Contemporary English Language Teaching and Research

Edited by

Mariusz Marczak and Martin Hinton

Contemporary English Language Teaching and Research

Contemporary English Language Teaching and Research

Edited by

Mariusz Marczak and Martin Hinton

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing

Contemporary English Language Teaching and Research

Edited by Mariusz Marczak and Martin Hinton

This book first published 2015

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

Table of Contents

Part Two: Researching Language Learners

LIST OF FIGURES

Part Two:

LIST OF TABLES

FOREWORD:
REFLECTIONS ON NON-NATIVE
LANGUAGE TEACHING

BARBARA LEWANDOWSKA-TOMASZCZYK
UNIVERSITY OF ŁÓDŹ

The key questions which have always been the focus of attention in foreign language teaching and learning address problems of how to encourage and motivate learners to study more effectively and how to educate teachers to make this happen. The present volume reflects a selection of themes and topics which take up some of these issues, presented and discussed at the Sieradz English Teaching and Research Forum organized by the Foreign Language Teacher Training College in Sieradz in April 2014. Drawing on a range of new developments in linguistic theory and foreign language pedagogy, this volume brings together theoretical perspectives and new empirical studies in the field of foreign language teaching and foreign language teacher education in Poland.

My presentation at the conference (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 2014a) focused on the contribution of Cognitive Linguistics and language corpora to the analysis of English and Polish grammar and vocabulary and to the development of effective techniques of semantics- and grammar-awareness-raising with FL learners. The linguistic area discussed involved questions which arise with reference to time, temporality and time experience and their manifestation in language. These questions include a number of more specific issues. The first relates to the way the experience humans acquire and possess is organized in terms of a temporal framework and how this experience is expressed in the grammatical categories available in the languages they use. Another particular issue is how linguistic forms accommodate various types of time concepts and particularly temporal displacement, in which the actual temporal point of reference in a real context is different from that described or referred to in a linguistic utterance. The question of the nature of mental models

language users develop to grasp and convey the notion of time, particularly in terms of the ongoing debate on the actual (physical and ontological) and cognitive (conceptual) position and functions of time, especially with reference to space, is another vast research area with direct relevance to foreign language awareness raising. Finally, the investigation aimed at uncovering the processes of native and non-native time acquisition , which provides new insight into FLT methodology employed in the teaching of temporal categories in non-native contexts.

The basic conclusion from the reported study (see also Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 2014) clearly points to the character of language research methodology, which combines cognitive linguistic analysis and usage-based implications, inferred from the analysis of large corpus-based materials. Effective FLT methods and techniques on the other hand are shown to involve both *form-* and *meaning-focused* techniques to facilitate language awareness-raising through *grammar-discovery* tasks, as first labelled by Ellis and Gaies (1998). The authors convincingly argue that FLT learners internalize those linguistic properties that they are ready to learn and the learning process passes through a series of *transitional stages*, in which learners first *notice* a pattern (Schmidt 2010) and gradually acquire a system to, at least partly, monitor *its use*, which is precisely what is needed in competent communication.

The role and function of computerized language corpora, both national such as British National Corpus (BNC), Corpus of Contemporary American (COCA) or National Corpus of Polish (nkjp.pl), and learner collections of authentic language materials cannot be overestimated. Numerous publications (Granger et al. 2002) show a range of corpus-based approaches to interlanguage analysis, and the analysis presented at the conference (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 2014a) precisely identified the transitional stages in the process of learning English time-related concepts with Polish students as well as the direct pedagogical relevance of learner corpus work both in foreign language learning and teacher education.

The authors in the present volume seek to enlarge their research agenda and pedagogical practices in a two-way dynamic, by exploring how various parameters associated with the learners, their age, gender and individual personality traits as well as the typological specifics of the conceptual and linguistic systems they try to master, bear on the learning success and, in turn, how extending teacher education into new technological realms, encompassing the virtual space, with the use of online language assessment and online collaborative writing, might reconfigure teachers' teaching practices leading to greater didactic success.

The authors focus predominantly on the teaching of English as a

foreign language in Poland, where English language teaching needs significantly surpass those related to other foreign languages. Apart from cross—linguistic insight (e.g. emotion studies), the publication also offers a sample of resources in foreign language assessment, individual differences and technology. It constitutes an interesting reference, which covers reflections on learner language, new trends in teacher education and samples of applications in Computer-Assisted Language Teaching and Learning.

How are these developments to be treated in foreign language pedagogy? In older times students used to be considered learners merely of foreign language grammar and vocabulary, while in present times they are taught to be communicators. New approaches to language teaching involve the acquisition of meaningful communication patterns in the language, immersed in a relevant cultural context. The stimulation of verbal exchanges in terms of competently controlled grammar, lexis and discourse strategies, in the form of both classroom and online speaking and collaborative tasks, contributes to the development of the increased quality of all foreign language skills.

References

Ellis, R. and S. Gaies. 1998. *Impact Grammar*. Hong Kong: Longman.

Granger, S., J. Hung and S. Petch-Tyson. 2002. Computer Learner Corpora, Second Language Acquisition and Foreign Language Teaching. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, B. 2014. "Time and Time Experience in Language". In Time and Temporality in Language and Human Experience edited by B. Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk and K. Kosecki, 19-44. Frankfurt a. Main: Peter Lang.

Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, B. 2014a. Time in Polish and English Description of Events: Problem Areas for EFL Learners. Paper presented at Sieradz English Teaching and Research Forum, 5 April 2014.

Schmidt, R. 2010. "Attention, awareness, and individual differences in language learning". In *Proceedings of CLaSIC 2010,* edited by W. M. Chan, S. Chi, K. N. Cin, J. Istanto, M. Nagami, J. W. Sew, T. Suthiwan, & I. Walker, 721-737. Singapore: National University of Singapore, Centre for Language Studies.

INTRODUCTION

Most of the papers contained in this volume were presented at a conference in Sieradz, Poland, in the Spring of 2014; others were inspired by its theme and its aims. The Sieradz English Teaching And Research Forum was organised in order to provide an opportunity for four different groups to come together and discuss the teaching of English: researchers engaged in investigating the nature of language teaching and learning; teacher trainers charged with developing the next generation of educators; practising language teachers at work now in Polish schools, and students, many of whom will go on to teach in the future.

As organisers we were concerned that many practising teachers felt very distant from the research process and the theoretical concerns of academics. At the same time, we understood that it is essential for those of us engaged in research which studies and hopes to affect the classroom, to maintain contact with the reality of language teaching as it is conducted in schools from the nursery to university, in private schools and the toughest of state run institutions.

The presentations given on the day covered a very wide range of issues of interest to teachers and researchers alike, and the interaction between the two groups led to intense discussion and was, we believe, informative and stimulating for both groups. The topics covered, although extremely diverse, can be divided into two principal groups and that is the structure we have followed in this volume.

Part one contains papers taking, in the main, the perspective of the teacher and the process of teaching. There is, as one would expect in any contemporary discussion of such matters, quite an emphasis on the effect of developments in technology on the classroom and how the new opportunities offered by those developments can best be utilised for the good of language learners. In the first paper, Jarosław Krajka discusses an integral part of e-learning, telecollaboration. Telecollaboration treats learning as a social process and promotes communication between learners using a range of web-based platforms. Professor Krajka thoroughly explores the aims and the potential of such methods, as well as considering the drawbacks and possible difficulties, many of which have been eased by the advent of Web 2.0.

The theme of collaboration is continued by Przemysław Krakowian. His contribution introduces the notion of Communities of Practice, where individuals with a common purpose come together to discuss and solve outstanding problems. One such example is the Electronic Performance Support System hosted by the University of Łódź. Professor Krakowian provides a full description of the system and a practical guide to its use, and points out the variety of applications the tool has both in the assessment of oral production and the understanding of raters and rating systems.

Mariusz Marczak's paper concerns the concept of teaching writing skills in EFL courses through online collaboration tools. It demonstrates how to harness cloud computing technology in order to foster synchronous learner-learner collaboration online with a view to making learners benefit from mutual contribution to the writing process. The study discussed investigates the actual practices that students follow while writing collaboratively as well as their perceptions of this kind of work mode. The author rounds the paper up with a set of conclusions pertaining to the advantages of online collaborative writing.

The fourth article also deals with issues arising from the spread of information technology, but takes a different perspective. Katarzyna Papaja, Adam Pluszczyk and Artur Świątek constructed a questionnaire designed to assess the degree to which learners of English adapt their language when communicating via the web as opposed to traditional linguistic interactions. They look also at the effect computer-mediated communication has on the learning process, concluding that it may be of great help in learning vocabulary but is of less importance in the acquisition of grammar.

The remaining two papers in this section address more traditional methodological problems. Mark Weaver is an experienced teacher trainer and classroom assessor. His contribution looks at differences in teacher behaviour found when teaching groups of boys and groups of girls. The study he conducted in Polish school classrooms involved a comparison of elicitation techniques used by teachers when dealing with different genders and found substantial differences in the way teachers work with male and female learners. He concludes by discussing what attitudes lie behind these differences and how the techniques used affect learner outcomes.

Anna Świerczyńska describes a study she carried out using innovative informal methods of assessment. Her focus is on the assessment of reading skills, but the idea of employing non-traditional methods of assessments is relevant to all language skills. The approach she took sought to encourage

good behaviours in students and to involve them in the process of assessment. She notes that, despite some practical difficulties, this led to an increase in motivation to read among the participants and gave the teacher a better idea of the ability of the students.

Along with the advent of communication technology and all the opportunities it presents, perhaps the most important trend in English teaching research over recent years has been the increased interest in the attitudes, needs and abilities of the learner. Section two of this collection asks and seeks to answer a number of questions relating to the wishes and beliefs of learners; considers the needs of particular groups, such as the blind, and the challenges they face,; and ends with a look at emotions and how they are differently expressed and understood in different language cultures, an issue of great importance to all teachers who work with students from around the world.

Dorota Lipińska's paper questions pre-conceptions about the aims of language learners by actually asking them what they see as their target in the area of pronunciation. Her study suggests that although we cannot take it for granted that all learners wish to achieve a native-like accent, most do and those who would prefer to move to a more neutral model of pronunciation teaching may be doing so against the wishes of their students.

The Individual Differences Myth is the suggestion raised by Zoltan Dornyei that the traditional concept of distinct individual differences operating more or less independently is no longer sustainable. Martin Hinton considers this viewpoint and looks at how researchers may respond to the challenge laid down by Dornyei. It is suggested that although Dornyei's ideas bring considerable problems for those studying individual differences, he cannot be ignored, and that with the right methodology, embracing the notion of interrelated differences in a state of flux, they can lead to a better understanding of how the individual functions and learns.

Monika Madej and Zuzanna Kiermasz have examined the reactions of a group of students to a particular methodology: in this case teaching vocabulary through the use of word clouds. They looked for correlations between the attitudes of students and an assessment of their intelligence type, based on the theory of multiple intelligences. They report some significant differences between the reception of the method by different intelligence types which should be borne in mind by teachers when making use of word clouds and similar techniques, and discuss a number of avenues for further research.

The contribution of Agnieszka Piskorska addresses the often neglected area of learners with specific impairments. She looks at blind learners and

how their differing experience of the world can impact on their ability to
perform comprehension tasks in a foreign language, designed by and
primarily for sighted people. As well as describing comprehension
problems caused by gaps in knowledge and pragmatic competence, she
also makes a number of practical suggestions which would make
examination tasks fairer and less confusing for the blind.

The final chapter in the volume deals with language and emotion rather
than teaching and learning per se. Paul Wilson's study looks at how
emotions and their linguistic expression are influenced by socio-cultural
factors, by examining the links between the understanding of apparently
direct translations of emotion words and cultural differences, particularly
the degree of individualism and collectivism in British and Polish society.
The finding that English and Polish speakers have quite different
associations to what is usually considered to be the same word is of great
importance to language learners and teachers as both groups are happy to
translate freely between languages, when, in fact, they ought to pay more
attention to the subtle differences in the connotations of matching words
between languages.

As editors, we sincerely hope and believe that the work collected in
this volume will be of great interest to students and teachers alike, and will
serve to further stimulate research into the many fascinating areas of the
study of English Language Teaching. We would like to take this
opportunity to thank everyone involved in producing this publication, in
particular the contributors themselves and reviewers, dr Dorota
Gonigroszek and dr Arkadiusz Rojczyk, without whose work no volume
could have materialised.

<div align="right">Mariusz Marczak and Martin Hinton</div>

PART ONE:

TECHNOLOGY AND TEACHING SKILLS

Extending Teacher Training into the Virtual Space: Telecollaboration in Foreign Language Teacher Education

Jarosław Krajka
Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Lublin

Foreign language teacher education is a process that is well-established in the research literature and usually quite clearly regulated by the legal acts of a particular country. Even though knowledge, skills and attitudes can be specified together with curriculum subjects and their length, there is still much room for innovation in terms of methods of work. One such cutting-edge option can be supplementing face-to-face instruction with an e-learning component.

The aim of the present paper is to explore the notion of telecollaboration and its application in foreign language teacher education. Definitions and models will be provided, together with possible drawbacks and steps for implementation. The discussion will end with a presentation of selected Telecollaboration 2.0 environments and activities.

1. Introduction

With the great ease of networking, increased access to the Internet and ubiquitous social networking platforms, it seems unquestionable that computer-mediated collaboration will play a great role not only in people's lives, but also in their learning processes. University education in general, and teacher training in particular, cannot be left aside in this respect, as the value of telecollaborative projects has already been proven at other levels of education both in Poland and in a number of other countries.

However, with great emphasis on boosting the learning process with innovative methods and classroom techniques evident in quite a lot of schools, university education has always stayed somewhat behind in this respect, with inadequate technological provisions and a lack of separate curricular foci for technology-assisted learning. Luckily, in recent years

the situation has started to gradually improve, with more and more institutions providing Eduroam mobile Internet access to students in all classrooms, setting up Learning Management Systems like Moodle to assist teaching courses or introducing electronic forms of assessment and feedback giving.

Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning, listed by Lund (2003) alongside other computer-based paradigms such as Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI), Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITS) and Logo-as-Latin, is an approach to knowledge building based on the socially oriented sciences and the idea of learning as a social process, stressing the role of the distributed nature of knowledge (Bouziane 2005). Its most widespread application is telecollaboration, which involves the use of computer learning networks for foreign language learning and teaching in institutionalised settings, where "internationally dispersed learners in parallel language classes" (Belz 2003, 2) use varied Internet communication tools to support social interaction, dialogue, debate and intercultural exchange (Vinagre, 2007). Thus, as Belz (2002) has it, in this kind of computer-supported learning environment pairs or groups of distantly-located students are embedded in varied sociocultural and institutional settings.

The purpose of the present paper is to reflect on the part telecollaboration can play in this landscape, showing in particular its possible application within the foreign language teacher training curriculum. After establishing definitions and theoretical aspects of Computer-Mediated Communication, collaborative learning environments will be described, with special attention devoted to pedagogical designs and activities.

2. Telecollaboration in University Education

2.1 Preliminary Considerations

On the simplest level, a telecollaborative project is made up of two or more groups from different partner institutions, who work online in varied modes (synchronously and asynchronously), learning environments (e.g., Learning Management Systems, videoblogs, Facebook groups), to achieve common instructional purposes. However, a quick review of a number of terms that appear in the literature calls for a much more systematic introduction to the way telecollaboration can be defined.

Depending on the viewpoint of the researcher, the process of online work can be given various labels with specific connotations. Thus, for Lamy and Goodfellow (2010), telecollaboration is an exchange that

always has to lead to a collaboratively created tangible product, excluding all those frameworks in which conceptual or attitudinal change in learners' minds, learning repertoires or outlooks is actually accomplished in the process. On the other hand, Dooly and O'Dowd (2013) call the process "online intercultural exchanges", stressing the fact that a collaborative project needs to help partners develop intercultural communicative competence, obviously, specially adapted to the digital medium in which it is taking place. As defined by Guth, Helm and O'Dowd (2012, 4), "Online Intercultural Exchange (OIE), also called foreign language telecollaboration, involves Internet-mediated intercultural engagement between classes of foreign language (FL) learners in geographically distant locations." Therefore, digital competence of online collaborators will always be one of the objectives of the project, however, while in the era of Internet 1.0 it was one of the major tenets of the project, it has been currently removed to the background by more important subject-matter objectives.

Many telecollaborative projects originate from the concept of tandem learning (Little 2001, 2003; Little, Ushioda 1998), in which a group of non-native students of a particular language was teamed up with native speakers of that language. In this way, the language gap that arises due to the different backgrounds of partners is bound to be beneficial for both parties–NNSs develop their target language proficiency by being placed in authentic interactions in the virtual space, while NSs become more aware of the elements of their mother tongue, especially in terms of formal aspects of the language. This concept has inspired reflections on how to design telecollaborative projects so that their participants, joined by shared professional interests (tranversal interests, Guth et al. 2012), would find a natural desire to use the language and work on common products.

Another question that arises is the extent to which a telecollaborative exchange is focused on the learning process and achieving specific goals, and to what extent it is a social process of relationship forming, bonding, and trusting. While the two cannot be separated, it becomes more and more evident that in social networking projects the social sphere and individual relations will be more appreciated, while a telenetworking design will focus more on what the remote participants need to contribute to conclude the project. For instance, in their understanding of professional networking, Lamy and Zourou (2013) stress the concepts of reuse of materials, openness beyond the borders of the class and the added value stemming from dissemination of knowledge outside the network of the actual partners.

Communication, cooperation and collaboration are usually regarded as synonymous, without much consideration paid to what particular outcome these three processes culminate with. In terms of telecollaborative exchanges, as is the argument of An et al. (2008), they need to be clearly separated both in terms of instructional design and technology used. With communication as the aim of the project, as Lee et al. (2006) have it, the essence is message exchange and information delivery; thus, Computer-Mediated Communication tools are used to enable students to easily distribute information and resources to one another. Thus, in such a setup partners share locally produced computer artifacts, which are later used as prompts or stimuli for activities done by the partners in their face-to-face classes. Beatty and Nunan (2004), on the other hand, are strict about the necessity for a clear distinction between the two remaining processes. Cooperation requires that students work together, with each getting a part of a task to do, however, the aspect of negotiation of the outcome is not essential for successful task completion. Finally, as the finest and most sophisticated form of online work, and the one most difficult to arrive at, collaborative learning implies "working in a group of two or more to achieve a common goal, while respecting each individual's contribution to the whole" (McInnerney and Robert 2004, 205; cited after An et al*., 2008, 67). Still, the distinction between the two is not widely made, which means that many examples of activities and tasks labelled as cooperation fall under the above definition of collaboration.

This way or another, telecollaboration is a highly flexible concept, denoting a broad area of applications and a multitude of instructional designs. Instructors need to be aware of the fact that the extent to which remote partners share understanding of the concept may actually be one of the factors contributing to the successful outcome of the project.

2.2 The Rationale for Telecollaboration in Teacher Education

Computer-Mediated Communication, with telecollaboration as its specific form, has received a lot of research attention over the years, starting with early studies of email-based projects, through more sophisticated learning designs based on Web 2.0 tools to current projects based on social networks. Warschauer, Turbee and Roberts (1996) claim learner collaboration mediated by computer technology helps foster social relations in the classroom, stimulates greater student involvement and empowerment by sharing information, engaging in collaborative writing and holding electronic discussions. Beatty and Nunan (2004, 166) point out that collaboration manifests itself "as a willingness to listen to others'

ideas, suggestions and opinions so that they can be discussed and integrated into further actions, such as decisions about how to complete a task". In a similar vein, Eklund and Eklund (1996) add that the electronic collaborative classroom makes learners more involved in learning, "increasing motivation and providing a framework where they may place their work", thus having an effect on enhanced satisfaction and improved learning outcomes.

As regards the characteristics of the telecollaborative learning process, Berge and Collins (1993) pinpoint the removal of traditional barriers to participation due to greater convenience, place- and time-independence. For Schultz (2003; after An et al. 2008), participation in online intercultural exchanges helps improve socialisation skills and enhanced critical thinking (Jegede 2002; cited after An et al. 2008). Specifically in the context of foreign language teacher training, telecollaboration is credited with the following benefits:

- Increased exposure to training materials, by giving trainees access to subject-matter materials from the course curricula of both (or more) partners;
- Greater impact of instruction through deeper processing of input, with methodology-related knowledge, skills and attitudes coming into play in the process of negotiation of knowledge;
- Familiarity with diverse educational contexts increasing trainees' skills of evaluating and adapting language instruction to fit learners of different mother tongues, cultures, social backgrounds and learning styles;
- Preparation for multilingual and multicultural teaching, leading to greater employability;
- Effective integration of language development, methodology knowledge development and digital competence development;
- Enhanced interpersonal skills, with increased sensitivity, tolerance for diversity and openness to otherness.

