the questions being asked during a lead-in (while this is somewhat more explicit, we classified this as another Mediational Move 4), Candidate 4 finally focuses on learner engagement (Turn 6). However, this is not the end of the interaction. The tutor wishes the candidates better connect the academic concept to their teaching experiences (their everyday concept of learner engagement). The tutor focuses, therefore, on the parameters of the task at hand – the particular questions asked in the lead-in. At this point (Turn 8), Candidate 4 recognises that this can simplify the tasks for some learners. The tutor builds on this, connecting this statement, probably coming from the candidate's teaching experience to the academic concept in Turn 9. In Turn 10, the candidate, being unsure, asks for the tutor's confirmation. This reciprocity move was not a part of the typology we created for the portfolio assessment (due to the difference in the task parameters). However, based on Poehner' (2005) typology (requesting additional assistance), this indicates that the candidate is still reliant on the tutor in connecting the academic concept of engagement (and personalisation) with their everyday experiences. The tutor, therefore, reacts more explicitly, giving an explanation (Mediational Move 7). This finally leads this and other candidates towards merging of the two concepts in their verbalisations (Turns 12 and 13).

We note that the degree of explicitness of guidance in this episode required for successful resolution of the challenge is illustrative of the effort that the tutor made at this point of the course with other candidates. The Zoom interactions before the portfolio assessment led the tutor to opt for the particular mediational moves in Portfolio 4 for Candidates 1 and 4. Specifically, for Candidate 4, the tutor started with Mediational Move 4, as this was the most common move to help this candidate to start thinking about their classroom practices through the lens of academic and pedagogical concepts.

The following interaction occurred between Portfolios 5 and 6. The candidates, together with the tutor, focused on a post-listening task of a listening activity (Excerpt 3). As in Zoom meetings, the tutor interacted with the learners as a group, there were other candidates in the interaction besides Candidate 4. However, this interaction, we argue, is important for understanding Candidate's 4 performance on Portfolio 6 and performance following it.

Excerpt 3

T: Have a look, what is the point? What is the purpose of this task?

C5: The post-listening.

T: No, no, it's post-listening. Yeah, post-listening. What is the aim? Why do we need it?

[Candidate 4 suggests via the chat that it is to understand the listening better.]

T: [...] look at this. These are the things that students have to talk about. Well, this one is not about understanding the listening.

C2: This is this is speaking parts.

T: Part speaking part, and this is connected to the listening?

CC: Yes.

C5: Of course, work. Yes, they [discuss] everything that they had previously.

T: Yeah, so it's an opportunity to personalise this thing, right? So, they talk, they discuss and practice. Yeah, develop their fluency. You see they have to discuss these questions like have you ever not something dramatically different to your appearance? Would you do a parachute jump or a bungee jump? [...] So for learners to discuss something right to reflect, so that's it.

C2: Means that we should also include the Speaking part, yes?

T: OK

C2: After all these things with [...] OK.

We enter the exchange as the tutor inquires from the candidates what the purpose of the task was. Candidate 5 responds to the tutor's query, recognising that it was post-listening. As the tutor's intentionality was to elicit not what the task is by why it is used, that is its function, she starts by telling Candidate 5 that they are incorrect but quickly modifies her own formulation, as knowing what kind of activity is being analysed is important for determining its function. She follows up the partial acceptance of Candidate's 5 response by reformulating her questions, focusing now on the aim of the task (Turn 2). At this moment, Candidate 4 enters the exchange, albeit via chat. This candidate's response is

notable, as just like in the portfolio assessment, this candidate does not think in terms of learner-centeredness despite the tutor's effort so far, unable to think of the task through the lens of this concept just as they were unable to apply their concept to planning their lesson in Portfolio 5 even after the tutor's rather explicit mediation. Building on the information the tutor received about Candidate 4 (but also other candidates who submitted their Portfolio 5 assignments by that time), the tutor opts for suggesting a solution (Mediational Move 5), drawing the candidate's attention first to the fact that this task is no longer about listening proper. This is somewhat more implicit than the mediation given to Candidate 4 (and, generally, other candidates who have submitted their Portfolio 5 assignment). However, the tutor accounts for (a) the potential development that may have happened and (b) that there are other learners in the interaction, above all Candidate 5 as the main interactant, so creating their ZPD, that is, their development together with them, should be the focus.