In terms of university education, according to Guth et al. (2012), telecollaboration is a highly effective vehicle for the simultaneous and smooth development of both foreign language skills and intercultural competence at the academic level. Mastery of both of these areas, together with practical use of selected technologies, is a prerequisite for proper functioning in the knowledge society of today. Additionally, a telecollaborative project is described by Guth et al. (2012) as motivating, semi-authentic in nature, providing ample opportunities for spoken and

written language use and, most importantly, constituting an inexpensive form of quality contact with other cultures.

However, online collaboration can encounter some challenges, tensions and problems as well. The learning process can face steep learning curves and time investments with access requirements to be met in appropriately reliable hardware and software environments (Berge and Collins, 1993). Missing the immediacy of human presence with paralinguistic communications systems of face, hands and body, inadequate depth and detail of intonation, stress and tone of voice (if voice is present at all) failing to transmit, for instance, empathy and professional solidarity (Edge 2006) are some additional serious drawbacks of such instructional frameworks.

In her plenary lecture to the Telecollaboration in Foreign Language University Education conference organized as the culmination point of the INTENT project in Leon, Spain, in February 2014, Marie-Noelle Lamy points to the following challenges and tensions in telecollaboration, whose negative effects would have to be prevented or at least minimised in order for online intercultural exchanges to constitute a positive learning experience for university students:

- negative grammatical pragmatic transfer;
- sociopragmatic differences;
- age differences;
- differences in local learning values;
- institutional and professional misalignments;
- practical constraints;
- psycholinguistic pressures due to synchronicity;
- mismatches between teaching and assessment;
- teacher workload;
- political incompatibilities;
- tension-creating influences from the wider context of use.

As visible from the list above, some of the constraints refer to factors stemming from the very differences between the partners, their cultures, mother tongues, perception of teacher-student relations, willingness and openness towards other cultures. In fact, sociopragmatic differences, political incompatibilities or institutional and professional misalignments do not have to have such a harmful effect on the actual outcome of the project. On the contrary, once disparities in sociopragmatic, political, institutional or professional domains are isolated and acknowledged by coordinators from partner institutions, the actual design of the exchange

can exploit these differences as the chosen focus to be explored and pondered upon.

Other factors (practical constraints, mismatches between teaching and assessment or teacher workload) mentioned by Lamy (2014) are connected to the mediating technologies, where it is sometimes the case that teachers want to motivate their learners with the cutting-edge technologies they are not in full control of themselves. As a result, instructors' frustrations, excessive workload and occasional technology-related mishaps influence the way a collaborative project is perceived by all the parties involved. As a solution, it seems much more reasonable to pay much greater attention to the sophistication of the learning design, activities, tasks and products, rather than attempt to boost learners' motivation only with the technology used. Thus, careful selection of mediating technologies needs to take into account the actual daily usage by teachers, who need to be fully contextually-confident (Kessler, Plakans 2008) in particular operations in order to be in full management of language instruction happening in the virtual space.

2.3 Classification of Collaboration Tools

Computer-mediated collaboration can use an almost unlimited range of technologies, both in terms of materials production (such as word-processors, presentation software, audio/video/graphics editors, authoring tools), communication as well as online collaboration. In fact, any technology, aiming at content creation, communication or testing, can be successfully implemented into a collaborative project in one of its stages. In general, the requirement for interactive technologies to be classified as suitable for virtual teamwork is that they should allow teams to communicate, collaborate, and share knowledge and information resources with other team members and beyond (Lee et al. 2006).

Traditionally, technologies fall into asynchronous tools (e-mail, discussion boards, wikis, blogs, online word processors), where interaction is done with a delay, and synchronous tools (chat, audio/videoconferencing, MOOs, whiteboards), enabling creating the learning context and mediating social exchange at the very same moment. Another distinction is that into same time/same place, same time/different place, different time/same place, and different time/different place (Duarte and Snyder, 1999; cited after Lee et al. 2006), which brings into focus the fact that in telecollaborative projects at least some part of collaboration may take place in the classroom (same place), either real-time (same time) or asynchronously, out of class (different place).

Studies	Technologies
Coleman (1997)	☐ Synchronous (desktop and real-time data conferencing, electronic display, video conferencing and audio conferencing) ☐ Asynchronous applications (e-mail, bulletin boards, non-real-time database sharing and conferencing, workflow applications)
Duarte and Snyder (1999)	☐ Same time, same place (residence meeting) ☐ Same time, different place (audio conference, video conference) ☐ Different time, same place (chat room, bulletin board) ☐ Different time, different place (e-mailing, voice mail message)
Bonk, Medury and Reynolds (1994)	☐ Electronic mail and delayed messaging tools ☐ Remote access/Delayed collaborative writing ☐ Real-time dialoguing and idea generation tools ☐ Real-time collaborative writing tools ☐ Cooperative hypermedia
Chinowsky and Rojas (2003)	☐ Communication technology ☐ Cooperation technology ☐ Collaboration technology

Table 1.1

Most crucially, the taxonomy of Chinowsky and Rojas (2003) indicates a need to reflect on the reason why a particular technology is used to mediate learning, and what is achieved thanks to it. The distinction into communication, cooperation and collaboration, already established in the initial section of this paper, sets forth the pedagogical principles for the use of CMC in language education. Thus, to start with, communication technologies focus on message exchange and information delivery, enabling students to distribute information and resources. On the other hand, cooperation technologies, such as a forum-style discussion board or team file space, according to Lee et al. (2006, 21), "feature technical advances over communication technologies", and their users focus on utilising information transmitted and develop ideas and solutions in response to team tasks. Finally, collaboration technologies offer multiple modes of delivery (e.g., graphic-textual in whiteboards or audio-textual in audio conferencing) and aim at providing real-life work situations and experiences, thus supporting "the emotional flow of teamwork process" (Lee et al. 2006, 21).

CMC tools, serving communication, cooperation and collaboration purposes, would not cater for all possible needs of partners in a telecollaborative process without user authoring of digital materials of various kinds (text, picture, audio file, video, multimedia presentation, self-study Java-script quiz). In quite a lot of instructional patterns much of telecollaboration involves the production of digital artifacts by telecollaborators in their classrooms, and then exchanging them with remote partners to stimulate discussion, response or further authoring. The materials can be created by:

- office applications: word processors, spreadsheets, presentation software, databases;
- web publishing tools: word processors, webpage editors, HTML editors, blogs, wikis;
- multimedia recorders: audio editors such as Audacity, http://audacity.sourceforge.net; video editors such   as VideoGet, http://nuclear-coffee.com/VideoGet or Total Video Converter, http://www.effectmatrix.com/total-video-converter/;
- multimedia editors: Windows MovieMaker, image editors like GIMP, http://www.gimp.org; audio editors   such as Audacity, http://audacity.sourceforge.net;
- multimedia self-study quiz making tools: HotPotatoes, http://hotpot.uvic.ca; Learning Apps, https://learningapps.org/.

The era of Collaboration 1.0 (for instance, early eTwinning) was marked by a prevalence for using separate production and communication technologies, which meant, for instance, preparation of films, PowerPoint presentations, audio postcards, and the like, and their exchange with partners via email, Moodle or Google Drive. As O'Dowd and Eberbach (2003) note, the use and combination of different communication and production tools can offer teachers and learners various advantages. Thus, for instance, videoconferencing enables students to see and speak to their partners in real time, thus making use of paralinguistic features and non-verbal communication, while MOO's or discussion boards provide unrestricted access to interaction transcripts, facilitating reflection and further study (O'Dowd and Eberbach, 2003). In this way, the selection of tools should not only take into account the characteristics of the specific task designed for a computer-mediated collaborative session, but also planned follow-up activities.

However, in the current understanding of telecollaboration more and more negotiation of meaning and material authoring actually takes place

online, reflecting the Read-Write nature of Web 2.0. Such characteristic features of Web 2.0 network as a platform, with connected devices (O'Reilly 2005), 'microcontent' pieces of data "saved, summarized, addressed, copied, quoted, built into new projects" (Alexander 2006), "architecture of participation", with software being updated as influenced by the more people use it (O'Reilly 2005), "open communication, decentralization of authority, [and] freedom to share and re-use" material, obviously influence the way telecollaboration in university settings is going to be undertaken. The evolution from Read-Web to Read-Write Web (Thompson 2007), with increased authoring opportunities, easy-to-use solutions enabling online publishing without much knowledge (Thompson 2007), folksonomy and much greater role of social networking (Alexander 2006), led to the emergence of new Collaboration 2.0 (office/text/multimedia/search 2.0) environments, with the listing of types seen below:

- blogs and wikis (Leuf, Cunningham 2001; Godwin-Jones 2003; Angeles 2004; Schwartz et al. 2004);
- online whiteboards, screen annotation software (Ericson 2007; Good 2008);
- online word-processors and presentations (Ericson 2007; Good 2008);
- audio/video/graphic conferencing and voice threaded discussions;
- virtual worlds (Sobkowiak 2010a, 2010b; Kruk 2014);
- Virtual Learning Environments (Krajka and Marczak 2013);
- project management tools, network presence monitoring tools, assessment, polling and voting tools;
- collaborative multimedia authoring: subtitle authoring (Krajka 2013), animation authoring, quiz authoring.

Out of the ones above, it is particularly the last group of tools, namely collaborative multimedia authoring services, which seem to display greatest potential for contemporary collaborative projects. Collaborating on different language versions of captions for the videos uploaded to DotSUB (http://dotsub.com), with the ability to publish a number of transcriptions or translations of the same video, and the ability to continue another user's unfinished subtitles, open up interesting opportunities for modern philology students. Similarly, collaborative quiz creation with such services as Quizlet (http://quizlet.com) helps student teachers gain a wider perspective on their own target language awareness and sensitivity to learner problems. Most importantly, collaborative authoring

environments foster student teachers' meta-cognitive skills, by facilitating self-assessment, peer-assessment, self- and peer-monitoring, peer feedback or directed attention.

Fig. 1-1

Web 2.0 redefines communication technologies by enabling multimodal interaction in a variety of patterns. Apart from the characteristic features of standard conferencing tools, online whiteboards (also termed 'screen annotation software') add an important visual channel to the communication context. With the display space visible to all members of the class and flexibly managed by the teacher and/or students, they can be used to enhance the message and give an additional dimension to the instruction by using visual appeal. Displaying websites, pictures, drawing elements, writing straight on the whiteboard or highlighting parts of text, can all help to focus students' attention on the task and facilitate comprehension.
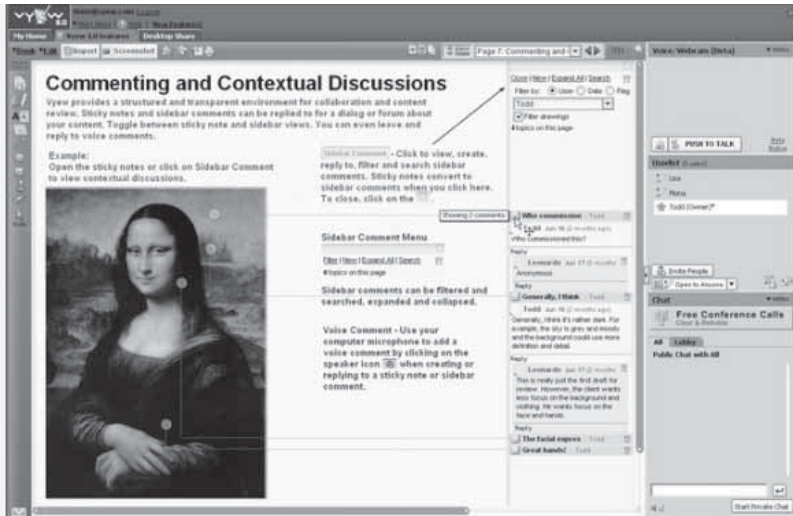
Fig. 2

Short-term collaborative activities, such as brainstorming, task feedback or peer correction, might be easily managed by such online whiteboarding tools as Groupboard (http://www.groupboard.com); Twiddla (http://www.twiddla.com/) or Vyew (http://vyew.com). The drawing capabilities (freehand, line, empty rectangle and ellipse, fill colour choice and line thickness), pointing and marking (real-time/laser pointer, arrow-pointer, highlighter-emphasiser, numbered marker, marker with preset symbols, spotlight), text addition and deletion (text tool, individual/global eraser), importing/exporting a picture/screenshot, saving/loading/hiding/displaying annotations, and interacting in text/audio with multiple users, all allow boosting productivity of classroom presentation and practice similarly to the stationary Interactive Whiteboard. On the other hand, online whiteboards provide equal interaction opportunities to all invited students, be it locally or remotely, which means that work on the display space can be truly collaborative and learner-centred.

2.4 Pedagogical Designs and Telecollaborative Activities

While the abundance of technologies potentially useful for telecollaborative projects in university settings may be highly appealing, it is more important, on the one hand, to reconcile different technologies into

a coherent pedagogical framework, and, on the other hand, to ensure actual collaboration with a thoughtful methodological design. As it is claimed by Lee et al. (2006), "the success of virtual teams depends on the balanced integration of technologies and pedagogical activities, and the decisions on the specific tools and their features to be exploited in the language classroom naturally influence the virtual team's processes and performances" (par. 4). At the same time, Lamy (2014) warns against being overenthusiastic about the potential of cutting-edge technologies, instead advocating clear and sensible pedagogical thought behind the exchange syllabus. "There is no need to go into very much bells and whistles things" (Lamy, 2014), instead, the key is to make sure true collaboration, rather than student-responses to teacher-initiated forums, actually appears. It is necessary to emphasise the primary role of cognitive, pedagogical, language and intercultural objectives over computer objectives, as technology only creates conditions for the accomplishment of these types of aims, not constituting an aim itself. On the other hand, it is by getting to know the opportunities offered by contemporary ICT tools that one can formulate the above-mentioned aims in a way that will be appropriately challenging for learners.

Before the selection of tasks and activities can actually take place, the major decision to be taken is what particular model the exchange is going to follow. In its first dimension, the question arises on the cultures partners are supposed to come from. Thus, an online exchange can be monocultural, if participants from different parts of the country are teamed up together (e.g., students of English philology from different universities in Poland). An interesting variation on a monocultural exchange can be a project in which student teachers from a country could be coupled with their counterparts of Polish origin from some other country, e.g., young Polish Melbournians in Australia, though such partners might be very difficult to find. On the other hand, a bicultural exchange involves two partners of two different cultures, and the degree of distance between these may be taken into account when setting up the aims for the exchange. In the two teacher training projects summarized in Krajka (2014), Polish student teachers liaised with Turkish student teachers on the one hand and Slovenian teachers on the other. Thus, the selection of the culture partners are supposed to come from should not be done at random, on a 'whoever volunteers' basis, but rather be suited to the amount of collaboration and the depth of relationship expected. Finally, a multicultural project involves more than two partners from different countries. Greater exposure to diversity, on the positive side, may of course be compromised by unequal participation and problems with establishing proper bonds between partners.

At this point, Guth et al.'s (2012) recommendations for telecollaboration design need to be brought to light. According to the authors, there is a great need for more telecollaboration in lesser-taught languages, or at least, within the context of teacher training, involving multilingual speakers and going outside the stereotypical European and US partners. Transversal skills development, or "specific professional skills for future workers who are increasingly likely to have to communicate and/or work online" (Guth et al. 2012, 78), provides relevant learning opportunities for students of foreign languages for effective acquisition of metaprofessional competence. On top of all of these, obviously, there is a need for improved partnership finding, much greater effort spent on conceptualising an exchange, negotiating it with the partners, to find the best possible scenario in terms of grouping, outcome and timeline.

The second important dimension to be addressed when setting up project aims is the professional competence that is expected of the partners. Ideally, the partners in a telecollaborative project should be as close as possible in the greatest number of individual characteristics (age, language proficiency, learning styles, professional roles, etc.) so that it is the mother culture that is the only differing factor influencing the outcome of the project. Unrealistic as this may be, it is quite inevitable that partners will differ in a much greater number of aspects, thus, creating a purposeful competence gap can be an alternative which might be exploited in an interesting way in the project's design. In the teacher training project described by Krajka (2014), Polish student teachers were teamed up with Slovenian teachers. The arising competence gap was supposed to stimulate the process of collaboration and give a sense of responsibility to partners.

The INTENT project website (http://uni-collaboration.eu/) lists a number of telecollaborative activities, which are worth implementing or adapting to fit particular partners' needs. The ones with greatest didactic potential seem to be the following:

- chain stories;
- photo sharing;
- synchronous and asynchronous debates;
- culture autobiographies;
- information exchanges;
- producing travel brochures;
- audio postcards;
- news reviews;
- collaborative brainstorming;

- creating a group identity;
- collaborative biography writing;
- jigsaw reading and speaking;
- ethnographic interviews online.

While reflecting upon the choice of activities, the question arises on reconciling the diverse influences that a foreign language teacher is subject to. On the one hand, the amount of institutional support may be insufficient, resulting in the telecollaborative exchange exercising excessive teacher workload. The need for stronger institutional assistance, together with better teacher education in telecollaboration techniques, according to Guth et al. (2012), should lead to greater effectiveness of this form of learning.

If a telecollaborative project is to be a supplement to regular face-to-face instruction, as is most likely to occur in the current framework of Polish language teacher education, then the question arises on how to integrate online activities with the regular curriculum, how to develop assessment tools for intercultural and computer-mediated learning, so that there are no mismatches between teaching and assessment (Lamy 2014). Careful design in this respect involves specification of content areas, setting realistic objectives, choosing forms of online work (communication, cooperation or collaboration) that are doable in a particular context with a given group of students, within the timeline that is likely to reinforce the quality of face-to-face instruction rather than be some kind of burden.

The learning design and the activities applied in the telecollaborative project need to be selected in such a way that the intercultural differences arising between partners are either minimised or consciously exploited during the exchange. Careful management of 'sensitive' issues in the pre-project phase, as well as monitoring them while the project is running, should release the psycholinguistic pressures arising due to synchronicity and diversity.

3. Conclusion

Telecollaborative partnerships in university language teacher education can be realised according to various levels of online interaction: communication; which focuses on information exchange and message delivery, cooperation; where partners contribute their shares to the final product, and collaboration; in which it is negotiation over individuals' contributions which leads to the success of a project. Together with the advent of Web 2.0 and a whole array of applications facilitating multimedia

content authoring and multimodal communication, Collaboration 2.0 features new opportunities in terms of learner interaction and knowledge creation. Both text-based collaborative technologies such as wikis or online word processors, as well as graphic tools like online presentations, screen annotation applications and whiteboards, can give a new dimension to the project. It seems the future should see greater inclusion of more versatile collaboration tools in a greater number of projects, provided ample care is taken to properly design the project in terms of models, activities, finding partners and thinking up assessment measures.

References

Alexander, B. "Web 2.0: a new wave of innovation for teaching and learning?" *EDUCAUSE Review 41*, no. 2 (2006): 32-44.

An, H., Kim, S. and Kim, B. "Teacher perspectives on online collaborative learning: Factors perceived as facilitating and impeding successful online group work." *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education* 8, no. 1 (2008): 65-83.

Angeles, M. "Using a wiki for documentation and collaborative authoring." (2004). Accessed May 15, 2014. http://www.llrx.com/features/librarywikis.htm.

Beatty, K. and Nunan, D. "Computer-mediated collaborative learning." *System* 32 (2004): 165-183.

Belz, J. A. "Social dimensions of telecollaborative foreign language study." *Language Learning & Technology* 6, no. 1 (2002): 60-81.

Belz, J. A. "From the Special Issue editor." *Language Learning & Technology* 7, no. 2 (2003): 2–5.

Berge, Z. L. and Collins, M. "Computer conferencing and online education." *The Arachnet Electronic Journal on Virtual Culture* 1, no. 3 (1993). Accessed May 13, 2009. http://www.emoderators.com/papers/bergev1n3.html.

Bonk, C. J., Medury, P. V., and Reynolds, T. H. "Cooperative hypermedia: The marriage of collaborative writing and mediated environments." *Computers in the Schools* 10, no. 1/2 (1994): 79-124.

Bouziane, A. "CALL: Implementation challenges." Plenary presentation at EUROCALL Cracow 2005 conference, Cracow, August 2005.

Chinowsky, P., and Rojas, E. "Virtual teams: Guide to successful implementation." *Journal of Management in Engineering* 19, no.3 (2003): 98-106.

Coleman, D. "Groupware: The changing environment." In *Groupware: Collaborative Strategies for Corporate LANs and Intranets,* edited by

D. Coleman, 1-37. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1997.

Dooly, M., and O'Dowd, R. (eds.) *Researching Online Foreign Language Exchanges: Theories, Methods and Challenges*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2012.

Duarte, D., and Snyder, N. *Mastering Virtual Teams: Strategies, Tools and Techniques that Succeed*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1999.

Edge, J. "Computer-mediated cooperative development: non-judgemental discourse in online environments." *Language Teaching Research* 10, no. 2 (2006): 205-227.

Eklund, J. and Eklund, P. "Integrating the Web and the teaching of technology: Cases across two universities." Paper presented at AusWeb96 the Second Australian World Wide Web Conference, Gold Coast (Australia), July 7-9, 1996. Accessed May 15, 2014. http://ausweb.scu.edu.au/aw96/educn/eklund2/index.htm.

Ericson, R. "Online office suites: the winner is clear." *Computerworld*, 17 January 2007. Accessed May 15, 2014.
http://www.computerworld.com/action/article.do?command=viewArticleBasic&articleId=9007884&pageNumber=1.

Godwin-Jones, B. "Blogs and wikis: Environments for on-line collaboration." *Language Learning & Technology* 7, no. 2 (2003): 12-16.

Good, R. "Collaborative writing tools and technology: a mini-guide." (2008). Accesed May 15, 2014.
http://www.kolabora.com/news/2007/03/01/collaborative_writing_tools_and_technology.htm.

Guth, S., Helm, F., and O'Dowd, R. *University Language Classes Collaborating Online. A Report on the Integration of Telecollaborative Networks in European Universities*. INTENT Project Final Report, 2012.

Kessler, G., and Plakans, L. "Does teachers' confidence with CALL equal innovative and integrative use?" *Computer Assisted Language Learning* 21, no. 3 (2008): 269–282.

Krajka, J. "Audiovisual translation in LSP – A case for using captioning in Teaching Languages for Specific Purposes." *Scripta Manent* 8, no. 1 (2013): 2-14. Accessed May 15, 2014.
http://www.sdutsj.edus.si/ScriptaManent/2013_8_1/krajka.html.

Krajka, J. "Student teachers and teacher students – telecollaboration in LSP teacher education." Paper presented at *Telecollaboration in University Language Education*, Leon, University of Leon, 11-13 February 2014.

Krajka, J., and Marczak, M. "From everyday language to key competences

– teachers' views on developing intercultural competence through e-learning." In *E-learning in Teaching Foreign Languages at the Tertiary Level*, edited by L. Zielińska and W. Górski, 69-86. Kraków: Cracow University of Economics, 2013.

Kruk, M. "The use of Internet resources and browser-based virtual worlds in teaching grammar." *Teaching English with Technology* 14, no. 2 (2014): 51-66. Accessed May 15, 2014. http://www.tewtjournal.org/VOL%2014/ISSUE%202/ARTICLE3.pdf.

Lamy, M.-N. "Telecollaboration: what have we learnt?" Plenary lecture delivered to *Telecollaboration in University Language Education*, Leon, University of Leon, 11-13 February 2014.

Lamy, M.-N., and Goodfellow, R. "Telecollaboration and Learning 2.0." In *Telecollaboration 2.0: Language, Literacies and Interncultural Learning in the 21st Century*, edited by S. Guth and F. Helm, 107-138. Bern: Peter Lang, 2010.

Lamy, M.-N., and Zourou, K. *Social Networking for Language Education. New Language Learning and Teaching Environments*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013.

Lee, S., Magjuka, R., Liu, X., and Bonk, C. J. "Interactive technologies for collaborative learning." *International Journal of Instructional Technology & Distance Learning* 3, no. 6 (2006): 17-32.

Leuf, B., and Cunningham, W. *The Wiki Way: Quick Collaboration on the Web*. Boston: Addison Wesley, 2001.

Little, D. "Learner autonomy and the challenge of tandem language learning via the Internet." In *ICT and Language Learning: A European Perspective*, edited by A. Chambers, G. Davies, 29–38. Lisse: Swets & Zeitlinger, 2001.

Little, D. "Tandem language learning and learner autonomy." In *Autonomous Language Learning in Tandem*, edited by T. Lewis, L. Walker, 37–44. Sheffield: Academy Electronic Publications, 2003.

Little, D., and Ushioda, E. "Designing, implementing and evaluating a project in tandem language learning via e-mail." *ReCALL* 10, no. 1 (1998): 95–101.

Lund, A. *The Teacher as Interface. Teachers of EFL in ICT-rich Environments: Beliefs, Practices, Appropriation*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Oslo: University of Oslo, 2003.

O'Dowd, R., and Eberbach, K. "Guides on the side? Tasks and challenges for teachers in telecollaborative projects." *ReCALL* 16, no. 1 (2003): 5-19.

O'Reilly, T. "Web 2.0: Compact definition?" (2005). Accessed May 15, 2014.
  http://radar.oreilly.com/archives/2005/10/web_20_compact_definition.html.

Schwartz, L., Clark, S., Cossarin, M., and Rudolph, J. "Educational wikis: Features and selection criteria." *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning* 5, no. 1 (2004). Accessed May 15, 2014. http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/163/244.

Sobkowiak, W. "SLEFL pronunciation, or: on teaching and learning EFL pronunciation in Second Life." In *Issues in Accents of English 2: Variability and Norm*, edited by E. Waniek-Klimczak, 201–212. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010a.

Sobkowiak, W. "Konkordancje dyskursu w Second Life jako narzędzie w dydaktyce." In *Studia językoznawcze: od językoznawstwa teoretycznego do stosowanego*, edited by J. Fisiak, 179–189. Kraków: Tertium, 2010b.

Thompson, J. "Is Education 1.0 ready for Web 2.0 students?" *Innovate* 3, no. 4 (2007). Accessed May 15, 2014.
  http://www.innovateonline.info/index.php?view=article&id=393.

Vinagre, M. "Social interaction in telecollaborative language learning." Paper presented at UNTELE 2007 conference, Compiegne, March 2007.

Warschauer, M., Turbee, L., and Roberts, B. "Computer learning networks and student empowerment." *System* 14, no. 1 (1996): 1-14.

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE IN PEER ASSESSMENT OF SPEAKING WITH THE EPSS (ELECTRONIC PERFORMANCE SUPPORT SYSTEM)

PRZEMYSŁAW KRAKOWIAN
UNIVERSITY OF ŁÓDŹ

1. Introduction

A community of practice (CoP) is often defined as a network or a forum, both informal and with varying degrees of formal structuring and internal organisation, through which ideas are exchanged and solutions generated (Wenger 1998). It implies the existence of a group of professionals, associated with one another through similarity of interests and expertise, and working on a common set of problems, in common pursuit of solutions, and themselves constituting a store of knowledge (Wenger 1998, Wenger, McDermott and Snyder 2002). The community of practice additionally entails the process of social learning that takes place when individuals who have common interests in some field or problem collaborate and share ideas, come up with solutions and otherwise interact with each other to work (Saint-Onge and Wallace 2003, Hildreth and Kimble 2004).

It constitutes a very attractive arrangement for many undertakings, as nothing binds people together faster than common interest and pursuit of solutions to common problems (Wenger 1998, Wenger, McDermott and Snyder 2002, Saint-Onge and Wallace 2003, Hildreth and Kimble 2004). One such scheme in which communities of practice, through the use of a web-based environment, collaboratively evaluate spoken performance is an Electronic Performance Support System hosted at the Institute of English Studies in Łódź. This web-based application, or webapp, is an offshoot of a project[1] sponsored by the EU and was carried out with the

---

[1] cf.: WebCEF http://webcef.eu http://webcef.open.ac.uk

support of the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency and the European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture, under the Socrates - Minerva programme. Partner institutions included (alphabetically): the Catholic University of Leuven (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven), Euneos Corporation, Fontys University of Applied Science (Fontys Hogescholen), the Open University UK, the Technical University of Dresden (Technische Universität Dresden), the University of Helsinki – Department of Applied Sciences of Education (DASE), the University of Łódź (Uniwersytet Łódzki), the University of Savoy – Languages Research Group (Université de Savoie). At the last stage of the project, significant contributions were made by the University of Bologna - CILTA (Centre of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics), which became a non-contractual partner in the project.

2. The IA Electronic Performance Support System

The EPSS hosted on a server at IA (Instytut Anglistyki) of Łódź University is a substantial re-write of the initial PHP code made available by the original consortium of project partners, with Łódź University vitally interested in making the code available to the general public under GNU General Public License, following the premise that the work on the project was EU financed, MySQL and PHP based and therefore open to inspection by any party interested (Meeker 2008). The parts that have been re-written by the author to make the system usable for the purposes intended by IA in Łódź pertain to the portions of the system that relied on the use of proprietary software and which would require a commercial licence to be implemented locally. Two such areas were identified; the first involved a Flash®-based upload facility, which provided the server with a security contingency as well as a progress bar indicator to prevent the users from abandoning the upload process as a result of lack of progress update; the second a commercial video and audio encoder; both of which were replaced with a GLP alternative and integrated into the scheme. Portions of the system that now allow users to self-register have been written by the author from scratch.

The bare system, with a minimum of two sample files and a test user, owing to the compactness of PHP and MySQL, amounts to a little over 90MB in a compressed archive, which can be downloaded from the UŁ Philological Faculty server as an ISO image of the EPSS CD (see Bibliography). With minimum PHP savvy, a computer literate but non-specialist enthusiast should be able to set it up in a little more than ten minutes.

There are very few systems that offer electronic support and remote access to examiners involved in assessing oral performance and examinee performance in the form of annotated samples comprising examinee portfolios.

DIALANG (www.dialang.com) cannot be treated as such, as it is was never meant as a support system for examiners, it should instead be treated as a low stake feedback facility for learners of various languages. Additionally, it has been out of commission at its original location, with Lancaster University running the technology of DIALANG "pro bono" and for some time now working to try to find a sustainable future for the system.

LOLIPOP – the Language On Line Portfolio Project (www.lolipop-portfolio.eu), though capable of storing various types of student work, is not designed to be a database facility for developing expertise in oral assessment or for training examine-rs.

SACODEYL (www.um.es/sacodeyl) is a web-based system for open distribution of European teen talk in education, which makes speech samples available, but offers no facility for annotation or benchmarking.

CEFTRAIN (www.ceftrain.net) offers practical sessions in assessing language samples, which are meant as a benchmark to explicate the workings of CEF, hence the name, but samples are few and far between.

VERSANT (www.ordinate.com), which was formerly known as the Spoken English Tests (SET), offers automated tests of spoken production, using speech processing and recognition technology, incidentally the same technology that is part of the French Arianespace programme. Tests can be taken over a telephone or a computer equipped with a modem and a microphone, and are automatically scored by the system.

Finally, LIVEMOCHA (www.livemocha.com) offers courses in six languages and aims at building a global user community, encouraging interaction and improving motivation of its members. The assignments, however, are in no way connected to any established marking or assessment system, and no support for examiners is provided.

One facility offering a similar type of support for examiners is ESOL CAMBRIDGE FRONTER (fronter.com/cambridge), essentially a VLE through which training materials and benchmarking activities are offered, but its use is restricted to examiners involved with the Cambridge ESOL exams. It provides three general areas where oral examiners can familiarise themselves with the standard, practice marking and undergo a verification procedure. Since the Fronter system is essentially a VLE, and as such is not meant for public access, it only offers access to the examiners associated with ESOL and its use was never intended for the

general public seeking access to speaking samples and striving to hone their assessment skills and expertise.

An interesting development can be seen in another EU sponsored project – SpeakingApps (www. speakingapps.eu) – this one, however; is meant as a plug-in resource for the Moodle VLE environment, and while it offers a substantial experience upgrade to the otherwise mute VLE environment, it is not meant as an application for collecting, evaluating and semi-automated assessment and training procedures.

3. The EPSS Structure

Work with the IA EPSS follows a different line of thinking and a different structural organisation, allowing greater access and a greater variety to anyone who is interested in obtaining a user account. The system recognises four types of users: the system administrator, mentor of mentors, mentor and student. All four have different system privileges and levels of access. The hierarchical organisation of user accounts was dictated by the original arrangement of the project, which assumed that certain files, information and the overall structure of user networking should be restricted to users with specific access level as well as group membership. All of this was dictated by issues related to user and data privacy, as any on-line, web based and publicly available system, whatever the intentions of the designers may be, poses privacy and data protection issues. In essence, an administrator account allows the kind of access that permits account creation, editing and access and privilege augmentation and suspension, with deletion possible only manually and for logistical reasons outside the system as any user activity leaves a trace in the system in the form of interconnectivity between the user, task and group interdependencies, thus possibly resulting in a situation where the integrity of the database and the effectiveness of MySQL queries may be at risk, and in extreme cases render the system unusable.

Other levels of access include the mentor of mentors, a simple mentor and a regular student account. At all levels of access, with only the exception of a student account, the user can create new user accounts and assign the user a role in the system, as well as create user groups and determine the group membership. The role associated with a user account determines which of the groups are visible, and potentially accessible to the user. A mentor group created by a mentor of mentors, the highest access user account, will be open only to other users with a mentor of mentors status. On the other hand, any group created by a regular student will be available by invitation to any user enjoying a higher access status

as well as any other student user. A peculiarity in the system lies in the fact that a group creator is not automatically a member of the group which is started in the process. Instead, just as with any other group membership, the creator of the group needs to add his account to the group membership list if he wishes to have access to the samples and annotations made within the group. The assumption of the creators of the original EPPS here was perhaps, especially with higher access accounts, that the creator was not necessarily always interested in what became of the group and the assessments that ensued. The EPSS at Łódź University includes a facility, which makes the group membership optional when creating a group, with the option set to yes by default.

4. The EPSS Workflow

Work with the system begins with creating a group with group user availability determined by the creator level of access, but amendable through a set of drop-down boxes. In order to make the group active and usable, the group creator needs to associate the group with one of the assessment schemas and provide future users with the description of the group and types or scope of assessments envisaged. The group may be created prior to its actual use and kept inactive, as well as it may eventually become suspended if interest in the assessments and group activity is discontinued. For reasons associated with database integrity, a group may only be deleted manually and outside the system by a direct MySQL query by the administrator; which is, however, not advisable as it may unravel the delicate tapestry of the group-task-user-assessment interconnectivity.

The next step in the workflow entails designing an assessment task, and involves providing metadata pertaining to various aspects of the future assessment instances – envisaged level in relation to CEF, status of the task in related curricula, if any, setting formality, support material, including any audio and visual files to be stored in the system as well as any meta information on the relation of the task to any existing publications of examination tasks, task sets and exam materials. A separate provision is made to store any information relating to the sample recording protocol and the procedures used in acquiring samples. In order for a task to become usable, it needs to be associated with a group, which in turn determines the type of assessment schema.

The assessment schema is added to the database manually and by the system administrator; at the moment there is no provision to do so at the individual user level, and while in the future such a functionality may be

added by popular demand, the original WebCEF project was centred around the CEF scales, and no need to add, clone and modify scales was perceived. The EPSS hosted on a server at IA (Instytut Anglistyki) of Łódź University is currently implementing two separate assessment schemata on top of CEF, in no way related to CEF, and a process of refining and fine-tuning the scales is under way, with all of the changes to the performance descriptors dictated by the process and feedback information from exams. Tracking the various interim scales, managing scale integrity, and various consistency ensuring tasks are, in the absence of a separate facility to automate the task, managed by the author, who is the EPSS administrator.

With an assessment schema in place, work can begin on samples that first need to be uploaded, transcoded, made ready for use and eventually associated with the task. Two modes of operation are possible with the current EPSS code at Łódź IA: the first involves encoding done on the server directly after the sample has been uploaded and before it has been made available for further processing, while the second assumes that the user will have already encoded the sample into the required format and performs a compatibility check on the sample. The choice as to which of the two is used is again made at the level of the code and by the system administrator. While the first of the modes is more user-friendly and makes work with the system more straightforward, it puts considerable strain on the server resources, both file allocation wise as well as in processing times.

To illustrate the point, the Open University in Milton Keynes, where the original WebCEF server operates, uses a separate, dedicated graphics workstation sporting a four quad core processing unit to cope with the demands of transcoding as well as employing a distributed computing cloud-type storage facility to process incoming multimedia traffic. This results at least partly from the fact that the server accepts high fidelity and high definition video and limits upload to 2GB. Since the resulting video to be later used in sample evaluation, which was originally meant to be undemanding in terms of bandwidth and hardware, is a mere192x144 FLV flash movie, such liberality in reserving considerable resources was seen by the EPSS designers at IA in Łódź as wasteful and overly extravagant. The added advantage of the arrangement employed IA in Łódź lies in the fact that, provided the file has been properly transcoded by the user, it is available for processing and evaluation the moment the download is complete. A separate workstation, on the other hand, requires scheduling transcoding and sometimes bottlenecking may transpire as a result of errors in encoding, when the system is unable to determine automatically if the encoding stalled or possibly failed and when it merely is still in progress.

With a sample uploaded, associated with a task, a user group and an assessment schema, the user may proceed to make assessments. This is achieved by navigating through a number of screens where individual scales are displayed and where the user may review the sample, pause it where necessary, and rewind it using the controls in order to finally make selections as he deems fit. Once the selection is made and saved, the user proceeds to subsequent scales and finally publishes the assessment. At any time, the assessment may be stopped and work on it can be suspended and the state of assessment is then automatically saved by the system with a corresponding time stamp for further editing. Any number of assessments of a given sample may be made, and any number may be left unfinished. Samples that have not been published, and therefore not made available to other group members, may be deleted, while the ones that have already been completed and published may only be deleted manually and by the administrator, with the reservations mentioned previously.

Apart from the scales that are employed in any of the available marking and assessment schemas, the system makes provisions for manual annotation, notes and comments from the assessors. Those come in two separate forms, as comments applicable to the entire sample or time specific comments, which have the added advantage that the relevant part of the sample can be played at the click of the mouse. The annotations can be used as comments, explications as well as illustrations of the finer points of the scale that may be of importance to the future user of the system as well as any CoP (Community of Practice) working on a particular task.

The system additionally allows the user to recycle samples through a functionality that makes a provision for any sample visible to the user, whether this is the sample originally uploaded by the user or any of the samples assigned to the user group the user is currently a member of, to be cloned. Cloning produces an identical instance of the sample, but stripped of any meta information or existing evaluations that may have been performed. In essence, the sample must undergo an identical procedure as any other newly uploaded sample before it can be used for evaluation. This functionality is especially useful in situations where the oral performance of more than one subject is evaluated. The cloning saves the time otherwise used on uploading and limits the space allocated to the file, as the system stores reference to the original file and not the duplicate.

The file cloning procedure, serves an additional purpose of allowing the cloning party to strip an interesting file of any associated information. The idea behind a community of practice (CoP) is that people collaborating on a task and sharing their opinions and points of view,

through the differences of their professional opinions create a multidimensional account of the phenomenon accounting for its richness and complexity. With convergence being paramount in evaluating oral performance, there is a natural temptation to consult the opinions of others before committing oneself to a judgement, especially that within the same user group all evaluations are open to user inspection once they have been published. The more evaluation traffic any sample receives, the greater the risk that the opinions of the subsequent users may be biased and tainted by unsavoury curiosity how others view, perceive and evaluate it. On the other hand, a sample stripped of any history of evaluations, of any contextual information as to its origin, provenance and purpose, and for that matter also of its original name and timestamp, would require considerable effort to be traced within the system, and if additionally belonging to a different user group, would in fact prove untraceable and for all intents and purposes be seen by the intended audiences as an entirely new file.

Sample cloning may additionally be used to separate the uses and the intended applications of the different instances of evaluation. The annotation functionality does not limit the database allocated storage in practical terms, or does so for only some of the samples that would perhaps be previously eliminated by the upload limitations of the server. The annotation, therefore, does not need to be restricted to short, incidental observations made on top of the evaluation to highlight a point that in the opinion of the rater is instrumental in justifying or emphasising a particular choice made or a band chosen on the scale. Instead, the entirety of the sample can be transcribed and then used as a starting point for further analysis. Since text is relatively lightweight and undemanding in terms of the database storage, there is essentially no limit to the degree to which the transcription can be augmented with various kinds of information, starting with accuracy, range, appropriateness, discourse markers and linking words to prosodic features and their effective use for message enhancement.

Given the fact that various features of the EPSS and different intended and unintended applications and uses, as well as the emergence of a variety of interest groups of users is bound to generate sample and assessment traffic, an issue arises as to how to manage what is being done by different groups and whether perhaps different groups are not redundant in their efforts. The system does not provide a listings or a directory functionality, neither is there an internal discussion forum or a system of internal mail or point to point communication or chat-room at the disposal of the users. Obviously the users can establish and maintain

communication outside the system, but the prerequisite for this is that they know about one another. A fragmentary glimpse into the complete extent of activities in the EPSS is offered through a metadata export functionality. Obviously, even though referring to whole of the samples and their assessments, the metadata provides only the sort of information that has been included by the user uploading or cloning the sample, hence, in order to avoid incompleteness of the insight into the assembled oral performances and their evaluations, it is recommended that the metadata goes beyond what is required by the system.