A different candidate, Candidate 2, takes the lead at this point, indicating that they recognised the change of focus on speaking, which was implied by the tutor (Turn 6). The tutor accepts the response, immediately building on it, instructing the candidates that it should be connected to the listening activity, albeit in the form of a question (Mediational Move 5). The candidates confirm that they recognise this connection, and Candidate 5 strongly shows understanding, adding that this is the opportunity for the learners to discuss the themes that emerged in the listening activity with reference to the questions in the post-listening task (incorporating thus the tutor's mediation, Reciprocity Move 2). The tutor confirms, finally explicitly linking the task with the concept of personalisation. The tutor, namely, connects the task to how it should be orchestrated by the teachers, creating an opportunity for learners to reflect on the questions with reference to their experiences. The exchange ends when Candidate 2 checks the confirmation and accepts the tutor's explanation. While Candidate's 4 contribution to the exchange was minimal, it nevertheless helped the tutor to guide the candidates' understanding of the function of the post-listening, linking the academic concept of personalisation with how it can be operationalised in the activity. This, we argue, shaped the way that Candidate 4 approached the assignment in Portfolio 6, finally using the academic concepts of personalisation and learner engagement in planning a lesson without the tutor's guidance.

'When the two candidates' performance on the initial versions of portfolios was considered, it was rather similar in that they tended to be teacher-centred. However, their mediated performance showed a vastly different picture. To be sure, the candidates' modifications of their portfolios in response to mediation were expected'

4.3. Final assignments

The candidates' development manifests particularly clearly in the final assignment – a plan of and reflection on a teaching practice. Candidate 1 wrote the following in their lesson plan, for example:

The topic relates to students' own lives. Students will talk about their own towns and things they can do in the town. It should be interesting for them, because students are eager to talk about something that concerns them [...] Post-listening activity will help to personalise the vocabulary in a meaningful way.

In their reflection, this candidate wrote:

[...] they [the learners] were very active during the lesson [...] the students were engaged.

Candidate 1, therefore, recognised how they could make their lesson more learner-centred and reported on this using the academic concept of *engagement*. This candidate was also able to explain the operational decision – design of the *personalised* post-listening activity with reference to making it meaningful to the candidates. They, hence, designed the activity informed by the conceptual understanding, which was nurtured both in the portfolio assessment and Zoom interactions.

Candidate 4, too, seemed to be able to apply the understanding and knowledge that emerged in the course in their classroom practice. Namely, in their lesson plan, they strongly focused on making the lesson learner-centred, for example: *'Students talk about a house which became a museum in their country [the teacher's role being] monitoring and giving feedback.'*

Candidate 4 also reflected on how they minimised cognitive load and succeeded in making the lesson learner-centred. Among the strengths of the lesson, the candidate indicated *'giving students an opportunity to be free and express their thoughts as there wasn't any grammar controlling.'* Still, they noted that they could have used shorter explanations (*cognitive load*) and made the lesson even more learner-centred, though they did not elaborate how.

There is, therefore, evidence for at least a degree of internalisation of the concept leading to changes in the candidates' practice. However, the two candidates' developmental paths in the internalisation of the concept of learner-centeredness were different.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this paper, we reported on an exploration of (a) L2 in-service teachers' conceptual and methodological knowledge development emerging in the portfolio assessment and (b) how information obtained in this assessment can be used to promote the development of true concepts and L2 English teaching practice. We next discuss the results with reference to the two research questions.

When the two candidates' performance on the initial versions of portfolios was considered, it was rather similar in that they tended to be teacher-centred. However, their mediated performance showed a vastly different picture. To be sure, the candidates' modifications of their portfolios in response to mediation were expected. However, our interest was not in the modifications proper but in (a) specific areas of struggle the candidates had, (b) how much responsibility for their performance the candidates assumed as well as how they solved the challenges the tutor identified, and (c) how reliance on the tutor changed across the portfolios, Zoom interactions, and the final assignment.

We repeat that while the unassisted performance of the two focal candidates was largely similar across the portfolios, their mediated performance was somewhat different. The portfolio assessment also revealed that by Portfolio 7, both candidates demonstrated more responsibility for their performance, recognising the value of giving agency to their learners, making the covered material relevant to them. Still, Candidate 4 considered the tutor's asking for clarifications as an indication that there were points to correct in their portfolio. That is, they were still more dependent on the mediator than Candidate 1. The candidates' growing self-regulation (less reliance on the tutor's mediation), that is in using academic concepts covered in the course to mediate their practice is particularly evident in the final course assignment, where both candidates demonstrated that learner-centeredness strongly informed their lesson planning, as well as its implementation and their reflection on it.