5. Working with Samples

While there may be numerous applications of the EPSS, two seem to be most prominent, with the former more forthrightly appealing to an average user and the latter more attractive to examiners or examiner trainers. Primarily, the EPSS may be used in the process of providing feedback on the quality of oral production, and in this it may be instrumental in targeting different interest groups, ranging from learners, peer-learning arrangements, teachers, learning and teaching supervisors and standards authorities, to finally catering to parents wanting to learn about their offspring. Secondly, but no less importantly, the EPSS may be useful to any parties interested in refining their understanding of rating scales; whether those are any of the aforementioned or those involved in assessment, assessment vetting and training of assessors. The EPSS, apart from its main function of being a repository of peer/mentor assessed speaking samples, additionally has the potential for storing and retrieving any text based information entered by the assessors/raters in the process of pinpointing the merits and shortcomings of oral performance, and may therefore be used as a corpus of learner language providing various insights of interest to a language researcher.

When attempting to assess a sample, a brief summary of the task that the sample was based on is provided on one of a number of preliminary screens. Any materials that were used for the task such as instructions, text, pictures, audio/video recordings will be listed in the box of "associated documents". Under most typical circumstances, file names in the right-hand column will allow users to open and view the documents, or in some cases, if the document is on a website, a URL will be provided instead of a direct link to the file. While browsing the files, although familiarity with the task behind the sample is not a prerequisite for accessing the sample assessment screen, it is advisable and highly recommended, especially so for scales that refer performance to task

completion. Once the preliminary screens containing sample summary and task details have been displayed, the system opens the main assessment screen, which has been reproduced below. The main assessment window consists of four major zones which are responsible for displaying and controlling the playback of the sample, annotations, displaying the rating scales and providing summary information on the assessments of the sample on various subscales. The screen seems initially somewhat overpopulated and difficult to navigate through, but in essence it has a very straightforward arrangement and is easy to learn once the logic of making the assessment is understood.
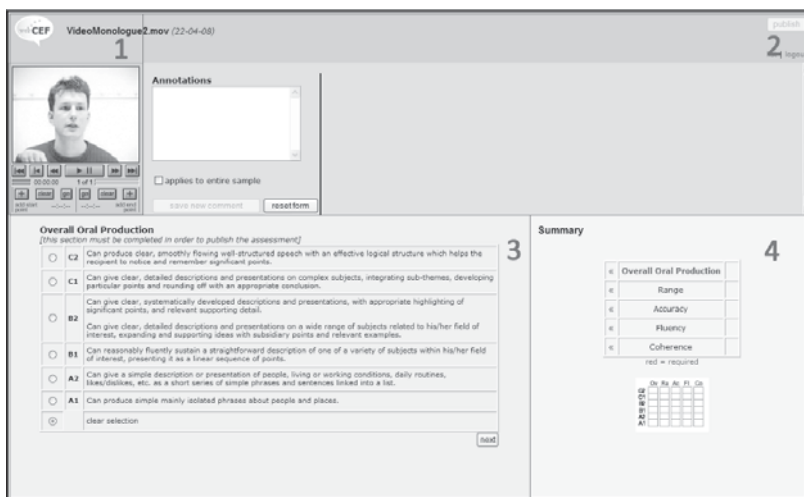
Fig. 1-3

Zone 1: The video player - this has the usual buttons for playing, pausing, rewinding, plus a row of buttons underneath such as "clear", "go", and "+" which are used for adding time-stamped annotations to the sample.

Zone 2: Annotations - this zone is used to add comments and explanations to the assessment. In a collaborative assessment, this can provide useful information on why a sample has been assessed at a given level as it explains how the assessor arrived at the decision. In training assessors, those comments can be used to help the assessors/raters better understand the scale descriptors as well as hone on particular levels.

Zone 3: Assessment scales - this zone displays the descriptors for the

scales (CEF in the illustration above) used in evaluating oral production, so that the level can be selected (here A1 to C2) which corresponds most closely to the sample being assessed.

Zone 4: Summary table. Once the assessor/rater has arrived at the assessment of the level corresponding to the sample on a given scale, this choice will appear in this table, so it can be seen at a glance which levels have been chosen for each of the scales; in this example scales relating to Overall Performance, Language Range, Language Accuracy and other.

Since there may be two types of samples to be evaluated on the assessment tool: oral production in the form of monologue of sorts by one speaker and spoken interaction performed by two or more speakers, when evaluating interaction, there is need to indicate which of the two or more speakers is to be assessed - this information may be displayed in a caption on the video, or in the task description.

The assessment scales area (zone 3) shows the descriptors for all levels on individual scales. In the case of the example above, these are the standard CEF descriptors published by the Council of Europe. Note that the language the descriptors are displayed in is set by the person who created the group if the scales are available in different languages. To indicate the level to be assigned to the sample, radio buttons in the left-hand column are used. Confirming the selection is achieved through clicking on the "next" button at the bottom of the annotation form.

The assessment will then appear in the summary table (zone 4), and the next set of descriptors will appear. At any time before the assessment is published and made available to other assessors/raters, it may be modified or deleted. The scales are displayed in the order shown in the summary tables above. However, it is possible to move back and forth through the scales and do the assessment in a different order if preferred. As the assessments for each of the scales are selected, the choices will appear in the summary table. In all cases, the Overall rating, whether it is Overall oral production or Overall spoken interaction, is a required field and the assessment is not completed without an Overall rating.

5.1 Adding Annotations

Annotations, which essentially are comments, explanations and examples which are aimed at illustrating the assessments – can be added to any of the assessment pages, so separate comments can be added for each subscale. The comments simply need to be typed into the text box in zone 2, and they can be in any language and of whatever length that is desired for the purpose. There are two types of annotation: overall comments,

which apply to the whole of a sample within a scale/sub-scale, and time-specific comments, which apply to a particular time segment within the sample, again within a scale/sub-scale.

5.2 Overall comments

An overall comment can be applied for each section of the scales used for evaluating the task behind the sample, and in order to add such a general comment, the text needs to be entered into the annotation box and "applies to entire sample" box needs to be ticked off. The "save new comments" button will then be activated and when clicked on, the text of the annotation will be transferred from the text box to the right-hand part of the annotation zone, accompanied by two icons that can be used to edit the comment, or to delete it altogether. There is no limit to how many comments or annotations can be added to the assessment of the sample, or to what their length may be other than what is set up in the database; obviously depending on the envisaged applications, the database can be altered and augmented accordingly by the administrator.

5.3 Time-specific Comments

If a remark concerning a specific section of the recording such as any comment on a particular section that provides a good illustration of the speakers' performance such as range, fluency, discourse management etc. the annotation can be linked to a time-stamp which is placed in the recording and stored in the database behind the EPSS. Owing to this facility, when looking at the assessment the comment can be referred to the exact place in the recording and the recording will automatically start playing at the beginning of the section which has been time-stamped and selected for inspection. As many time-stamped annotations as there are needed may be added to the recording; the different annotations may be overlapping or repeated. The size of the annotation is not limited otherwise than by the setting in the database, which may at any time be changed by the administrator if a need arises.

5.4 Publishing the Assessment

Before the speaking performance is rated on the compulsory overall scale, and before the entire set of ratings is published with the use of the "publish" button (zone 2), only the author can see the assessment; and at any time there may be any number of such assessments not visible to the

general public browsing samples within the group. To make the assessment(s) available to other members of the group, the author needs to publish it. At any time when the assessment is considered complete, whether all of the scales have been used, or merely the overall scale has been selected, and whether any annotations have been made or not, the sample may be published by clicking on the "publish" button in the top right-hand corner of the screen. Once the assessment is published, it cannot be modified or deleted by the author, and while the administrator of the EPSS may intervene at the level of the database, such course of action is not recommended for reasons outlined earlier in connection with the database integrity and sample-assessment interconnectivity. Any number of subsequent assessments, however; may be published when the author decides that any previous instances lack precision, clarity or require additional comments and explications in the form of annotations.

6. Concluding remarks

Apart from the original applications of the EPSS to constitute a meeting ground for teachers. assessors and students/learners and any other interested parties in the form of a community of practice (CoP), the system has the potential to offer numerous other opportunities including amongst others a training platform for assessors, a system for creating learner portfolios, a vetting system for rating scale construction or a multimedia annotated corpus of spoken learner language. Obviously, any information stored in the system that refers to instances of spoken performance may be used for research purposes.

References

Hildreth, Paul M, and Chris Kimble. 2004. *Knowledge networks: innovation through communities of practice*. Hershey: Idea Group Inc (IGI).

Meeker Heather J. 2008. *The Open Source Alternative: Understanding Risks and Leveraging Opportunities.* Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons.

Saint-Onge, Hubert, and Debra Wallace. 2003. *Leveraging communities of practice for strategic advantage*. Burlington: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Wenger, Etienne. 1998. *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Cambridge: CUP.

Wenger, Etienne, McDermott, Richard Arnold, and William Snyder. 2002. *Cultivating communities of practice: a guide to managing knowledge*. Boston: Harvard Business Press.

Online Collaborative Writing: Learners' Perceptions and Practices

Mariusz Marczak
Pedagogical University of Cracow

1. Introduction

The question of 'why perform collaborative writing in the foreign language classroom' has been answered by a number of scholars, who have long perceived the benefit of this work mode as a facilitator of the learning process.

At its most general, the very idea of collaborative learning was promoted as early as in the 1970's by Vygotsky (1978), the author of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory, who drew attention to the fact that those individuals who were assisted in learning tasks by their peers were capable of reaching a higher developmental level than those who performed single-handedly. ZPD encouraged educators to take steps which would facilitate the learning process through peer support, and collaborative writing may be seen as one of the numerous implementations of Vygotsky's theory.

However, collaborative writing may also be viewed as a contribution to the overall development of the learner which may enhance their job skills. It was back in the 1980's that scholars such as Faigley and Miller (1982) as well as Lunsford and Ede (1986) had already linked collaborative writing to professional contexts by stating that collaboration was used for on-the-job writing. In the same vein, Morgan et al. (1987) maintained that "Many business and professional people write collaboratively as frequently as individually" (Morgan et al. 1987, 20). The argument still stands today, which is apparent in Hewett, Robidoux, and Remley's suggestion that "The world of workplace writing – whether corporate, academic, government, public, or private – increasingly calls for collaboration among writers to develop and produce complex documents and to do so efficiently (...)" (Hewett 2010, 1).

More recently, the introduction of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has provided a tool for performing collaborative writing on the computer. At the same time, the ensuing common use of ICT by younger and younger members of society both at home and in educational settings and claims made about the specific learning needs of *digital natives*, as advocated by Prensky (2001a; 2001b), have inspired calls for the utilisation of technology-enhanced learning techniques (Warschauer 2002; Prensky 2012).

Online collaborative writing seems to be a perfect response to the demands of the modern-day learner as it does not only utilise new technologies but also involves group work, which is the work mode that millennial students are said to enjoy (Oblinger 2003).

The internet provides a large number of tools which can be used to practice collaborative writing, including: discussion boards, online chats, email services and wikis, which all permit work in an asynchronous mode. Yet, with the use of purpose-developed commercial as well as open source applications, e.g. *Google Docs, Zoho Writer, Etherpad, Confluence, TitanPad* or *Penflip* – to name but a few – collaborative writing can also be performed synchronously, i.e. in real time.

2. Study

2.1 Sample and Research Questions

The present paper is a report of a study conducted in 2014 on a group of 108 university students who had an opportunity to practise writing collaboratively with the use of *TitanPad*, a free online application available at titanpad.com. The study was motivated by the fact that despite the availability of instruments for internet-based collaborative writing little research on students' perceptions of collaborative writing has been administered so far (Storch 2005). In Kessler, Bikowski and Boggs' (2012) view, even less research has been devoted to the nature and process of web-based word processing in second language learning contexts. Consequently, the purpose of the present research was to amend the situation by collecting data which would help to answer two research questions:

1. What practices do students follow when writing collaboratively online?
2. What benefits of online collaborative writing do students perceive?

2.2 Procedure and Instruments

Titanpad is an online application which provides the user with a simple web-based text editor which can be used simultaneously by a number of users, each typing their text in a distinctive colour. The editor features functionalities which permit the use of: a limited number of fonts, text formatting limited to bold type, italics and underlining, ordered and unordered lists, indentation and do/undo buttons. The application is convenient to use as it automatically displays any changes made to the text in real time, without users having to refresh the screen.

The editor facilitates the collaborative writing process through a text chat room thanks to which contributors can communicate with one another. In addition, one can retrace both the entire writing process and the corresponding collaboration thanks to a screencast from the text editor window as well as a record of the chat room exchanges which *Titanpad* saves for future reference. Thus, it is a perfect tool for data collection and analysis.

The research procedure consisted in the participants writing in pairs or groups of three a 200-word narrative story which began with the sentence: *When the sun was slowly rising, embarking on its daily trip up the sky, it looked like it was going to be just another ordinary day.* Initially the students spent 45 minutes working on the task in the classroom but they completed it by collaborating via the web from home. It must be underlined that even the part of the assignment which was completed in the classroom required collaboration on *Titanpad* as partners were selected so that they would lack immediate eye contact with one another.

The qualitative data necessary to collect in order to respond to the two research questions which were cited above was obtained with the use of two instruments: *Titanpad* per se as well as an online forum where the participants of the research were asked to reflect on the benefits of collaborative writing after the experience; each student did so in a single post to the forum. The *Titanpad* record-and-replay functionalities were utilised so that evidence could be gathered with regard to the practices the students followed while performing the collaborative writing task. In addition, the students' online forum posts were reviewed for the benefits of collaborative writing which had been reflected upon.

3. Results and Discussion

An analysis of the research participants' communication via the *Titanpad* chat room as well as the steps they took while writing the story revealed a number of practices that the students resorted to while

performing the collaborative writing assignment.

At the beginning of the task the students negotiated the rules of collaboration, whereby they assigned each other specific roles, including the roles of writers and text editors whose responsibility was error correction.

The students also negotiated with one another the writing strategies which would help them complete the task. The negotiations concerned: the timing of the process; the order of the steps taken while writing, e.g. giving the story a title; or the use of reference sources, e.g. online dictionaries.

Throughout the writing process the students were actively involved in the negotiation of the story plot, which they seemed to find engaging. It was evidenced by the number of details that they provided while describing the events to come in the story as well as the story background. What is more, they commented on story developments being suggested by their colleagues, or recommended by themselves, with words which expressed surprise, amazement or fear. What transpired through the reflections which the students shared with their partners, e.g. on the soundness of the events to follow and their relation to the remainder of the story, was a considerable engagement with the plot. In places they asked one another questions about how the story would end or whether the characters would succeed in accomplishing their goals.

It was observed that the students used peer correction as a means with which to increase text quality. Peer correction either took the form of commentary delivered to writing partners via chat, or manifested itself in explicit error corrections which the students made to the text being typed by their colleagues in the text editor. Interestingly enough, attention to errors within the composition piece being created collaboratively translated into particular students' self-monitoring practices which were observable even in the chat room, where they corrected their own language mistakes despite the fact that the tool served them only as a communication channel with their partners. The corrections delivered in both a peer- and self-correction mode concentrated on: spelling, punctuation, the meaning of lexical items, word grammar as well as syntax.

In the case of need, the students also practised peer teaching, through which they delivered information to their colleagues pertaining to the meaning of particular words, the choice of the most optimal words to be used in a sentence or the form and function of specific grammatical functions. What is interesting, peer teaching was usually triggered by an explicit request from a partner. Occasionally, it happened that the teaching

needed to be mediated by online reference resources, e.g. dictionaries, and the students who consulted them reported their findings to the partners. In one case, a student who did not understand his/her colleagues' translation of an unfamiliar English word was referred through a hyperlink to *Google Images*, where he/she could see the meaning of the word in question illustrated by a number of images displayed on the search results page.

Another practice observed was the assistance that the students provided one another with when they faced practical problems pertaining to ICT skills which they needed to use at a given time. For instance, they would instruct each other on how to calculate the number of words in the text that they had already produced in order to meet the word limit set in the task rubric. A solution was suggested either in the form a step-by-step instruction, or a reference to an external online application which would provide simple text statistics at the click of a button.

The students used the chat room to discipline one another when their colleagues switched from English into the mother tongue. It happened that they posted a reminder message to their colleagues, stating that the teacher would be able to read their chat, and they were supposed to use English for communication.

All in all, the practices that were observed during the collaborative writing are listed as follows:

- negotiation of writing strategies
- negotiation of collaboration rules and roles within the assignment
- negotiation of the story plot
- commentary on the story plot
- peer editing/correction
- peer teaching, including instruction in language and ICT skills
- use of online reference resources
- peer disciplining

What follows is a discussion of the potential benefits of collaborative writing, as they were perceived by the study participants who reflected on the experience in writing on a purpose-designed online forum.

It must be observed that the constructed responses to the question pertaining to the afore-mentioned problem were analysed qualitatively rather than quantitatively, as the purpose of the analysis was to identify the largest possible range of the benefits of collaborative writing that learners are likely to discern.

By and large, the benefits of collaborative writing that were described by the student teachers embraced the following aspects:

- a possibility of synchronous editing
- the pooling of knowledge, the development of collaborative skills
- a potential for the promotion of intercultural competence
- learners' attention to language accuracy
- an opportunity to practise language in context
- increased learner motivation
- peer editing
- peer teaching
- low levels of anxiety
- a sense of text ownership and accountability for task completion
- increased learner confidence, training in ICT skills, and meaningful revision.

Synchronous writing. First and foremost, the student teachers noted that the very nature of collaborative writing benefits learners in that it offers them an opportunity to process the text being produced collaboratively in real time. They underlined the fact that this particular work mode enabled them to work without delay and increase the tempo of collaborative performance, thanks to which, in spite of the individual learners working from home, it felt as if the task was being completed within a single context.

Pooling of knowledge. The student teachers also claimed that they appreciated collaborative writing because it helped them take advantage of the intellectual potential of all those involved in the collaborative task. They believed that the swift exchange of ideas between the members of a group enables learners to share ideas and interpretations of the theme of writing, take different perspectives, and thus develop "(…) a more complex view of the topic or issue". They added that in a collaborative setting the "combined knowledge of many people can be aggregated"; therefore, this kind of writing is likely to produce a kind of synergy effect, whereby the final product becomes more than the sum of individual ideas.

Collaboration skills. The respondents maintained that through collaborative writing learners are given a chance to further their writing skills but also collaboration skills. On the one hand they need "(…) to learn to cooperate with one another", while on the other they need to negotiate and consequently adhere to the principles of team work.

Intercultural development. One of the respondents observed that online collaborative writing may be implemented in order to facilitate the development of intercultural competence, which stems from the major characteristics of this work mode. By definition, it enables learners to collaborate with colleagues from even distant locations as tasks are

supposed to be completed on the internet. In effect, learners can be involved in international and intercultural cooperation. That, in turn, opens a platform for the development of intercultural communication skills, including, but not limited to: skills of discovery and interpretation or skills of interaction. In an international/intercultural context online collaborative writing may acquire an entirely different dimension as learners need to complete the writing task at hand while exchanging perspectives, negotiating intercultural differences and avoiding potential conflicts, so that the ultimate goal can be achieved. What merits attention is the fact that this kind of intercultural training is experiential in nature and happens in real time, thus it must be cautiously prepared.

Focus on accuracy. Another advantage of the collaborative writing that the participants of the study enumerated was the fact that while working on a writing assignment learners tend to focus on accuracy as they are being monitored by their colleagues. The respondents suggested that collaborative performance "raises awareness of errors", which found confirmation in the fact that even in the chat room which the student teachers utilised for communication purposes they used self-correction while posting messages addressed to their partners. They did so despite the the realisation that their chat messages would not be evaluated by the course teacher.

Language practice in context. The respondents also emphasised that collaborative writing contextualises language practice in that learners work on longer fragments of text, complete sentences, they need to consider the rules of syntax and coherence while simultaneously attending to the grammar structures and word forms which they use in the text.

Increased motivation. The student teachers reflected on the collaborative writing experience as a learning event with motivational potential. They stated that collaboration stimulates peer-to-peer cooperation, and it is likely to integrate learners. At the same time, it facilitates learners' creativity as well as independence from the teacher. Thus, it may be noted that the motivation beyond collaborative tasks works on a number of layers.

Peer teaching. Perhaps, another source of motivation in collaborative writing tasks are the numerous opportunities for learning from others that it offers to learners, who can expand or consolidate knowledge through the constant monitoring and peer correction provided by their colleagues. Another aspect of peer tuition is the opportunity for the weaker students to benefit from the experience and knowledge of the better ones. In this manner, those learners who have gaps in their knowledge are given a chance to catch up with the others while those who are more successful

can use their expertise in a productive way while consolidating the knowledge they have already internalised.

Lower levels of anxiety. The afore-mentioned motivation which is likely generated by collaborative tasks could additionally stem from lower levels of anxiety that team work involves. The respondents stressed that in collaborative writing tasks learners felt more at ease as their performance is being monitored and corrected, if need be, by their colleagues, rather than a teacher. Besides, learners do not have a feeling that the teacher intervenes too frequently, and they do not feel their work is being interfered with by the teacher. Consequently, they are more likely to display more *confidence* than in teacher-controlled tasks. A possible outcome is increased involvement in the assignment on the part of shy students, who usually withdraw from active participation in face-to-face tasks.

Sense of ownership and accountability. One of the respondents maintained that collaborative writing "(…) teaches [learners] responsibility and [develops] awareness that they can produce everything and are responsible for the results". In other words, online collaborative writing on the one hand increases learners' sense of text authorship, while on the other it makes them feel responsible for the ultimate outcome of their performance. In the long run it could develop in students the habit of approaching assignments responsibly and increase the amount of effort that they invest in the planning, drafting and writing process.

Meaningful revision. Amongst the benefits of online collaborative writing listed by the respondents there was also meaningful revision, which is permitted by the functionalities of collaborative text processing applications. As learners can track the precise history of a written piece, they are given a chance to reflect on the nature of the writing process, including: text editing, text organisation, clarity of expression, text cohesion and coherence and language corrections. They can examine how many changes were introduced to the text, of what kind and what purpose they were supposed to serve.

Finally, the respondents claimed that online collaborative writing was a "great way to improve the ability to work with computers", i.e. to develop *information and communication skills*. Technical as this aspect of writing in foreign language learning settings may sound, it is worth recognising as it helps course instructors develop the skills that learners will need in their future jobs. What is more, today's communication is frequently performed in the written mode and occurs in online contexts, thus the ability to utilise new technologies for that purpose appears to be an essential communication skills. Therefore, it seems reasonable to suggest that through online

collaborative writing tasks they give their courses a genuinely utilitarian purpose thus bringing language education closer to life.

4. Conclusions

It seems reasonable to recommend collaboration as a possible form of language practice which gives writing tasks a more authentic edge by involving students in actual written interaction with others, on the one hand, and setting the writing process in the socket of a realistic context, with a real audience and a genuine purpose to the activity, on the other.

As the results obtained in the course of the study indicate, learners who engage in collaborative writing: develop their negotiation skills; learn to reflect on and critically assess their own writing products; tend to monitor the quality of their own writing as well as that of their colleagues; develop skills which are necessary for assisting others and providing learning support; increase their ICT skills, including the use of online reference resources; and display behaviour which is indicative of self- and peer-discipline, which are supposed to help them complete the task successfully.

What is more, if collaborative writing is interwoven into the fabric of a teacher education course, it is likely to raise pre-service and in-service teachers' awareness of the benefits of collaborative writing as a language teaching technique. As they learn through hands-on experience how collaborative writing functions, the chances are that they realise, consciously as well as subconsciously, that learners may enjoy a number of elements involved in online collaboration. Among the potential benefits there are: collaboration per se, rather than individual work; the development of collaboration skills; the pooling of knowledge, the possibility of developing intercultural competence; developing the habit of monitoring one's language accuracy; the contextualisation of the learning experience; the resulting motivation; more comfort, which stems from low levels of anxiety; a sense of text ownership and accountability; as well as learner confidence.

Should student teachers realise, at least to a certain extent, how they themselves benefit from collaborative writing, it is likely that they will make an attempt at adding this work mode to the repertoire of their own teaching practices, which may be advantageous to them as well as their learners.

References

Hewett, B.L., C. Robidoux, and D. Remley. 2010. Principles for Exploring Virtual Collaborative Writing. In *Virtual Collaborative Writing in the Workplace: Computer-Mediated Communication Technologies and Processes*, edited by B.L. Hewett and C. Robidoux, 1-27. doi: 10.4018/978-1-60566-994-6.ch001.

Morgan, M., N. Allen, T. Moore, D. Atkinson, and C. Snow, 1987. "Collaborative Writing in the Classroom." *The Bulletin*, September: 20. doi: 10.1177/108056998705000305.

Oblinger, D. 2003. "Boomers,gen-xers & Millennials: Understanding the 'New Students'." *EDUCAUSE Review*, July/August: 36-47. Accessed February 20, 2014.
http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ERM0342.pdf.

Prensky, M. 2001a. "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants." *On the Horizon*, *9*(5), NCB University Press, October.

—. 2001b. "Do They Really Think Differently?" *On the Horizon*, *9*(6), NCB University Press, December.

—. 2012. *From Digital Natives to Digital Wisdom: Hopeful Essays for 21st Century Learning.* Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Corwin.

Vygotsky, L. 1978. *Mind in society: The Development of Higher Mental Processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Warschauer, M. 2002. "A developmental perspective on technology in language education." *TESOL Quarterly*, *36*(3).

The Role of Computer-Mediated Communication and its Impact on Learning Foreign Languages: A Questionnaire Study

Katarzyna Papaja, Adam Pluszczyk
University of Silesia
and Artur Świątek
Pedagogical University of Cracow

1. Introduction

It is very difficult to live in 21st century without a computer. A lot of young people have been brought up with a computer and treat it as the main source of communication. There are many ways to communicate via the Internet: e-mail, IM, SNS, SMS, chat, etc.

The aim of this article is to present how the English Philology students (Internet users) adapt their language to the reality of Computer-Mediated Communication, which is defined as "a written natural language message sent via the Internet" (Baron 2011, 10) and what impact it has on learning foreign languages. There is no doubt that language used while communicating via the Internet is different from the one used offline which is due to the limitations of the written text and the lack of face-to-face contact which omits the whole spectrum of body language, facial expression, tone of voice and other extra-linguistic features. Social media which is a group of Internet-based applications take on many different forms such as blogs (e.g. Twitter), social networking sites (e.g. Facebook), content communities (e.g. YouTube), photographs or pictures (e.g. Instagram), wall-posting (e.g. Pinterest), rating and social bookmarking (e.g. Foursquare) and many others.

The questionnaire, which was specially designed for the purpose of the study, consisted of closed-ended and open-ended questions. More than 100 students from the English Department (University of Silesia and Institute

of Neophilology) took part in the study. The obtained data allowed us to find out how the English Philology students adapt their language to the reality of Computer-Mediated Communication and what impact it has on foreign language learning. Additionally, we will be able to distinguish which linguistic and extralinguistic features have influence on messages conveyed through social media applications / devices, e.g. pronouns, apostrophes, abbreviations, acronyms, contractions or acronyms.

2. Computer-mediated Communication

There are many definitions of Computer-Mediated Communication. According to Baron (2003, 10), "the term CMC refers to a written natural language sent via the Internet". This definition refers to the written message only, however, a few years later Baron (2011, 119) added the following term "electronically-mediated communication" claiming that it is any kind of communication which takes place through electronic devices.

Thorne (2006, 1) argues that this phenomenon is not always Internet-mediated. In fact, with the development of new ways to communicate and new devices such as tablets or phones it is no longer the case that all CMC messages are transmitted from one computer screen to the other.

The most accurate definition of CMC was provided by December (1996, 4) who wrote that "CMC is the process by which people create, exchange, and perceive information using networked telecommunications systems (or non-networks) that facilitate encoding, transmitting and decoding messages". Even though, the definition was provided a relatively long time ago the importance of both medium and interactions taking place during the process is emphasised here.

CMC's development highly relies on technology. It is as diverse and sophisticated as the technology allows it to be. The beginning of the Internet dates back to 1969 when Advanced Research Projects Agency (US Department of Defence) –ARPA developed a group of computers that were linked together – ARPANET. In 1971 the first e-mail was sent but it allowed for information sharing only between two people. Later, in 1979 MUDs (Multi-User Dimensions) were created by Roy Trubshaw and Richard Bartle which allowed the messages to be sent to more people (Crystal 2001). While between 1970s and 1990s it was mainly used by scientists, academics and specialists in computer science, from 1990s there has been a significant rise in the number of Internet users. Within the last twenty years many CMC capable technologies were developed e.g.

- SMS (short message service) – it uses GSM protocols and is transmitted via telephone signal but is considered to be a mode of CMC (Baron 2003);
- ICQ (instant messaging computer programme) (ibidem);
- AIM (Aol Instant Messenger) – used for chats and web logs (ibidem);
- SNS (Social Network Sites) – the most recent development and the most widely used one (boyd and Ellison 2007).

The development of Social Network Sites was one of the biggest steps in the expansion of CMC. It provided people with a tool which allows them to stay in touch with friends, family and co-workers all the time.

3. The Language of CMC

Examining language in the context of the Internet is complicated by the fact there are different types of "languages" to be considered. Herring (2002) points to the specific character of communicating via electronic media. The idea that technology has some impact on the form and language of communication is nothing new. The invention of print caused standardization of spelling in English, on the other hand, widespread use of typewriting caused deterioration in handwriting. It would be very hard if not impossible to argue that CMC and its language are homogeneous phenomena. There are many differences according to a number of factors such as:

- technology used (Herring 2002);
- context (ibidem);
- similarity between the speech and writing (December 1993);
- synchrony vs. asynchrony of interactions (Baron 2003);
- the number of participants (ibidem);
- nature of communication (Liu 2002).

CMC is not homogeneous and the number of linguistic modifications as well as their quality and frequency of use can vary depending on the person, the technology involved, context or language used (Herring 2002). Looking at the syntax in CMC, it can be noticed that it is often telegraphic and fragmented. The sentences tend to be short e.g. structures without a subject, contractions, etc.

The language of CMC also tends to be lowercase with minimalist punctuation (Crystal 2001) which means that both capital letters and

punctuation marks can be assigned different roles.

When it comes to spelling and orthography it may 'drastically' differ from the standard one e.g.:

- the use of plural - "z" replacing "s" (e.g. filez, gamez) (Crystal 2001, 88);
- the use of spelling imitating pronunciation (e.g. nope, yup) (ibidem);
- the use of spelling that is designed to make up for the lack of prosody or other sounds that are not linguistic in   character (e.g. zzzzzzzzz – for sleeping) (Herring 2011);
- the use of "eye dialect" (e.g. sez for says) (ibidem);
- the use of numbers as a substitute for their phonologically similar letter or parts of the word (e.g. 18er, gr8) (ibidem);
- omitting the apostrophes (e.g. cant, dont) (Farina and Lyddy 2011);
- the use of spelling designed to imitate accent (e.g. wanna, gonna) (ibidem);
- so called "leetspeak" where "some of the letters of a word are replaced by nonalphabetic symbols based on graphic resemblance" (Herring 2011, 2);
- errors and misspellings (e.g. crazy) (Farina and Lyddy 2011).

In the case of morphology the following phenomena may occur:

- clipping (e.g. nickname) (Herring 2011);
- blending (e.g. netiquette) (ibidem);
- semantic shifts (e.g. flame, spam) (ibidem);
- shortenings (e.g. jan for January) (Farina and Lyddy 2011);
- contractions (e.g. thx for thanks) (ibidem);
- prefixes (like cyber-, e-) and suffixes (like –icon) (Hadziahmetovič-Jurida 2007);
- innovations / inventions – completely new words (e.g. ecruiting, etailing, to mouse etc…) (ibidem).

Additionally, some other features of CMC are enumerated:

- the use of lowercase "i" instead of "I" and "u" instead of "you" (Tagliamonte and Denis 2008);
- the use of personal pronouns – the overuse of 1st personal pronoun (ibidem);

- abbreviations which are written short forms of words (e.g. – for example, asap – as soon as possible) (Segerstad 2002);
- acronyms which are words coined by taking the initial letters of the words (e.g. LOL – laughing out loud; TTYL – talk to you later; BBS – be back soon; F2F – face-to-face;) (Randall 2002);
- emoticons which are graphic signs often representing emotions or feelings (e.g. ☺ - smiling; ☹ - sad; ;-) – winking) (Zhang, Ericson and Webb 2010).

The language of CMC is changing and expanding constantly and it is very difficult to enumerate all the features. However, the most important feature is that it is communicative and understood by people all over the world due to its simplification and clarity.

4. Social Networks

The development of social networks has had a significant impact on the accessibility to CMC. Nowadays, not only computers but also tablets and phones provide people with the ability to browse web pages, make video conferences or send and receive e-mails. In fig. 1-4 below, the timeline and launch dates for Social Network Sites are presented.

As can be seen from the figure, SNS are a fairly new phenomenon. The number of SNS started to grow rapidly in 2003. It is also the year when media sharing websites like MySpace, Last.FM or Flickr started to employ new features allowing them to transform themselves into SNS (Boyd and Ellison 2007). Early research on the Internet and computer mediated communication (CMC) often focused on the ability it afforded users to interact with people outside their normal circle of contacts (Rheingold 1993). Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Academia.eu, LinkedIn, MyLife, Pinterest, WeeWorld, Blogster, About.me and hundreds of others have become the platforms where people share their interests, activities and even everyday life.

Launch Dates of Major Social Network Sites

Year	Sites
'97	Six Degrees.com
'98	
'99	AsianAvenue, LiveJournal, BlackPlanet
'00	LunarStorm (SNS relaunch), MiGente, (SixDegrees closes)
'01	Ryze, Cyworld
'02	Fotolog, Friendster, Skyblog
'03	LinkedIn, Tribe.net, Open BC/Xing, Couchsurfing, MySpace, Last.FM
'04	Orkut, Dogster, Multiply, aSmallWorld, Catster, Hi5, Flickr, Piczo, Mixi, Facebook (Harvard-only), Dodgeball, Care2 (SNS relaunch), Hyves
'05	Yahoo! 360, Cyworld (China), Ning, YouTube, Xanga (SNS relaunch), Bebo (SNS relaunch), Facebook (high school networks), AsianAvenue, BlackPlanet (relaunch)
'06	QQ (relaunch), Windows Live Spaces, Twitter, Facebook (corporate networks), Cyworld (U.S.), MyChurch, Facebook (everyone)

Fig. 1-4

5. Research on CMC

Research on CMC and the use of social network sites has become very popular in recent years, which is not surprising when observing the rapid adoption by users around the world. Boyd and Ellison (2007) outline four broad areas of research:

a) **Impression management and friendship performance:** research here is concerned with how users construct online identities, how users manipulate SNS profiles, including how images of friends influence friendship formation and others' impressions of SNS users (Boyd 2008; Boyd and Heer 2006; Marwick 2005, Tong et al 2008, Walther et al 2008)

b) **Networks and network structure:** research in this area looks at the structure of networks with insights into network structure and visualizations made possible by the availability of link data in SNSs (Hogan 2008; Liben-Nowell et al 2005)

c) **Language in CMC:** research in this area focuses on the use and development of language in CMC (McGuire, Kiesler and Siegel, J. 1987; Bailey and Cotlar 1994; Child, Pearson and Petronio 2009; Herring 2011).

d) **Privacy:** researchers in this area focus on the extent to which SNS users reveal their personal information exposing themselves to such problems as identity theft (Gross and Acquisti 2005; Acquisti and Gross 2006; Dwyer et al. 2007; Stutzman 2006).

Although there is now a large body of work on the social capital implic cations of SNSs and the use of CMC many research issues remain to be still investigated. Among the many possible directions of future research investigation of the changes in language seems to be of very significant importance.

6. A Brief Description of the Current Study

The **aim** of the current research is:

- to find out what the role of CMC in the life of the students of English Philology is;
- to find out what impact CMC has on learning a foreign language.

The main **hypotheses** stated before the analysis of the data were the following:

1. CMC has a positive impact on learning and communicating in a foreign language.
2. Grammar tends to be neglected in CMC.
3. CMC enhances the acquisition of vocabulary.

For this very reason, in order to analyse the obtained data, the following **research questions** were established:
1. Does CMC have a positive influence on learning a foreign language?
2. To what extent is grammar important in CMC?
3. Does CMC contribute to the increase of vocabulary?

The **participants** of the study were 245 students from the Institute of Neophilology at Pedagogical University of Cracow and students from the Institute of English at the University of Silesia. There were 63 males and 182 females who have been learning English for 7-12 years. Their experience in using computers varied between 12-17 years. The average number of hours spent in front of the computer is 2-4 hrs per day. The most frequent means of computer-mediated communication is YouTube (97%), Facebook (90%) and Skype (70%).

In order to collect the data a special **questionnaire** was designed. It consisted of 12 closed-ended questions and 5 additional questions concerning gender, the period of time the students have been learning English and using a computer, the number of hours they spend in front of the computer, types of CMC they use.

The study was conducted between January and March 2014. The students were provided with clear instructions on how to fill in the questionnaire. It lasted about 30 minutes and it was anonymous.

7. Data Analysis

The questionnaire, which was outlined in the introduction, was based on closed-ended and open-ended questions. The obtained data enabled us to determine how the English Philology students adapt their language to the reality of Computer-Mediated Communication and, moreover, what impact it has on foreign language learning. Apart from that, we were able to distinguish which linguistic and extra-linguistic features have influence on messages conveyed through social media applications or devices, e.g. pronouns, apostrophes, abbreviations, acronyms, contractions or acronyms.

The following tables (1-5 - 1-16) reflect the percentage of the interviewees' responses in relation to twelve questions the answers of

which serve as the basis for the description and analysis of the study.

Chart 1: The chart presents the percentage of the interviewees' responses based on the following statement: 1. Using Computer-Mediated Communication to communicate with others is pleasant.
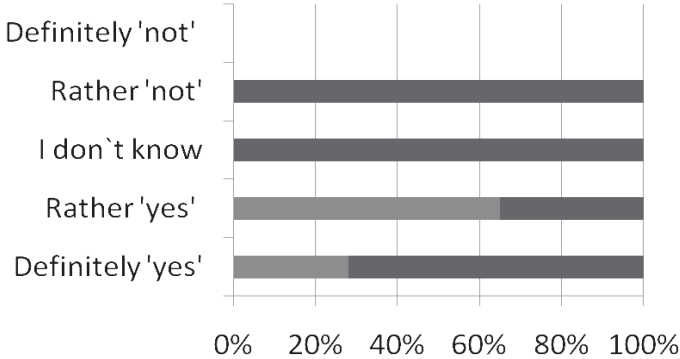
Fig. 1-5

According to the chart, over 60% of the respondents regard using CMC as rather pleasant as opposed to over 20% of the interviewees who consider using CMC as definitely pleasant. As a result, we may state that using CMC is pleasant for most of the students.

Chart 2: The chart presents the percentage of the interviewees' responses based on the following statement: 2. Computer-Mediated Communication helps me to learn a foreign language.
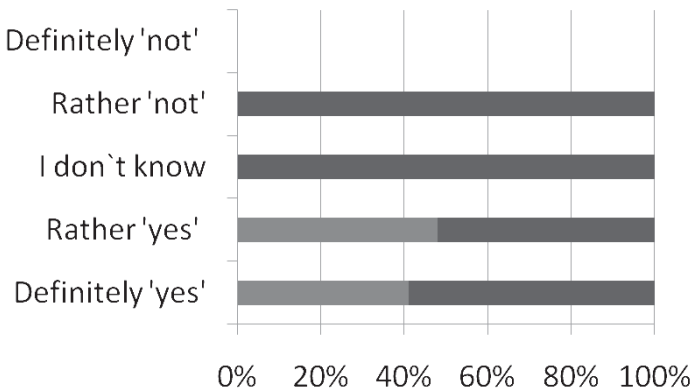
Fig. 1-6

In accordance with the chart, whereas over 40% of the respondents regard using CMC as rather helpful, slightly over 40% of the interviewees consider using CMC as definitely helpful. As a result, we may state that using CMC is helpful for most of the students.

Chart 3: The chart presents the percentage of the interviewees' responses based on the following statement: 3. I think that Computer-Mediated Communication helps me with communicating in English.
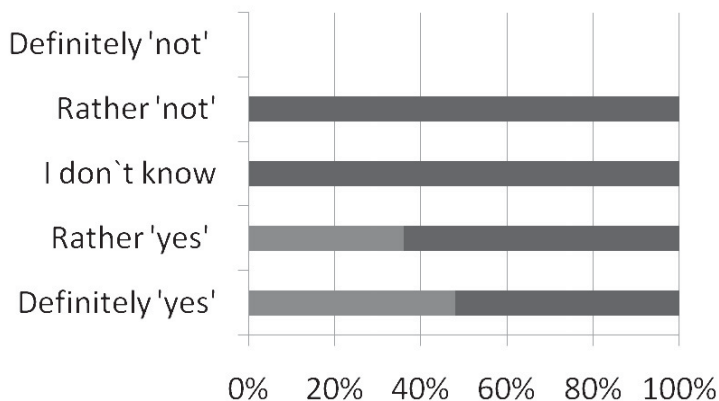
Fig. 1-7

On the basis of the chart, nearly 40% of the respondents claim that using CMC facilitates their communication in English. However, nearly 50% of the interviewees consider using CMC as definitely facilitative.