We would like to highlight at this point that, as Vygotsky (1978) argued, ZPD is not a static 'zone' but emerges in dialectics between the individual and the

social. In this study, it, too, was the mediation-reciprocity cycle that led the candidates' development. Similarly to Shrestha (2020), we opted for flexible mediation, nurturing different developmental trajectories. The mediation in the portfolio assessment did not just disclose the candidates' different ZPDs—it created them. However, and more importantly, the portfolio assessment helped the tutor to mediate the candidates' during Zoom interactions.

To be sure, as outlined, both asynchronous mediation (see Reis, 2011) and the development of academic concepts (as outlined in Section 2.1) have been the foci of praxis with pre- and in-service teachers. Similarly, DA has, too, been implemented in teacher training (Golombek, 2011; García, 2019). Our research extends from these and other research on teacher development (Amory, 2020; Johnson & Golombek, 2016; Johnson et al., 2020), exploring, similarly to García (2019), but using a different arrangement, how the principles of DA can inform assessment and instruction teacher training, focusing on this assessment not as a separate activity, but as a part of this training.

We concur that the understanding of the ZPD in interactionist DA is still more of a tool for uncovering the proximal development of an individual (albeit in collaboration with an expert other). However, a broader understanding of ZPD as an activity where development is mediated by means emerging on the interpersonal plane (see Holzman, 2018) is a more useful ZPD interpretation.

This understanding was adopted in this study. In fact, we are of the opinion that this broader interpretation of ZPD favours designs stretching beyond individual ZPD activities, such as Zoom interactions or assessment informed by the DA framework, towards how these activities create development together (see also Leontjev & deBoer, 2022; Poehner & Leontjev, 2022). That is, the course was designed so that the portfolio assignments, focusing on assessment and using largely everyday concepts in mediation, complemented the Zoom interaction focusing on the development and academic concepts collectively guided the candidate's formation of a true concept of learner-centred teaching. Thus, the portfolio assessments with the focus on assessing the candidates' unmediated *and* mediated performance with regard to applying the academic and pedagogical concepts in lesson planning and the Zoom interactions, with the focus on helping the candidates merge academic and pedagogical concepts and their everyday concepts, were considered *together*.

‘SCT compels us to appreciate the revolutionary character of development, and we argue that the approach explored in this study enables such development. That is, the course design in the study can make both individual developmental trajectories (portfolio assessment) and that of the groups (classroom interaction) of in-service teachers visible and, in fact, create them’

To elaborate, just as portfolio assessment informed the Zoom interactions, Zoom interactions informed the mediation in the portfolio assignments, which, in turn, provided information for the tutor, which informed the subsequent classroom interaction. We demonstrated this with reference to the interactional episode to which Candidate 4 contributed. It allowed us to trace the development of the two focal candidates’ understanding of learner-centeredness as a concept which included giving learners’ agency and learner engagement and how it can be applied and operationalised in their practices. Both eventually manifested themselves in their final assignments. In fact, without the classroom interaction, we argue, the changes in the candidates’ performance on portfolio assignments would be difficult to interpret. Indeed, these could be seen as candidates following the tutor’s advice without thinking why it is important.

Hence, the interactional episode we analysed both explained the notable change in Candidate’s 4 reliance on the tutor in Portfolio 6 and helped to recognise that there was understanding behind this change.

Lantolf et al. (2021) argued that development is not a linear process but is characterised by shifts in learners’ reliance on the mediator, even if the general

Appendix 1. Portfolio sections

A standard portfolio template contained the following sections:

- general information on the learners and lesson focus;
- description of the teaching material, rationale and language analysis, anticipated problems and solutions, assumptions about the learners and material;
- a step-by-step lesson procedure (in later portfolios);
- self-evaluation, further steps for developing the lesson/analysis;
- tutor’s checklist of assessment criteria.

trend is towards more self-regulated performance. SCT compels us to appreciate the revolutionary character of development, and we argue that the approach explored in this study enables such development. That is, the course design in the study can make both individual developmental trajectories (portfolio assessment) and that of the groups (classroom interaction) of in-service teachers visible and, in fact, create them. Hence, we suggest a similar approach can be used in other in-service teacher training.

In this regard, considering the context where teacher-centred approach has been prevalent (see Cirocki & Farely, 2016; Feryok, 2008), promoting candidates’ understanding of the purpose of guidance can be important. In the current study, some candidates took the mere fact that comments were coming from the tutor as a sign that there was a problem that needed rectifying. It should be made clear to candidates that the purpose of comments is to guide the development of their understanding as well as eventually give them responsibility for their performance.

Limitations of the study need to be mentioned. To start with, partially due to our study design and partially due to some candidates not submitting all their assignments or submitting them late, we focused only on the development of two candidates. Hence our results should not be generalised, and further research could be conducted to show whether our design is feasible and whether and how development occurs in similar designs with a larger number of participants and in other contexts. Furthermore, the course structure was such that there were only a few opportunities for Zoom interactions with the candidates, so most of the mediation was in the written format.

Overall, due to its context – in-service teaching training – and the asynchronous modality of mediation, the study has something to offer both to practice and further research.

The completed assignments were assessed by the tutor, who suggested areas for improvement. The portfolio assignments under discussion had the following foci:

- Portfolio 4: researching a grammar construction that participants feel they might have trouble with;
- Portfolio 5: planning a language focus stage to teach grammar by using questions to clarify the meaning;
- Portfolio 6: planning and teaching a listening lesson;
- Portfolio 7: adapting a coursebook activity for the needs of one’s learners.

Appendix 2. Mediation moves

Mediation moves:

(1) accepting the candidate's response and praising: this mediation move occurred when a candidate overcame their problem in the subsequent portfolio following the mediation; accepting the response in our data coincided with praise, e.g., 'You managed to involve the students in the process more, good!'

(2) asking for clarifications/elaborations: this mediation move occurred when we were unsure of the candidates' intention or understanding of having a particular activity, aim, approach, etc., in their portfolio, e.g., 'Can you elaborate, keeping the aims you identified in mind?'

(3) identifying the problems in the text: similarly to Shrestha (2020), we considered this mediation move to be less explicit than the following, as while suggesting a change in a particular place in the portfolio, we left the agency with the candidates as to how this change could be made and why, e.g., 'describe the procedure here.'

(4) introducing guiding questions and prompts: this mediation move involved implicitly referring candidates, in an interrogative form, to teaching methodologies and other content covered previously in the course, without naming them, e.g., 'Which task is more controlled? Which gives freer practice?'

(5) suggesting solutions: with this mediation move, we directed the candidates to direct solutions without naming them, e.g., 'You need to talk about aims for the learners here.'

(6) referring to the previous portfolio: we considered this mediation move to be more explicit, as even though we did not name the solution for the candidate, we suggested they consider how they addressed a similar point in the previous portfolio; we considered that a degree of self-regulation was required, as the solution had to be adapted in the new portfolio, e.g., 'Look back on Portfolio 4 and think how these examples can be made more memorable for your learners.'

(7) explaining issues: this move explained what the candidates were expected to do and why, e.g., 'I wonder if basing on the learners' experiences or your joint one with them can help them understand the use of the tense better.'

(8) providing a choice: as the name suggests, this involved providing the candidate with (usually two) alternatives, e.g., 'These tenses ... are quite complex, so dig deeper here ... If you choose one tense only, describe it in detail.'

(9) providing correct solutions: the most explicit mediation move, where the tutor suggested the change in the portfolio overtly, even if with some hedging, e.g., 'Would graphically presenting it differently, e.g., strike-through formatting, help the learners see that they cannot use this form.'

Appendix 3. Reciprocity moves

Reciprocity moves:

(1) overcoming problems: this related to the candidate resolving their challenges with no support from the mediator;

(2) incorporating mediation: as in Shrestha (2020), this was the commonest reciprocity move; the candidates, guided by the mediation, built on their knowledge and experience to develop their portfolio;

(3) partially incorporating mediation: this indicated a change in response to mediation which was a step in the right direction, but the challenge was not fully resolved;

(4) accepting mediation: this move occurred in response

to explicit mediation, the candidates accepting the change that the tutor suggested;

(5) responding incorrectly: sometimes the candidates attempted to address the comments but misinterpreted what the issues were that the comments targeted;

(6) avoiding the issue targeted by the mediation: the candidates, rather than addressing the elicited issue, removed some text from their portfolio;

(7) unresponsive: this code was used when candidates did not introduce any change in response to a comment given on their draft portfolio.

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Book Reviews

Humble pie and cold turkey: English expressions and their origins (a review)

Original work by Caroline Taggart published by Michael O'Mara Books, 2021

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Article history Received September 27, 2022 | Revised October 29, 2022 | Accepted December 1, 2022

Conflicts of interest The author declared no conflicts of interest

Research funding No funding was reported for this research

doi 10.22363/2521-442X-2022-6-4-91-92

For citation Borisenko, V. A. (2022). Humble pie and cold turkey: English expressions and their origins (a review). *Training, Language and Culture*, 6(4), 91-92.