Chart 4: The chart presents the percentage of the interviewees' responses based on the following statement: 4. I think that Computer-Mediated Communication helps me with understanding English (e.g. English songs films, TV programmes etc…)
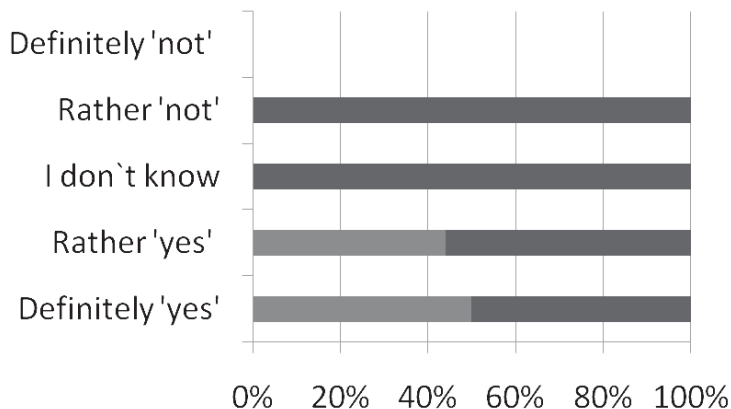
Fig. 1-8

On the basis of the chart, over 40% of the respondents are convinced that using CMC facilitates them in understanding English. However, for approximately 50% of the interviewees, using CMC is definitely facilitative in comprehending English.

Chart 5: The chart presents the percentage of the interviewees' responses based on the following statement: 5. I think that Computer-Mediated Communication helps me with acquiring vocabulary.
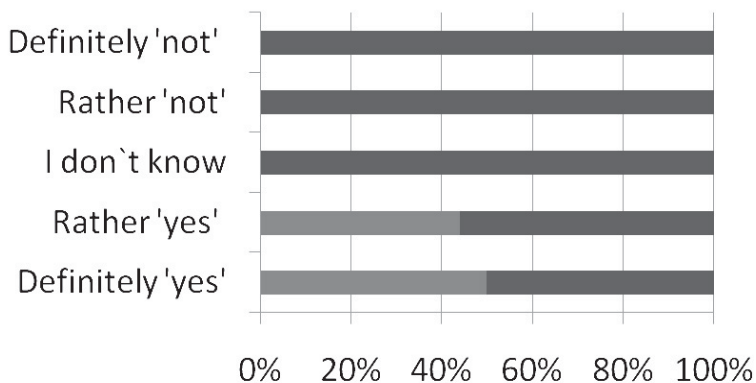
Fig. 1-9

Similarly to chart 4, over 40% of the respondents state that using CMC facilitates them in the acquisition of vocabulary and for approximately 50% of the interviewees, using CMC is definitely facilitative in acquiring vocabulary.

Chart 6; The chart presents the percentage of the interviewees' responses based on the following statement: 6. You cannot learn proper grammar through Computer-Mediated Communication.
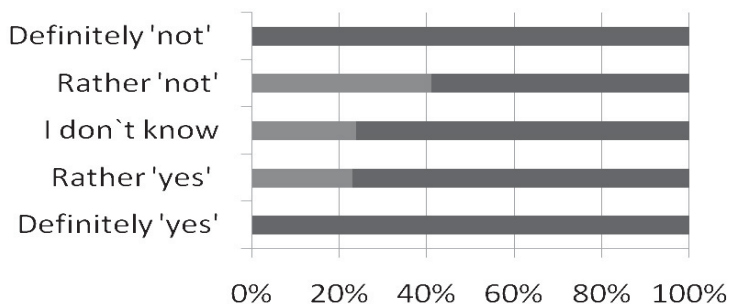
Fig. 1-10

Analysing the results from chart 6, we may evidently state that the majority of the respondents (40%) claim that learning proper grammar through CMC is rather not possible. In addition, over 20% are hesitant about providing clear responses. Finally, over 20% of the respondents regard learning grammar through CMC as rather possible.

Chart 7: The chart presents the percentage of the interviewees' responses based on the following statement: 7. Users Computer-Mediated Communication are normally responsive to messages.
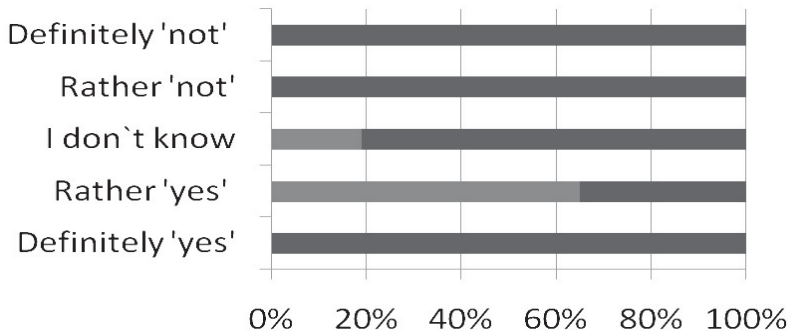
Fig. 1-11

The results from chart 7 are indicative of the preference for being responsive to messages via using CMC (over 60%). Nevertheless, we may note that the minority of the respondents (20%) do not have an opinion on the matter.

Chart 8: The chart presents the percentage of the interviewees' responses based on the following statement: 8. The language people use to express themselves in online communication is stimulating.
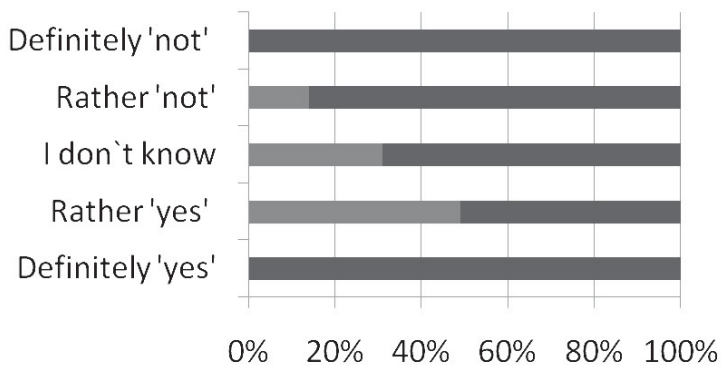
Fig. 1-12

The results from chart 8 indicate that for 50% of the subjects, online communication is stimulating. On the other hand, nearly 20% of the students do not agree with the above statement. Around 30% of the respondents are not able to provide a clear response.

Chart 9: The chart presents the percentage of the interviewees' responses based on the following statement: 9. The language used to express oneself in online communication is easily understood.
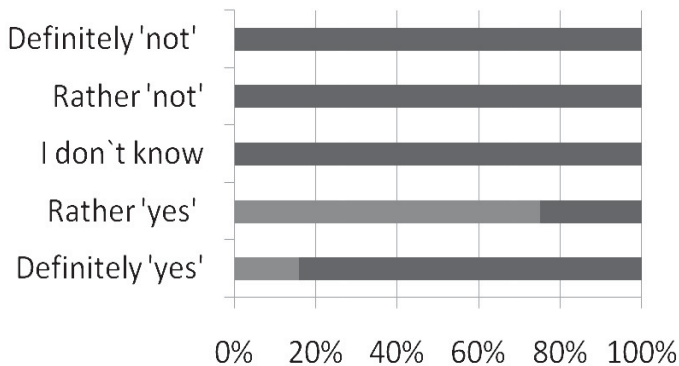
Fig. 1-13

As chart 9 illustrates, almost for 80% of the subjects, online communication is easily understood. On the other hand, for nearly 20% of the students, online communication is definitely easily understood.

Chart 10: The chart presents the percentage of the interviewees' responses based on the following statement: 10. The language used to express oneself in online communication is meaningful.
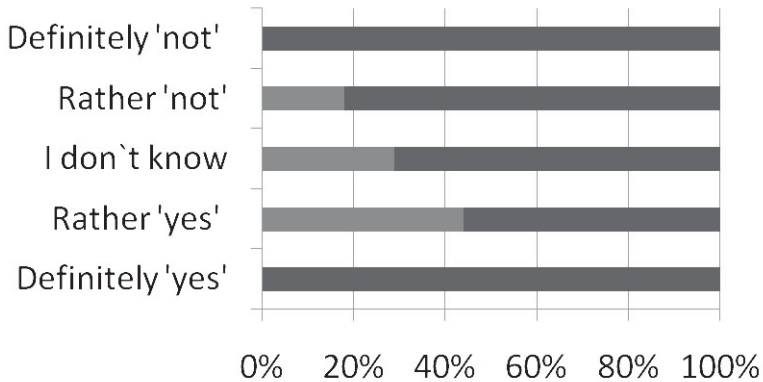
Fig. 1-14

As chart 10 indicates, for over 40% of the students, online communication is rather meaningful. In contrast, for nearly 20% of the students, online communication is rather not meaningful. 30% of the participants did not provide a negative or positive response.

Chart 11: The chart presents the percentage of the interviewees' responses based on the following statement: 11. It is difficult to express what I want to communicate through Computer-Mediated Communication.
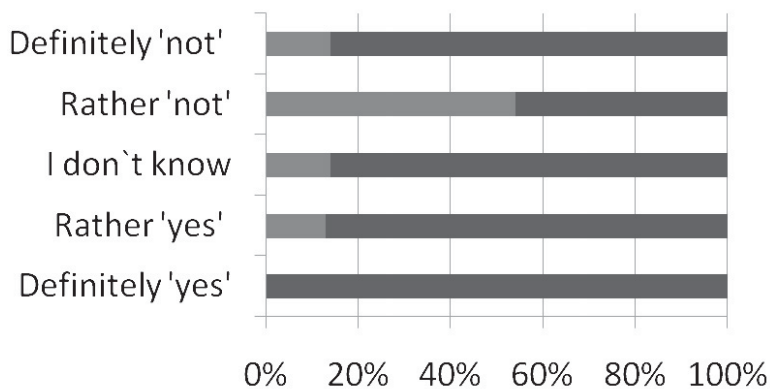
Fig. 1-15

    According to the chart, almost 60% of the subjects do not agree with the above statement. Less than 20% of the respondents definitely do not agree. As far as the remaining results are concerned, less than 20% of the subjects either agree or are not sure which answer to provide.

Chart 12: The chart presents the percentage of the interviewees' responses based on the following statement: 12. Learning a foreign language through Computer-Mediated Communication requires less effort than learning it in a traditional way.
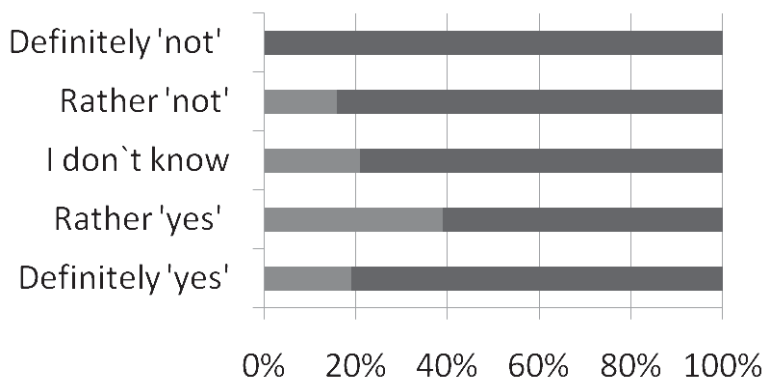
Fig. 1-16

The last chart juxtaposes the following responses: almost 40% of the subjects agree with the above statement. On the other hand, almost 20% of the respondents disagree and a similar number are not convinced which answer to select.

8. Conclusions

On the basis of the data analysis and observations, we can draw certain conclusions. First of all, CMC has a profound, positive impact on learning a foreign language. There are a number of advantages of using CMC which contribute to the enhanced comprehension and communication in a foreign language.

As far as learning grammar through CMC is concerned, as many as 40% of the respondents claim that we cannot progress in grammar via CMC. In other words, we may risk the statement that grammar is peripheral in the use of CMC.

As for vocabulary, it is claimed that it is considerably enhanced through the use of CMC. Apparently, the use of CMC favours the acquisition of vocabulary.

According to our observations, we may state that the role of CMC is profoundly significant in the life of the students of English Philology.

Moreover, the impact which CMC has on learning a foreign language is considerable.

References

Bailey, E.K. and Cotlar, M. (1994). Teaching via the internet. *Communication Education, 43(2),* 184-193.

Baron, N. (2011). Assessing the Internet's Impact on Language. In: Consalvo, M., Ess, C. (eds.), *The Handbook of Internet Studies.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 117-13.

—. (2003). Language of the Internet. In: Farghali, A. (ed.), *The Stanford Handbook for Language Engineers.* Stanford: CSLI Publications, 1-127.

Boyd, D. (2008). Why youth (heart) social network sites: The role of networked publics in teenage social life. In D. Buckingham (Ed.), *Youth, Identity, and Digital Media.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 119-142.

Boyd, D. and Ellison, N.B. (2007). Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication.* http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol113/issue1/boyd.ellison.html. Last Access 14 April 2014.

Boyd, D. and Heer, J. (2006). Profiles as conversation: Networked identity performance on Friendster. *Proceedings of ThirtyNinth Hawai'i International Conference on System Sciences.*Los Alamitos, CA: IEEE Press.

Child, J. T., Pearson, J. C., and Petronio, S. (2009). Blogging, communication, and privacy management: Development of the blogging privacy management measure. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 60,* 2079–2094.

Crystal, D. (2001). *Language and the Internet.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. December, J. (1996). Units of analysis for Internet Communication. *Journal of Computer- Mediated Communication,* 1(4) / *Journal of Communication, 46 (1).* http://jcmc.indiana.edu/voll/issue4/December.html. Last access 14 April 2014.

Dwyer, C., Hiltz, S. R., and Passerini, K. (2007). Trust and privacy concern within social networking sites: A comparison of Facebook and MySpace. *Proceedings of AMCIS 2007*, Keystone, CO.

Farina, F. and Lyddy, F. (2011). The Language of Text Messaging: "Linguisitc Ruin" or resource? *The Irish Psychologist.* Volume 37, Issue 6: 144-149.

Gross, R. and Acquisti, A. (2005). Information revelation and privacy in online social networks. *Proceedings of WPES'05.* Alexandria, VA: ACM, 71-80.

Herring, S.C. (2002). Computer-mediated communication on the Internet. *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology, 36:* 109-168. http://ella.slis.indiana.edu/~herring/arist.2002.pdf. Last access 23 March 2014.

—. (2011). Grammar and electronic communication. In: Chapelle, C. (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics.* Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell. Preprint. http://ella.slis.indiana.edu/~herring/e-grammar.2011.pdf. Last access 23 March 2014.

Hogan, B. (2008). Analyzing social networks via the Internet. In N. Fielding, R. Lee, and G. Blank (Eds.), *Sage Handbook of Online Research Methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 141-160.

Liben-Nowell, D., Novak, J., Kumar, R., Raghavan, P., and Tomkins, A. (2005) Geographic routing in social networks. *Proceedings of National Academy of Sciences, 102 (33),* 11,623-11,628.

Liu, Y. (2002). What does research say about the nature of computer-mediated communication: task-oriented or social-emotion-oriented? *Electronic Journal of Sociology* 6 (1), Article 001. http://www.sociology.org/content/vol1006.001/liu.html. Last access 2 March 2014.

Marwick, A. (2005). *"I'm a lot more interesting than a Friendster profile:" Identity presentation, authenticity, and power in social networking services*. Paper presented at Internet Research 6.0, Chicago, IL.

McGuire, T. W., Kiesler, S, and Siegel, J. (1987). Group and computer-mediated discussion effects in risk decision making. *Journal of Personality and Social Sociology, 52.* 917-930.

Randall, N. (2002). *Lingo Online: A report on the Language of the Keyboard   Generation.* http://www.arts.uwaterloo.ca/nhrandall/LingoOnline-finalreport.pdf. Last access 27 April 2014.

Rheingold, H. (1993). *The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier.* Reading. MA: Addison-Wesley.

Segerstad, Y. H. (2002). Instant Messaging with WebWho. *International Journal of Human- Computer Studies 56,* 147-171.

Steinfield, C., Ellison, N., Lampe, C. and Vitak, J. (2012). Online Social Network Sites and the Concept of Social Capital. In: Lee, F.L., Leung, L. Qiu, J.S. and Chu, D. (eds.), *Frontiers in New Media Research.* New York: Routledge, 115-131.

Stutzman, F. (2006). An evaluation of identity-sharing behavior in social

network communities. *Journal of the International Digital Media and Arts Association, 3 (1),* 10-18.

Tagliamonte, S.A. and Denis, D. (2008). Linguistic ruin? LOL! Instant messaging and teen language. *American Speech.* 83(1), 3-34 http://web.uvic.ca/ling/coursework/ling395/395_LOL.pdf. Last access 2 March 2014.

Thorne, S. (2008). Computer-Mediated Communication. In: Van Deusen-Scholl, N., Hornberger, N.H. (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Language and Education, 2nd Edition, Volume 4: Second and Foreign Language Education.* Springer Science and Business Media LLC, i-vii.

Tong, S. T., Van Der Heide, B., Langwell, L., Walther, J. B. (2008). Too much of a good thing? The relationship between number of friends and interpersonal impressions on Facebook. *Journal of ComputerMediated Communication, 13 (3),* 531-549.

Walther, J. B., Van Der Heide, B., Kim, S. Y., and Westerman, D. (2008). The role of friends' appearance and behavior on evaluations of individuals on Facebook: Are we known by the company we keep? *Human Communication Research, 34 (1),* 28-49.

Zhang, L. Erickson, L.B. and Webb, H.C. (2011). *Effects of emotional text online customer service chat – presentation.* http://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1224&context=gradconf_hospitality. Last access 14 April 2014.

The Effect of Group Gender on a Teacher's Choice of Guidance Strategies when Teaching English to Separate Groups of Boys and Girls in a Polish Primary School

Mark Weaver
NKJO Sieradz

1. Introduction

Comparisons have often been made between the relative successes of the two genders in school. Once concern was expressed about inequalities in classroom talk and the negative effect they might have on girls' learning. More recently concern has been expressed about boys' underachievement. One possible reason why the results of the learning/teaching process may differ according to learners' gender may lie in the relationships the two genders form with their teachers. Research into learners' and teachers' beliefs and verbal and non-verbal aspects of teacher-pupil interactions would seem to support this explanation. However, the nature of a teacher's relationships with the two genders may be highly context-specific, since they may be shaped by contextual factors: cultural traditions, institutional constraints, the learners' and teacher's beliefs, the subject being taught. Thus any research into gender relationships in classrooms must take account of local factors before its results can be used to generalise about teacher-pupil relations and the effect they might have on learning outcomes. The aim of this research was to try to answer the question: *Does a male Polish primary school teacher of English have different relationships with different genders?*

Research by Daniels et al. (2001) on gender and learning in British primary schools suggests boys and girls learn differently and this is the main reason for differences in their achievements in school. According to Daniels et al. (2001), cultural factors cause boys to associate masculinity

with competition and individuality, while those practices which seem to bring success in the primary classroom are collaboration and codependency. Boys' preference for competition and individuality leads them to believe they should only learn alone or under their teacher's guidance. Girls, in contrast, are happy to co-operate with peers and seek their assistance when learning. Daniels et al. (2001) argue boys' emerging masculinity causes them to seek more teacher attention than girls and since teacher-time is limited, this often leads to disruptive behaviour when boys cannot get the support they perceive they require.

Daniels et al.'s data were collected in twelve schools. The researchers collected school documents, took photos, drew classroom maps and observed children in learning and friendship groups. A major part of the research involved interviews with teachers and children to find out their beliefs about gender and learning (Daniels et al. 2001). However, there was no detailed analysis of the teacher-pupil interactions and the classroom talk accompanying them.

Other research from Britain suggesting boys and girls have different relationships with teachers comes from the period when researchers began to be concerned boys' dominance in classroom talk might be restricting girls' learning opportunities. This research, by Swann and Graddol (1988), was performed in two classrooms in separate primary schools. The teachers had contrasting teaching styles: one formal and one informal. However, both teachers were female. One lesson was videoed in each classroom.

Swann and Graddol analysed individual pupils' contributions to the talk in both classrooms. The researchers found the boys spoke more words per turn, had more turns per interchange and had more interchanges. Further analysis also revealed the boys received much more of the teacher's gaze. Swann and Graddol concluded that in both classrooms the boys received more teacher attention, were asked more questions and were cued earlier. Also, the researchers noted that the teacher with the more formal teaching style used more yes/no questions when addressing the girls but more open questions when addressing the boys (Swann and Graddol 1988).