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Idioms can be a curse for foreign language learners. First, it's not obvious what they mean. Secondly, we don't know where the expression comes from and thirdly, even if we have a similar concept expressed by an idiom in our own language it uses completely different language to do so. A common example in German is *dienst is dienst und schnaps ist schnaps*, which translates literally as *work is work and schnapps is schnapps* (an alcoholic drink). However, the comparable expression in English is *Don't mix business and pleasure*. Not obvious to a speaker of German learning English and definitely not to an English speaker learning German.

This is why appreciating the etymology of words and phrases to understand how they came to mean what they mean today is an important linguistic skill, as illustrated in Caroline Taggart's book about the origins of many common expressions used in everyday English. This makes them easier to understand. Let's take the two expressions in the title as an example. To eat *Humble Pie* means to make an apology when you make a bad mistake. But what is a humble pie? According to Caroline Taggart, in rich households the members of the family would eat the meat of an animal, and the servants would eat what remains – the heart or the liver

entrails – which were known at the time as *umbles*, often cooked in a pie with flour. So, eating *umble pie* is what the servants did while the landowners and their families feasted on the meat. The servants were humble in relation to the landowners, showing humility in their presence. So, *to eat humble pie* gradually came to mean to make a humiliating apology when something goes wrong or someone makes a bad mistake, as in *The journalist was forced to eat humble pie when analysis of the statistics exposed a number of inaccuracies in her report*.

No one seems to know where the other expression in the title *Cold Turkey* comes from. In English to *talk cold turkey* meant to talk frankly. That later became simply *talk turkey*, to get to the point. The phrase to *go cold turkey* means to withdraw completely from doing something potentially harmful, such as drugtaking or drinking alcohol. The evidence suggests that the original expressions came from America and possibly the eating of turkey to commemorate the Thanksgiving ceremony for the safe arrival of the pilgrims from Britain in America in 1621.

Some 400 colloquial words and idiomatic expressions are explained in the book and listed in a very useful index at the back. After a brief introduction the book

is divided into 8 chapters. Chapter 1 – *Big Wigs and Festive Boards* – focuses on words and expressions using homes, furnishings, and fashion. Chapter 2 – *Scapegoats and White Elephants* – focuses on expressions featuring food, animals, and birds. Chapter 3 – *Olive Branches and Apple Pies* – deals with nature and food, while Chapters 4 – *Thumbs up for the Grass Roots* – and 5 – *Running Amok with the Devil to Pay* – explore the origin of expressions deriving from legal practices and government and the military. Don't worry if the titles leave you lost. The expressions they contain are explained in the book. Chapter 6 – *Currying Favour with No Holds Barred* – explores expressions based on sports and Chapter 7 – *Assassins, Thugs and Morticians* – examines colour, the body and medicine and expressions dealing with death. Chapter 8 – *The Tower of Babel and Seventh Heaven* – is devoted to names, gardens, to the skies above us, and to conclude, theatrical expressions.

The book also contains references, one exceptionally useful example of which is The Phrase Finder which the author herself highly recommends. The organisation of the book will be helpful to researchers looking for examples of expressions relating to a particular area, for example food.

So, what does it all mean? The chapter headings themselves are full of idiomatic expressions. A *Bigwig* in Chapter 1 is an important person, the name being derived from the long hairpieces called wigs worn by important men in the 17th and early 18th centuries. *Festive Board* refers to the food on the table at a festival of some kind. *Scapegoat*, in Chapter 2, is the person who takes the blame when something goes wrong even if they are not responsible and refers back to the Book of Leviticus in the Old Testament of the Bible, while a *White Elephant* comes from a tradition in ancient Siam (Thailand) and refers to something which is considered useless and expensive. When you offer an *Olive Branch* in Chapter 3, again a reference to the Bible, you do something to restore or maintain peaceful relations, and an *Apple Pie* refers to arranging things in *apple pie order*, i.e., perfectly organised. The French are credited with the origin of this concept, but the precise reference is not clear.

In Chapter 4, A *Thumbs Up* sign, with the thumb of one hand signifies encouragement and the *Grass Roots* represent the general population, the people you must convince to support you if you are to be successful. Appealing to the grass roots is an important tool in politics to encourage voters in elections. However, in Chapter 5, if things aren't handled carefully people may *Run Amok*, i.e., go wild and behave very badly. As a result, there'll be *The Devil to Pay*, a very bad outcome. The Devil in this case was the seams of the wooden planks that formed the keel of a ship before the 1830s which would cause the ship to sink if you didn't paint them with hot pitch to stop sea water entering.

In Chapter 6 you *Curry Favour*, do and say nice things to get the support of influential people, an expression derived from *currying Fauvel*, a medieval French story about an important horse and if there is a disagreement you may attack with *No Holds Barred*, doing whatever you have to do to win no matter how violent. No holds barred is derived from the British Queensbury rules in the 19th century which set regulations for the sports of boxing and wrestling.

An *Assassin* in Chapter 7 is a killer of a prominent figure, while a *Thug* is a violent robber. Both terms have their origin in medieval times. A *Mortician* is term coined in American English to mean a person responsible for looking after the dead, just as a physician, a doctor, is responsible keeping people alive. The British English equivalent would be *undertaker* or *funeral director*. Finally, in Chapter 7, the *Tower of Babel* is the tower mentioned in the Bible where everyone spoke different languages and could not understand each other (incidentally, this is not included in the index.) and *Seventh Heaven* describes a state of total happiness. Being in the seventh heaven is similar to being on *cloud nine*, an expression denoting extreme delight.

Humble Pie and Cold Turkey is a very enjoyable read. I would recommend it for reference when you come across a colloquial expression you don't know the meaning of. At higher levels it could also be the basis of a language quiz-guessing the meaning of a colloquial phrase. Above all, it's a resource for researchers and for teachers who want not just to explain meaning but also the origin of colloquial words and phrases.

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Book Reviews

Why is this a question? Everything about the origins and oddities of language you never thought to ask (a review)

Original work by Paul Antony Jones published by Elliott & Thompson, 2022

Reviewed by Ludmila V. Gushchina

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Article history Received October 9, 2022 | Revised November 14, 2022 | Accepted December 1, 2022

Conflicts of interest The author declared no conflicts of interest

Research funding No funding was reported for this research

doi 10.22363/2521-442X-2022-6-4-93-95

For citation Gushchina, L. V. (2022). Why is this a question? Everything about the origins and oddities of language you never thought to ask (a review). *Training, Language and Culture*, 6(4), 93-95.



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As part of its subtitle, this book discusses *Everything about the origins and oddities of language you never thought to ask*. It asks 26 questions about language, ranging from broader questions such as what a word or a language is, through issues regarding the alphabet and parts of speech and word order, as well as reading, speaking and writing skills, ending up with *How Do We Understand?* and *Why Is This a Question?* and a look at body language research in *Why Do We Use Our Hands When We Talk?* It also includes at the end 14 puzzles with solutions supported by references and the all-important index.

Paul Jones' book starts by asking about languages and words and where they come from. Although the book is published in English it's primarily about world languages, in which the English language plays an important part. It uses examples from all the languages in the world from Mandarin Chinese to pidgin and is fascinating on how language developed from the articulation of the voice in response to crisis situations to the development of national and regional languages and dialects to fulfil the needs of particular communities. He also introduces research and theories which help explain how language originated, particularly in relation to animals.

One fascinating chapter asks which language is the hardest one in the world to learn. Many would say English because it has such a huge vocabulary. The Oxford English Dictionary includes definitions of over 200,000 words. However, vocabulary alone is not the issue. To help its diplomats being posted abroad the United States Foreign Services Institute split the world's languages into four categories depending on the time it was expected to take to become reasonably fluent. The categories rose from Level 1, the easiest, to level IV, the most demanding. Dutch, French and Swedish were in Category Level I, estimated as taking from twenty-four to thirty week's tuition to achieve reasonable fluency. German was in Category Level II, alongside Swahili and Category Level III included Czech, Finnish Icelandic and Polish, together with Armenian, Hebrew, Mongolian, Urdu, and Vietnamese. So, what are the hardest languages to learn as judged by the Foreign Service Institute? Category Level IV, labelled 'super hard' by Jones, includes Arabic, Cantonese, Japanese, Korean and Mandarin and are estimated to take up to 2,000 hours of coaching, often combined with study periods in the relevant country. One of the problems the English language does face is how to spell English words. In *Why is Q always followed by U?* Jones looks into the

'The final question in the book explores why we use our hands when we talk – in other words, the importance of body language or as Jones describes it, paralanguage. He describes research carried out at the University of Naples in 2019 where a fund-raising speech animated by a speaker making gestures as she spoke made a stronger impact, attracting lots of donations, whereas a similar speech with no hand gestures attracted much lower subscriptions. What paralanguage does is to give alternative meanings to the same phrase according to how the speaker feels'

history of written English and shows how the spelling has varied over the centuries depending on the influence of foreign languages on English. It started with the introduction of Germanic languages overtaken by Latin after the Roman invasion and the Runic symbols gradually being replaced by the Roman ABC alphabet. Next came the Vikings and the Anglo-Saxons. The influence of the Normans after their invasion of Britain in 1066 substituted Norman French for Anglo-Saxon, influencing the written work produced by scribes and establishing the language firmly as part of English by the 14th and 15th centuries.