Despite its small scale Swann and Graddol's research is significant because it suggests boys' dominance in classroom talk does not vary according to the teacher's teaching style. Two areas the research does not deal with are whether the inequalities in classroom talk vary according to the learners' age and whether the teacher's gender affects the extent of any differences. Furthermore, even though gender differences were noticed in one teacher's use of open and closed questions, there was no analysis of

the teacher's use of questions in either classroom.

Further research concerning differences in boys' and girls' participation in classroom talk comes from Norway. This research by Aukrust (2008) was performed in twenty-six classrooms with children from years 1, 3, 6 and 9. The teachers in years 1 and 3 were all female, while 50% of those in years 6 and 9 were female and 50% male. Twenty minutes of full-class conversation on a subject of the teacher's choice was videotaped in each classroom (Aukrust 2008).

Aukrust's research showed the boys participated more in classroom talk, made more uninvited comments and had more overlapping utterances. The only measure where the girls exceeded the boys was for the number of teacher-initiated turn allocations. Aukrust also found the differences were greater if the teacher was male and they were more marked, the older the children were (Aukrust 2008).

Aukrust's research answers the question whether the learners' age affects gender differences in classroom talk. However, since all the teachers in years 1 and 3 were female, Aukrust's findings on the effect of teacher gender on classroom talk can only be held to be applicable to children in year 6 and above.

The three pieces of research above suggest boys interact more with their teachers and receive more of their attention than girls. They also seem to suggest this is the result of teachers reacting to classroom situations. However, a teacher may perceive the two genders differently due to traditions and cultural beliefs about their roles in the classroom. To ascertain whether a teacher's perceptions are responsible for the inequalities in classroom talk, it is necessary to investigate the teacher's relationships with separate groups of boys and girls.

The three pieces of research also imply language plays a crucial role in learning. This is because they suggest it is the imbalances in classroom talk that lead to differences in the learning outcomes for the two genders. However, the teacher's share of classroom talk is considerably more than that of their pupils (Swann and Graddol 1988). Furthermore, the teacher's status and superior knowledge combine to give them a position of power, control and authority over their learners (Mercer 1995). Thus, rather than concentrating on the learners' contributions to classroom talk, any research into teacher-pupil relationships and their effect on learning should focus on the teacher's contributions.

The asymmetrical roles teachers and pupils have in the classroom and the importance language appears to have in their interactions suggest Vygotsky's ideas concerning children's cognitive development can be mapped onto formal learning contexts. For Vygotsky, children's emergent

understanding was largely the result of social interaction between experts and novices, with language being a powerful mediator in this process (Mercer 1995; 2000).

One of Vykotsky's ideas was that language functions both as a cultural tool for sharing and jointly developing knowledge and experience and as a psychological tool for organising individual thoughts. Vygotsky believed these functions were closely linked and people's involvement in social interactions could generate understanding which could then be internalised as individual knowledge and capabilities (Mercer 1995, 2000).

Another idea of Vygotsky's was that social interaction between experts and novices resulted in the construction of zones of proximal development (ZPDs). One of these he defined as: " the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by individual problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, cited in Tharp and Gallimore 1991: 96).

As Vygotsky's definition suggests, in a ZPD the expert models, guides and regulates the novice's performance. The aim of this assistance is to take the novice to a level of competence which will allow them to perform a task independently. This process requires the expert to adapt their intellectual support to take account of the novice's knowledge and understanding at any given moment. Thus, as these reach higher levels, the expert reduces the extent of their assistance accordingly. Finally, once the end of the ZPD has been reached, no support from the expert is required and the novice is able to perform the task on their own (Tharp and Gallimore 1991; Mercer 2000). Wood, Bruner and Ross call this assistance scaffolding (Wood 1986).

For instruction to be effective the level of scaffolding must be appropriate (Wood 1986). In home contexts caregivers are able to ensure this by using their knowledge of the child's history. However, teachers do not have access to such information and have little time to find out their learners' current level of knowledge. According to Wood, teachers typically try to resolve this problem by asking their pupils questions. This, in his opinion, is why there tend to be a large number of questions in classroom talk (Wood 1986).

The idea a teacher's desire to make their teaching contingent may increase the number of questions they use is significant. This is because teachers' questions tend to have certain specific characteristics. For example, there are often a very limited number of correct answers. Furthermore, teachers usually know the answers to any questions they ask. Wood (1986) claims extensive use of such questions can be

counterproductive since instead of encouraging learners to speak, the questions inhibit them. Thus the more children are asked this type of question, the shorter and fewer their contributions become. For Wood (1986) this has a detrimental effect because he holds that children's expressing of their own ideas and asking for new and/or additional information play a crucial role in the learning process.

Scaffolding and other strategies are often used by teachers to guide their pupils' learning. Mercer (1995) has identified several such guidance strategies: repetitions, elaborations, reformulations, recaps. However, instead of the category "questions" he prefers the term elicitations. This is because teachers do not use only interrogative forms for eliciting information.

According to Mercer (1995), although the ways guidance strategies are used is context-specific, they are common to all classrooms. Thus by analysing a teacher's choice of such strategies and the extent to which they allow learners to speak, it should be possible to determine whether the different genders have different relationships with a teacher and whether these relationships affect the learning process.

Daniels et al.'s (2001) research into learners' and teachers' beliefs and Swann and Graddol's (1988) and Aukrust's (2008) analyses of classroom talk indicate there are clear differences in teachers' relationships with the two genders. These pieces of research suggest the inequalities in classroom talk are the result of teachers reacting to classroom situations. However, traditions and cultural beliefs about the two genders' classroom roles could also influence classroom talk. If these factors are responsible for gender inequalities in classroom talk, there will be differences in a teacher's interactions with separate groups of boys and girls. Furthermore, since teachers' attempts to provide contingent instruction cause them to dominate classroom talk, any differences in the two genders' teacher-pupil interactions are most likely to be in the teacher's contributions. Finally, if, as is commonly held, the interactional differences cause differences in the school achievements of boys and girls, then these interactional differences are most likely to be in the teacher's choice of guidance strategies, and, more specifically, in the opportunities they give the two genders to speak. The aim of this study was to identify any differences in a teacher's choice of guidance strategies when teaching separate groups of boys and girls in order to answer the question: *Does a Polish primary school teacher of English have different relationships with different genders?*

The study involved the audio-recording of a male English teacher's classroom talk with separate groups of boys and girls. The teacher was asked to use the same materials with both groups. However, he was

allowed to exploit the materials as he saw fit. Subsequently, the lesson transcripts were analysed to see if there were any differences in the teacher's use of guidance strategies with the two groups and more specifically to see if:

A Polish primary school teacher of English uses a higher degree of elicitation and more "teacher questions" when teaching boys than when teaching girls.

It was assumed that if the teacher used more elicitation and/or more teacher questions with the boys than with the girls, this would indicate he had different relationships with the two genders and that there were differences between the learning/teaching processes in the two groups.

2. Method

2.1 Design

The study was designed to measure the effect group gender had on an English teacher's choice of guidance strategies. The study involved the audio-recording of teacher-pupil talk in four forty-five minute lessons: two with a group of boys and two with a group of girls. The teacher had the same aims and used the same teaching materials with each group. The researcher predicted the teacher would have different relationships with the two genders and this would be shown by his use of a higher degree of elicitation and more "teacher questions" when teaching the boys than when teaching the girls.

2.2 Participants

The children were in their sixth and final year of a Polish primary school. They were 12-13 years of age and had been learning English for six years. For the first three years they had been taught the language together for two hours a week in a whole-class group. Subsequently, they had been taught it for three hours a week in separate half-class groups. The division into groups for years 4-6 was made according to gender. At the time of the study there were twelve children in both the boys' and girls' groups. The two groups were officially deemed "parallel": they were considered to be of the same level/ability, had the same syllabus and were to be taught using the same materials.

The teacher was a male graduate of a teacher training college. He was the most experienced English teacher at the school. He had been working there for eight years and had been the children's teacher for three of them.

Prior to the research, the consent of the children, their parents, the teacher and the institution was sought. Firstly, the formal consent of the headmaster and the informed verbal consent of the teacher were obtained. Then the researcher and the teacher met with the two groups of children to ask for their consent. Finally, the researcher and the teacher met with the children's parents to explain and discuss the proposed research. At the end of this meeting consent forms were distributed. These were returned to the teacher in the week following the meeting. Only if a parent completed a consent form and their child agreed was the latter allowed to participate in the study.

2.3 Materials

The teaching materials were chosen by the teacher in accordance with the school's English syllabus. They were three pages from their *Winners 3* coursebook (2006) and a page from the accompanying workbook. These books are recommended for the sixth year of primary school by the Polish Ministry of Education.

Most of the materials were for the presentation and practice of the structure "going to + verb" for future plans and intentions. There was also one exercise concerning future and past time markers. All the exercises were typical of those used with learners of such an age and level.

2.4 Procedure

Before the recordings, certain instructions were given to the participants. The children were told in Polish to forget about the presence of the researcher and his dictaphone and to treat the lessons as normal classes. The children were also asked if any of them wanted to withdraw from the study and were reminded they could do so at any time. The teacher was told in English: "Forget about the dictaphone. Do your normal lessons. Just try to use the same materials with the two groups." No restrictions were put on how or when the teacher used particular materials.

The lessons took place in their regular classrooms and at their regular times. No special seating arrangements were made. The children were seated at six double-desks, which were divided into two rows of three, and the teacher stood at the front. The dictaphone was placed on the teacher's desk on one side of the classroom (the teacher's right side). The researcher sat at the back making notes to supplement the audio-recordings. In each classroom the board was in a central position on the wall behind the teacher.

The lessons were recorded during a three-day period: two on day 1 and two on day 3. The children were away on a trip on day 2. The lessons were recorded in the following order:

Day 1: 1. Boys' lesson 1
    2. Girls' lesson 1

Day 3: 1. Girls' lesson 2
    2. Boys' lesson 2.

2.5 Development of the Coding Scheme

The first coding scheme considered for the study was the one developed by Hughes and Westgate (1997). However, this was rejected because it was designed for talk with younger children and not solely for the analysis of teacher talk.

A more relevant list of linguistic features was found in Mercer's categorisation of guidance strategies (Mercer 1995). This list was then adapted for the aims of the study. Several categories were combined, others were added and, more importantly, Wood's distinction between teachers' closed questions and open questions (Wood 1986) was used to create three categories of elicitation techniques: teacher questions, open questions and non-interrogative elicitations.

The adapted list of Mercer's guidance strategies was the first version of the coding scheme. To test its effectiveness the researcher made four fifteen-minute recordings of the teacher and children involved in different types of tasks (two with each group). Analysis of these recordings confirmed the presence in the teacher's talk of all the linguistic features in the coding scheme. However, a further type of elicitation technique was also identified, the form-focused question. The researcher decided to add this to the coding scheme because in his experience such types of questions are often used by foreign language teachers.

The addition of the form-focused question category led to the second version of the coding scheme and was the last change made to the scheme prior to the recording and transcription stages of the study. However, once the analysis of the lesson transcripts was begun, several problems were encountered with distinguishing between certain categories. This led to a change in one definition, the abandonment of one category and, more importantly, the creation of another category of elicitation technique, the other closed question. These last changes made to the coding scheme led to the final version.

2.5.1 Final Version of the Coding Scheme (with examples)

Teacher question (TQ). When a teacher uses a question to which they already know the answer and to which there is a very limited number of possible answers.

    E.g.
 T : ... what are nouns (TQ)
 B5 : Czasowniki [verbs]
 T : No   *(from boys' lesson 1)*

Other closed question (OCQ). When a teacher uses a question to which they do not know the answer but there is a very limited number of possible answers.

    E.g.
 T : ... do you like flying (OCQ)
 G7 : No   *(from girls' lesson 1)*

Open question (OQ). When a teacher uses a question to which they do not know the answer and to which there are a large number of possible answers.

    E.g.
 T : ... and when you landed what did you feel when you landed (OQ)
 G2 : I didn't feel anything   *(from girls' lesson 1)*

Form-focused question (FFQ). When a teacher uses a question whose main aim is to elicit a particular linguistic form rather than information.

    E.g.
 T *(after talking about the use of "going to" for intentions)*: ... what plans have you got for today G2 (FFQ)
 G2: I'm going to walk to my grandparents'
 T : Good ...   *(from girls' lesson 1)*

Non-interrogative elicitation (NIE). When a teacher tries to obtain information from learners using a form other than a question.

    E.g.
 T : ... so here if there is a noun here noun like like (NIE)
 B5 : School
 T : Yeah like school ...   *(from boys' lesson 1)*

Confirmation (CON). When a teacher accepts a learner's answer or remark because the teacher feels it is appropriate.

   E.g.
 T : ... what is this this this this what are they what are they p
 B3: Pictures
 T : Yes (CON) they are pictures ...   *(from boys' lesson 1)*

Rejection (REJ). When a teacher refuses to accept a learner's answer or remark because the teacher feels it is inappropriate.

   E.g.
 B6: Charlie's going to a businessman
 T : You don't have something (REJ) there's something missing ...
                                               (from boys' lesson 1)

Elaboration (ELA). When a teacher decides to expand on a statement made by a learner or to explain its significance to the rest of the class.

   E.g.
 T : ... now I'd like you to change this question into a future plan question
 B1: What do you do tomorrow
 T : It's not a real future plan question what do you do is for general now it's like what do you do I'm a teacher what do you do I'm a student it's general now (ELA) ...   *(from boys' lesson 2)*

Recap (REC). When a teacher reviews events that took place or material that was covered earlier in the current lesson or in a previous lesson, or when a teacher refers to material that
was covered by learners at home (homework).

   E.g.
 T : … look I told you last time that going to right to be going to does not always mean
   iść [to go] going to sometimes means zamierzam [I intend] zamierzać [to intend]   (REC) ...   *(from boys' lesson 1)*

Reformulation (REF). When a teacher paraphrases a learner's response presenting it to the class in a form the teacher considers clearer or more relevant for the current classroom activity.

   E.g.
 T : ... number three
 B3 : Francis's going to round USA
 T : Yes or maybe she's going to go round the USA (REF) ...
            (from boys' lesson 1)

Repetition (REP). When a teacher repeats a learner's answer or remark so as to draw the class's attention to it because the teacher believes it is significant.

E.g.

T : What is he going to do when he finds the girl with lots of money when he finds the girl with lots of money what is he going to do

G11: He's going to marry her

T : Yes he's going to marry her (REP) ...   *(from girls' lesson 1)*

Polish (POL). When a teacher uses Polish (the learners' native language) to translate the meaning of a lexical item, elicit a grammatical structure or elicit information.

E.g.

T *(talking about the slot* : if there is a verb here this means zamierzać [to intend] (POL) *after "going to")*   for example going to have a shower ...

(from boys' lesson 1)

3. Results

The data collected were the guidance strategies used by an English teacher in a Polish primary school when teaching separate groups of boys and girls. The data collection spanned two lessons in the case of each group. Although the teacher was allowed to exploit the materials differently with each group, he generally used the same materials in corresponding lessons. However, there was one difference in when he used the materials: in lesson 1 with the boys' group he checked their homework, while with the girls' group he did not do this till lesson 2. Since the materials the teacher used in a given lesson may have affected his choice of guidance strategies, comparisons will not only be made between the frequency of particular guidance strategies in individual lessons but also their frequency over the period of the whole study. Furthermore, not all the guidance strategies in the coding scheme were directly relevant to the hypothesis and the research question. For this reason only those that are elicitation techniques will be discussed.

As table 1-2 shows, there were more elicitations in the first lesson with each group than in the second. This is because in the two first lessons the classroom talk consisted almost completely of teacher-pupil interactions, while in the two second lessons the learners worked in pairs for a period of about fifteen minutes. Table 1-2 also shows there were more elicitations in boys' lesson 1 than in girls' lesson 1 and more elicitations in girls' lesson 2 than in boys' lesson 2. Thus there were more elicitations in the lessons

where the teacher checked the pupils' homework. Finally, table 1-2 indicates that during the course of the whole study the teacher used 38 more elicitations with the boys than with the girls (about 16.5% more).

	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lessons 1 and 2
Boys	201	67	268
Girls	141	89	230

Table 1-2

Tables 1-3 and 1-4 show the occurrences and percentage frequency of individual elicitation techniques. As can be seen from table 1-3, there was one major difference in the percentage frequency of specific elicitation techniques in the two boys' lessons: the percentage frequency of teacher questions in boys' lesson 1 was 41% but only 31% in boys' lesson 2. The only other difference was in the use of other closed questions. Despite the difference in the percentage frequency of teacher questions the teacher's use of elicitation techniques seems to have been quite similar in both lessons with the boys.

	Boys' lesson 1		Boys' lesson 2		Boys' lessons 1 and 2	
Elicitation Technique	No. of occurrences	%	No. of occurrences	%	No. of occurrences	%
Teacher questions	83	41%	21	31%	104	39%
Other closed questions	24	12%	13	19%	37	14%
Form-focused questions	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Open questions	10	5%	4	6%	14	5%
Non-interrogative elicitations	84	42%	29	44%	113	42%

Table 1-3

Table 1-3 indicates there were more differences between the percentage frequencies of particular elicitation techniques in the two girls'

lessons. One major difference was in the teacher's use of non-interrogative elicitations: in girls' lesson 1 they comprised only 32% of the total elicitations, while in girls' lesson 2 they comprised 58%. Other differences can be seen in the higher percentage frequencies in girls' lesson 1 than girls' lesson 2 of other closed questions, form-focused questions and open questions. One important similarity between girls' lesson 1 and girls' lesson 2 was the percentage frequency of teacher questions (24% and 22% respectively). The large number of differences between the percentage frequencies of individual elicitation techniques in girls' lesson 1 and girls' lesson 2 suggests the teacher's use of elicitation was quite different in these lessons.

	Girls' lesson 1		Girls' lesson 2		Girls' lessons 1 and 2	
Elicitation Technique	No. of occurrences	%	No. of occurrences	%	No. of occurrences	%
Teacher questions	34	24%	20	22%	54	23%
Other closed questions	34	24%	15	17%	49	21%
Form-focused questions	8	6%	0	0%	8	3%
Open questions	20	14%	3	3%	23	10%
Non-interrogative elicitations	45	32%	51	58%	96	43%

Table 1-4

Tables 1-3 and 1-4 show that over the course of the whole study the teacher used a higher percentage frequency of teacher questions when teaching the boys than when teaching the girls (39% and 23% respectively). The tables also indicate he used more questions to which he did not know the answer with the girls' group: other closed questions, form-focused questions and open questions. This implies the teacher's use of elicitation techniques was quite different with the two groups. Furthermore, comparison of the percentage frequencies of the individual elicitation techniques for the four lessons using tables 1-3 and 1-4 suggests the teacher's use of elicitation techniques was the most distinct in girls' lesson 1.

4. Discussion

The aim of this study was to ascertain if a Polish primary school teacher of English uses more elicitation and more teacher questions when teaching boys than girls. The results show that over the course of the study the teacher did use more elicitations when teaching the boys than when teaching the girls. However, this difference can only be seen in one of the two pairs of corresponding lessons. Furthermore, the results indicate the teacher used more teacher questions when teaching the boys, whilst when teaching the girls he preferred to use other types of elicitation.

A theoretical basis for the results can be found in the theories and studies discussed in the introduction. For example, the fact that in the two first lessons and over the course of the whole study the teacher used more elicitations when talking to the boys' group suggests he interacts more with boys than girls. This would confirm the findings of Daniels et al. (2001), Swann and Graddol (1988) and Aukrust (2008). However, the fact this difference did not exist between the two second lessons suggests other factors apart from the learners' gender may affect the number of elicitations a teacher uses in a given lesson e.g. the teacher's use of materials (see below).

A clearer difference can be seen in the teacher's use of teacher questions. The figures in tables 2a and 2b show he often used this elicitation technique when teaching the boys, while when teaching the girls he preferred to use another. This is important because large use of such questions increases the asymmetry of the teacher's and pupils' roles in classroom talk and thus strengthens the teacher's position of power and authority (Wood 1986). This implies the teacher in the study felt a greater need to emphasise his position of authority when teaching the boys.

Further evidence the teacher has different relationships with the two groups can be found in his use of elicitation techniques in girls' lesson 1 (see table 1-4). The fact the teacher used a large number of questions to which he did not know the answer (other closed questions, form-focused questions and open questions) suggests that when teaching the girls he sometimes allows them to personalise the language and use it to express their feelings and beliefs. According to Wood (1986), such open-type questions are much closer to those used in home contexts than teacher questions.