One of the problems affecting spelling was the handwriting of scribes from different backgrounds using different spelling systems. The invention of printing in the 1400s by Johannes Gutenberg in Germany introduced an element of mass production with a more integrated spelling but the arrival of William Caxton from Bruges, in modern Belgium, to open Britain's first printing press in 1476 with some of his Bruges print setters meant that Flemish and Dutch spelling crept into English orthography.

The written word could keep up with changes in pronunciation, however. As Jones points out, the 'great vowel shift'; of the late 14th to early 17th centuries changed pronunciation so that the spoken word didn't correspond to its written form. So, we ended up with pronunciation which often did not conform to spelling and this was intensified by the introduction of words from Latin and Greek during the European Renaissance. In addition, a new spelling of many words in English

was published by Noah Webster in his 1828 *American Dictionary of the English Language* including *color* not *colour*, *center* not *centre* and *dialog* not *dialogue*; spelling differences that still confuse writers on their computers today.

But why is the letter *q* followed by *u*? Originally in Anglo-Saxon, the word *queen* was written as *cwen* and *quick* as *cwik* but the Normans replaced it with *qu* from the French. But, as Jones explains, *qu* was originally from Latin and originated in the Etruscan language, 3000 years ago.

The book is full of examples, with theories explained simply and entertainingly supported by examples of research studies conducted in universities and institutes worldwide. A key contribution is the influence of neurolinguistics research on the understanding and production of language. In answering the question, *How Do We Speak?* Jones explains how the process of reading works and how information is received through the eyes and analysed by the brain. He goes on to explain how in the 1860s the French surgeon Paul Broca was able to discover the area of the brain that produced speech by operating on a patient with epilepsy who was unable to speak. He and the German Carl Wernicke, a neurosurgeon in Germany in the 1870s, were the first to discover areas of the brain which were able to produce and comprehend spoken language, discoveries that modern neurosurgical research has greatly expanded.

The final question in the book explores why we use our hands when we talk – in other words, the importance of body language or as Jones describes it, paralanguage. He describes research carried out at the University of Naples in 2019 where a fund-raising speech animated by a speaker making gestures as she spoke made a stronger impact, attracting lots of donations, whereas a similar speech with no hand gestures attracted much lower subscriptions. What paralanguage does is to give alternative meanings to the same phrase according to how the speaker feels. Jones gives the example, of a sentence like, 'I'm not going', which could be an expression of regret with eyes turned down, a gently tilted head, arching eyebrows, and a soft tone of voice. The same expression could also signify a refusal to go and may be delivered in a much harder tone of voice with a challenging direct eye contact, a frowning expression and arms folded. The difference emphasises the need for teachers to go beyond vocabular, grammar, phonology and social context and intercultural diversity of expression but also to consider the influence

on meaning of proxemics (physical distance), vocalics (the tone of voice and speed of delivery), oculusics (eye movement) and kinetics (body movement). All these shape how we communicate. Another interesting discovery was that the rhythm of speech, of gestures and even of how words are used in repetition introduce a motor gesture which stimulates the brain of the listener, a technique frequently used by public presenters, especially politicians, making their case. Neurological research has found that hand gestures can actually stimulate the language processing areas of the brain. Gestures can help us listen and understand.

The book is a fascinating and instructive read and source of information both theoretical and practical on how the human race has learned to communicate verbally and in writing and how languages and different communication skills have developed. Take it one chapter at a time to enjoy its presentation and the information it provides. It will provide in many cases an unexpected but valuable research resource and will be useful to researchers and teachers interested in the growth and development of language and the linguistic and neurological research that supports it, expressed in a very readable and practical way.

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News & Events

RUDN University News

Interdepartmental Academic Workshop Hosted by the Department of Foreign Languages

The Department of Foreign Languages (Institute of World Economy and Business, Faculty of Economics) of RUDN University is hosting the interdepartmental academic workshop *Project-Based Activities in Business English Courses at Tertiary Institutions* co-organised in association with Professor Valentina Budinčić of Alpha BK University (Belgrade, Serbia).

Seeking to ensure the most effective learning in Business English courses, teachers look out for innovative, interactive and creative activities capable of enhancing students' language and business skills while keeping them motivated and engaged. As Professor Budinčić's presentation will show, Business English courses at Tertiary Institutions can and should incorporate a spectacularly wide range of prolific and enthralling project-based tasks. The workshop will discuss the most vivid examples of projects focused on cultivating language proficiency and developing some of the key 21st century skills: critical and creative thinking, teamwork, information and media literacy, technological awareness, flexibility, proactivity, social and communicative skills, leadership skills, etc.

The workshop will be hosted via MS Teams on December 22, 2022 (2pm – 3pm).

Master's Programme Foreign Language of Professional Communication & Specialised Translation

Institute of World Economy and Business offers the Master's Programme Foreign Language of Professional Communication and Specialised Translation.

Profession Profile. Linguists are skilled translators and/or interpreters with expertise in business communication. They speak foreign languages, have a good command of professional vocabulary, and can translate business documents, financial records, and economic texts. They are aware of the subtleties

of language and cultural boundaries, can engage in negotiations, and help avoid misunderstanding. Good linguists are highly employable across the board: in science, teaching, the arts, business, international organisations, etc.

Programme Perks.

RUDN University ranks 88th in the QS World University Rankings for Modern Languages.

Flexible schedule covering two weekdays past 6pm and a Saturday for a more convenient study and work hours planning.

Opportunity to learn two foreign languages.

Highly qualified teachers, best educators of RUDN University and Russia's other top universities, with a course in Economic Translation led by a Professor of London Metropolitan University.

Training with native speakers using information and communication technology and state-of-the-art methodologies.

A gateway to international science, prospects of engaging in research projects under the tenure of programme trainers, options to take part in summer schools, round table discussions, as well as the international research conference Topical Issues of Linguistics and Teaching Methods in Business and Professional Communication.

Trainees get the chance to take Cambridge exams to validate their language proficiency as per universally accepted standards.

Trainees can opt for a joint diploma programme (RUDN University and London Metropolitan University) and do practical training and internships abroad (UK, Germany, Spain, Italy, China, France).

Programme curriculum incorporates instruction in translation using SDL Trados CAT tool that helps optimise and streamline translation thanks to Translation-Memory and a consolidated term base.

Internships. Programme trainees do extensive internships in major Russian and international companies and leading universities: Danone, PepsiCo, Inkor, MGIMO University, Moscow State Linguistic University, Moscow Region State University, Moscow Pedagogical

State University, etc. The Master's programme adopts a practice-oriented approach with most classes covering specialised subjects, thus ensuring the programme's strong commitment to employers' needs. Programme trainees are offered an opportunity to do practical training and internships abroad (UK, Germany, Spain, Italy, China, France).

Career and Employment. Upon programme completion, graduates can further pursue a career in translation and/or interpretation with international companies; teaching a wide range of subjects at educational institutions with a focus on language, linguistics, and culture studies; mass media; postgraduate studies and research in Russian and international universities. Programme graduates are employed with companies and state agencies such as the Ministry for the Development of the Russian Far East – the Far East Investment and Export Promotion Agency, TNK-BP Management, LUKOIL-AVIA, Language link English School, Sakura M, Inkor, MKM EXPO (Department of Exhibition and Congress Activities), etc.

Research. Programme trainees can opt to take part in summer schools, round table discussions, and the international research conference Topical Issues of Linguistics and Teaching Methods in Business and Professional Communication. Affiliated Training, Language and Culture (TLC) research journal indexed in Scopus – the international citation database. Prospects to pursue postgraduate studies and research and to defend your PhD thesis.

Programme Supervisor. The programme is supervised by Dr Elena N. Malyuga, Academician of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences, Doctor of Linguistics, Full Professor, Head of Foreign Languages Department, Faculty of Economics, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University), Editor-in-Chief of Training, Language and Culture, Editor-in-Chief of Issues of Applied Linguistics.

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TRAINING, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Published by
Federal State Autonomous Educational Institution of Higher Education
Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University)
17923, GSP117198, Moscow, Russia, 6 Miklukho-Maklay Str.
tlcjournal@rudn.ru
<https://rudn.tlcjournal.org>



December 2022
ISSN 2520-2073 (Print)
ISSN 2521-442X (Online)
Volume 6 Issue 4
doi: 10.22363/2521-442X-2022-6-4
Quarterly journal published by
Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University)