The design of the study may have affected the results in several ways. For example the presence of the researcher and his dictaphone may have impinged on the participants' behaviour. However, the researcher felt this method of recording data was less obtrusive than using video as in the

studies by Swann and Graddol (1988) and Aukrust (2008).

Another part of the design that could have affected the results was the decision to permit the teacher to use the materials when and how he saw fit. This had the advantage of allowing him to use them differently, for different periods of time and at different times with the two groups as he would be able to in a normal teaching situation. However, it may well have affected the number and types of elicitations he used in a given lesson. Neither Swann and Graddol's (1988) nor Aukrust's (2008) research appears to have involved teachers and pupils using written materials.

Little difficulty was experienced in classifying the linguistic features in the coding scheme. Thus its design did not appear to influence the results directly. However, the way the scheme was applied did affect them. For example, a decision had to be made about the situations when the teacher had to use two (or more) elicitations before he received a response from a pupil. The researcher decided to treat these as two separate elicitations. However, in similar situations researchers investigating teachers' use of questions have only counted the first question (Siraj-Blatchford and Manni 2008). A further difficulty in applying the coding scheme was the teacher's use of a pupil's name to nominate whose turn it was to answer. The researcher decided to treat this as a separate elicitation provided that it was clear what the teacher was trying to elicit and that the nomination was not considered an integral part of another elicitation. In practice this meant nominations at the end of turns and preceded by pauses were counted as separate elicitations (non-interrogative elicitations). Both decisions made by the researcher affected the number of elicitations found during the study. No inter-rater was used to test the reliability of the coding scheme as the researcher is the only English native-speaker living in his area.

The teacher's preference for teacher questions when teaching the boys and his use of much more open questions in one lesson with the girls suggest his choice of elicitation techniques did depend on his pupils' gender. The question of whether these imbalances were the result of the teacher reacting to classroom situations or due to his beliefs about the roles of the two genders in the classroom is difficult to answer. However, the fact the teacher still used a high frequency of teacher questions in boys' lesson 2 even when there was a low level of teacher-pupil interaction suggests it was more likely to be the result of his beliefs about the two genders' roles in school. Support for this view can be found in the traditions and cultural beliefs associated with the Polish educational system.

The Polish educational system is traditionally based on the accumulation of large amounts of factual knowledge. From year 4 of

primary school, when subjects start to be taught separately, children not only have homework every night they must also be prepared for all the lessons they will have the following day. Apart from pre-arranged tests on the last few weeks' or months' work, children are given "surprise" tests based on the last few lessons. Another traditional testing technique is to select a pupil at random and question them in front of the class. Furthermore, notebooks are collected and marked without warning. Children are awarded marks for all these forms of assessment and these marks are then used to calculate semestral and yearly averages for each subject. It is commonly held that to be successful in this system a child must be well-organised, hard-working, obedient and systematic in their learning. These qualities are associated with girls, while boys are perceived as lazy, easily-distracted, disruptive and unsystematic in their learning. These cultural beliefs could well have influenced the teacher's classroom behaviour and caused him to try and exert more control over the boys.

The differences in the teacher's choice of elicitation techniques with the two genders could affect their relative achievements in school. Wood's ideas concerning open and closed questions suggest the teacher's preference for using teacher questions with the boys will inhibit their learning, while the fact he sometimes uses more open questions with the girls is likely to facilitate theirs. Further research is required to confirm this link between the teacher's choice of elicitation techniques and learning outcomes and to see if there are similar differences in his other classes and if they are repeated with other teachers (of the same and opposite gender) in this and other Polish schools and with children of different ages.

The study indicates the teacher has different relationships with the different genders. This can be seen by the differences in his choice of guidance strategies with the two groups of children. His preference for using teacher questions with boys and sometimes using more open questions with girls could lead to differences in the learning outcomes of the two genders.

References

Aukrust, Vibeke G. 2008. "Boys' and girls' conversational participation across four grade levels in Norwegian classrooms: taking the floor or being given the floor?" *Gender and Education*, 20(3):237-252. Accessed October 25, 2014. doi/abs/10.1080/09540250802000413.

Daniels, Harry, Angela Creese, Valerie Hey, Diana Leonard, and Marjorie

Smith. 2003. "Equity, equality and pedagogy." *Support for Learning, 16(3):112-116. Accessed October 23, 2014. doi/10.1111/1467-9604.00201/abstract.*

Hughes, Maureen, and David Westgate. 1997. "Teachers and other adults as talk partners for pupils in nursery and reception classes." In *Cultural Worlds of Early Childhood*, edited by Martin Woodhead, Dorothy Faulkner, and Karen Littleton, 214-222. London: Routledge.

Lawday, Cathy, and Mark Hancock. 2006. *Winners 3, Student's Book*. Oxford.

Lawday, Cathy, and Mark Hancock. 2006. *Winners 3, Workbook*. Oxford.

Mercer, Neil. 1995. *The Guided Construction of Knowledge*. Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters.

Mercer, Neil. 2000. *Words and Minds: How we use language to think together*. London: Routledge.

Mercer, Neil. 2001. "Language for teaching a language." In *English Language Teaching in its Social Context, a Reader*, edited by Christopher N. Candlin and Neil Mercer, 243-257. London: Routledge.

Siraj-Blatchford, Iram. and Laura Manni. 2008. "'Would you like to tidy up now?' An analysis of adult questioning in the English Foundation Stage", *Early Years,* 28(1):5-22 Accessed October 23, 2014.
  doi/pdf/10.1080/09575140701842213.

Swann, Joan, and David Graddol 1988 "Gender inequalities in classroom talk." In *Researching Language and Literacy in Social Context*, by David Graddol, Janet Maybin, and Barry Stierer, 151-167. Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters.

Swann, Joan. 2001. "Recording and transcribing talk in educational settings." In *English Language Teaching in its Social Context, a Reader*, edited by Christopher N. Candlin and Neil Mercer, 323-344. London: Routledge.

Tharp, Roland, and Ronald Gallimore. 1991. "A theory of teaching as assisted performance." In *Learning Relationships in the Classroom,* edited by Dorothy Faulkner, Karen Littleton, and Martin Woodhead*, 93-110. London: Routledge.

Wood, David. 1986. "Aspects of teaching and learning." In *Cultural Worlds of Early Childhood*, edited by Martin Woodhead, Dorothy Faulkner, and Karen Littleton, 157-177. London: Routledge.

INFORMAL READING ASSESSMENT: MOTIVATING L2 LEARNERS TO READ

ANNA ŚWIERCZYŃSKA
NKJO SIERADZ

1. Introduction

The paper attempts to present an example of informal assessment of EFL reading skill as an alternative to conventional reading comprehension tests. The author will try to prove that the former can be a powerful tool for both assessing students reading skills and motivating them to read.

The article reports on an application of informal reading assessment to a group of Foreign Language Teacher Training College (FLTTC) students with a special reference to evaluating skilled readers' strategies developed by individual learners. Additionally, the aspect of involving students in self-assessment is emphasised as an important factor in enhancing motivation to read. The aim of this paper is to illustrate that informal reading assessment, although more descriptive and presenting more qualitative data than formal assessment measures, may be extremely constructive for both students and teachers.

2. Basic Steps of Assessment Process

Reading is an extremely complex and multifaceted process, and reading assessment seems to be similar. Therefore, teachers and coaches who want to assess their students' reading performance must start with a few simple steps to make the process less complex and more manageable. The four steps that appear in every assessment are: identifying what to assess, collecting evidence of the assessment activities, analyzing the evidence, and making a decision about the outcome of this analysis. According to Schudt Caldwell (2008,4):

"Assessing a student's reading performance is no different. We ask a question about a student's reading. We select evidence that is appropriate

for answering our question. We analyze the evidence and use it to make judgments about the student's strengths and needs. Then we take instructional action."

When considering the first step, teachers should be able to understand the nature of reading in order to determine what students do or what they have to learn to be fluent and successful readers. Schudt Caldwell provides a list of 'good reader behaviours' (2008, 8), claiming that they are the basis for both reading assessment and further reading instruction. She states that:

"Before, during, and after reading, good readers…
Use letter and sound pattern to pronounce unfamiliar words.
Pronounce words accurately.
Pronounce words automatically.
Read fluently – accurately, quickly, and expressively.
Attach meaning to words.
Learn new words and refine the meanings of known ones.
Connect what they know with the information in the text.
Determine what is important in the text.
Recognize the structure of the text.
Summarize and recognize ideas in the text.
Make inferences and predictions.
Construct visual images.
Ask questions of themselves and the author, and read to find answers.
- **Synthesize information from different sources.**
- **Form and support opinions on ideas in the text.**
- **Recognize the author's purpose/ point of view/style.**
- **Monitor comprehension and repair comprehension breakdowns.**
- **Choose to read for enjoyment and enrichment."**

She continues to explain why the list should be helpful in the assessment process:

"If assessment is to be effective, it must be manageable. For this reason, it is crucial to have a realistic starting point. The good reader behaviours provide this starting point. By focusing on them, a teacher, or coach can better handle assessment of all students and be accountable for either the standards or the more detailed performance expectations that fit under them" (2008, 21).

Furthermore, according to this author, understanding of the inability to conduct good reader behaviours on the part of students will help to arrive at a better knowledge of their weaknesses and decide what action to

take. She also emphasises that it is not enough to identify which good reader behaviours to assess. They must be assessed in different reading contexts and in different forms of texts, and it is the teacher's task to give instruction as to which reading behaviours could be more appropriate for a specific text or a specific reading purpose.

Schudt Caldwell's review of good reader behaviours is based on L1 reading research, nevertheless, it seems to be a very clear and accurate idea for L2 reading teachers of what they should focus on and pay attention to when assessing their students reading performance. It also allows teachers to describe the outcome of their assessment so that it can be understood by school authorities and parents. Therefore, it is believed that they may serve FL teachers as a good reference point in the assessment process.

3. Design and Procedure of Classroom Research

Remembering that good assessment is embedded in the process of instruction (Sweet 2005), and that the two processes cannot be separated, classroom research into how informal assessment may work for advanced L2 learners was designed for the first year students of the Foreign Language Teacher Training College in Sieradz, accompanied by a set of objectives of what should be achieved by the learners during one year of their reading lessons.

3.1 What to assess?

Although Schudt Caldwell's idea of assessing students according to good reader behaviours seems to be very relevant, there may appear L2 reading situations that create different contexts for learning to read. According to Grabe and Stoller (2002) these differences may create instructional dilemmas for L2 reading teachers as to what should be taught, and in what way, in order to meet students' needs and expectations, and how to design their lessons so that the outcome should be reflected in the assessment part.

The action research project presented in this article started with an attempt to decide which aspects of the reading curriculum are the most crucial for first year students of the Foreign Language Teacher Training College after analysing their language proficiency, their needs and purposes. It was emphasised that, apart from vast vocabulary and discourse knowledge, the students were expected to transfer from a situation of learning-to-read to the one of reading-to-learn. Furthermore,

for L2 reading in academic settings, it was essential to integrate language abilities, for instance: reading with writing and speaking skills. Additionally, one of the goals of the reading instruction in the college was not to teach individual reading strategies, but rather to develop strategic readers who were aware of strategies they were going to use during both their studies and further work as teachers. Finally, a successful and fluent reader could be created only through exposure to a vast amount and variety of texts, and they would choose to read a lot if they were motivated and interested. Therefore, the relationship between motivation, attitudes, interest and their effect on L2 reading abilities was at the centre of attention of the college teachers and their instruction during reading classes.

- Specifying a purpose for reading
- Planning what to do, what steps to take.
- Previewing the text.
- Predicting the contents of the text or sections of the text.
- Checking prediction
- Posing questions about the text
- Finding answers to posed questions.
- Connecting text to background knowledge.
- Summarising information.
- Making inferences.
- Connecting one part of the text to another.
- Paying attention to text structure.
- Rereading.
- Guessing the meaning of a new word from context.
- Using discourse markers to see relationships.
- Checking comprehension.
- Identifying difficulties.
- Taking steps to repair faulty comprehension.
- Critiquing the author.
- Critiquing the text.
- Judging how well objectives were met.
- Reflecting on what has been learned from the text.

Table 1-5

Common strategies used by skilled readers were decided to construct the basis for the assessment. In order to meet the students' needs, a set of strategies (Table 1-5) that "work well in combination to carry out tasks or solve commonly occurring problems" was adopted from Grabe and Stoller (2002, 83). Actually, after closer examination, it appears most of them

correspond to "good reader behaviours" described by Schudt Caldwell.

Additionally, the action research assumed that the readers should be motivated enough to practise extensive reading and they should have an opportunity to expand their vocabulary and discourse knowledge and would know how to approach a text with the aim of learning from it.

3.2 How to assess?

Once what to assess has been identified, an appropriate method of collecting and analyzing evidence should be appointed. There are a number of different measures providing evidence of a student's reading performance and teachers can use published instruments or can construct their own. These assessment measures fall into two categories: formal and informal. Formal measures are usually commercial instruments prepared by publishers that take the form of standardized, often paper-and-pencil-based, tests providing data of a quantitative type. Informal measures take the form of conferences, observations, and reviews of student work and they are designed, administered and scored by classroom teachers. The data provided by these measures are rather descriptive and qualitative. The choice of the method is determined by what is going to be known about readers, their progress and development, and whether reading instruction provided in a classroom are accurate and relevant.

Formal tests, if designed professionally and in an appropriate way, are claimed by reading researchers, such as: Grabe and Stoller (2002), Alderson (2000), Urquhart and Weir (1998) to be most reliable and objective. That had also been the view advocated in the FLTT College in Sieradz before certain limitations of formal testing were observed. Firstly, it could not test reading for enjoyment. Secondly, conventional testing had problems with individual interpretations because differing readings depended on different background knowledge or different preoccupations of readers. Thirdly, test results were affected by the test-taking skills of students. Some students complained they found it difficult to cope with test pacing, or simply experienced a bad testing day. Moreover, a few students treated tests scores as accidental measures and could not judge from them whether they had made any progress. Finally, it appeared, as is also claimed by Alderson (2000), that different students had different verbal, quantitative and spatial potential, which could affect test performance.

On the basis of that, it was assumed that informal testing might be more effective in showing the full potential of the students and more useful in helping to design effective reading lessons, especially since this

view is also supported by other researchers of reading processes. Alderson (2000, 267) states that in certain circumstances:

> "Informal methods of assessing reading are frequently claimed to be more sensitive to classroom reading instruction, and thus more accurate in diagnosing student readers' strengths and weaknesses".

Similarly, Spolsky (1995, 151) says:

> "… we will need to design and use a variety of reading assessment procedures (not only tests) to allow us to report on a variety of aspects of the student's ability to understand, and to establish some systematic way of reporting the results on all of them. "

Wolf (1993, 519) also speaks in favour of informal assessment, claiming, in response to those who consider this form of assessment subjective and casual, that: "Assessment designed and carried out by knowledgeable teachers provides the most accurate and useful information about student achievement" .

Schudt Caldwell (2008) points out that informal assessment is: flexible and can be personalized to meet the needs of the student; useful in finding ways of motivating students to read and enjoy reading; and more similar to the actual task of reading (it is more natural to retell a story than answer multiple choice questions based on a text). Most importantly, she suggests that assessment procedures in a non-threatening environment might result in qualitatively better performances than test-based assessments.

Having the objectives of the designed action research project of developing strategic readers, who would read extensively for both enjoyment and enrichment of knowledge, vocabulary and discourse markers, it seemed most natural to appoint informal assessment measures as instruments that could be designed and modified by a teacher in order to collect the type of evidence that was needed.

3.3 Reading outside the classroom project

Therefore, reading outside the classroom tasks were designed, for which students were asked to read English texts from authentic sources of their own choice and prepare a short analysis on the basis of questions provided by the teacher (Table 1-6). The questions were designed in such a way as to reflect what was taught and how it was taught (the aspects being presented in parentheses) during the first year reading classes in the college. The tasks were assumed to make the assessment more manageable

for the teacher, and to allow for a possible further discussion of chosen aspects with a student.

Read a text from an authentic source and answer the questions below. Provide a copy of the text.

1. Why have you chosen this text for analysis? *(specifying a purpose for reading, previewing the text, predicting the contents of the text or sections of the text, connecting text to background knowledge).*
2. What is your opinion about the issue presented? *(checking prediction, posing questions about the text, finding answers to posed questions, connecting text to background knowledge, making inferences, critiquing the author, reflecting on what has been learned from the text.)*
3. Which parts of the text have been difficult for you? Why? *(identifying a level of difficulty of texts)*
4. What type of text is it? What can you say about the language and style of this text? *(critiquing the text, critiquing the author, paying attention to text structure, using discourse markers to see relationships.)*
5. What have you learned from this text? *(reflecting on what has been learned from the text, checking prediction, checking comprehension, rereading, connecting text to background knowledge.)*
6. What have you learned about yourself as a reader?
7. What strategies have you used to understand the text?
8. Choose 5 words from the text that are new for you and explain their meaning.

Table 1-6

So that the students could avoid any problems with encountering the meta-language used to describe the reading strategies, the questions were formed in simple language, with number 7 asking about strategies the readers could give once they felt they were ready to do so. In addition to the assumption that specific strategies were used to complete question number 5, the students were given an opportunity to show they could read-to-learn. Question number 6 was formed on the assumption that self-perceived competence is a key element in motivation (Schudt Caldwell 2008). Answers to this question could inform the teacher which students had a strong sense of their reading competence, and were more likely to persist in developing the skill, and which ones had negative self-perception, and therefore needed more help. The final task on the list was designed to encourage students to expand their vocabulary range.

The students were expected to prepare two analyses of their reading outside the classroom per month, for a period of seven months. The reports were then assessed according to a scale: from 1 point, given for the lowest performance, to 4 points, attributed to the highest performance. This part was accompanied by the teacher's comments, explaining the decision to apply a given number of points, with a description of students' strong and weak points. The achievement was measured by: accuracy of explaining the choice of strategies; level of texts' difficulty; comprehension of text content; an appropriate description of style and register; and appropriateness of self-assessment.

3.4 Analysis of the collected evidence

In order to keep track of the learners' performance in a fairly comprehensive and systematic way, a learner profile was built up (Table 1-7) and was supposed to serve as a record of monitored progress. As is generally the case in informal assessment, this kind of profile was intended to be descriptive of what the learners could do, rather than prescriptive of what had to be achieved by them. Nevertheless, it was considered necessary to assign a mark to each student as it was one of the points that was regarded as enhancing their motivation.

READING PROFILE OF : (student's name)..........
TEXT TITLE: ....
MARK:.......

Task	Teacher's comments
1. Reasons for choosing the text. (...points)	
2. Critical response. Understanding the content. (... points)	
3. Identifying areas of weakness. Defining a level of difficulty (...points)	
4. Responding to the style and register. (...points)	
5. Understanding the content. Inferring. Referring to background knowledge. (...points)	

6.	Self-reflection about the skill's development. Strong and weak points. (...points)	
7.	Strategies used. Reasons for using. (...points)	
8.	Explaining meaning of words. (...points)	

Table 1-7

Analysing the students' reports and profiles helped the teacher to arrive at the fourth step of the assessment process: making decisions about a mark, about which areas of classroom instruction should be improved, about those who would need individual or group discussion regarding their progress, and possible ways of eliminating weaknesses. During reading classes there were a number of conferences organised when the teacher discussed learners' progress with either a part of the group or with individual students. In the latter case, the other students were involved in presenting and discussing the texts they had analysed with their peers. Thus, they had an opportunity to be engaged in a social interaction about what they had read, which could also contribute to increasing their motivation to read. Other determinants of motivation were assumed to be: their own choice of texts that covered areas of their interests, their personal involvement in assessing the difficulty of texts, and the already mentioned self-perception of competence.

4. Classroom research evaluation

At the end of the academic year, the learners were given course evaluation questionnaires in which one of the points asked for comments about the reading outside the classroom project and its assessment. There were 40 questionnaires analysed, from which only one student provided a negative comment about the project being too time consuming. The 39 other participants gave the following comments:

- I practised more reading, because, when looking for a text that I could analyse, I read lots of other texts.
- I have learned quite a lot of new words.
- I have learned how to use the strategy of inferring, quick reading, scanning the text for specific information, guessing the meaning from the context

- I have learned how to summarise texts.
- At the same time I developed my writing skill.
- I read with pleasure because I could choose texts I liked.
- I think there should be more tasks of this type.
- This type of homework has made me read more.
- I have learned quite a lot of interesting things and my knowledge of the world has developed.
- Now I feel I am a better reader.
- I understand what to improve to be a better reader.

Summing up the presented example of informal assessment, one can observe that it helped the teacher to be more accurate in evaluating students' strengths and weaknesses, and more sensitive to whether the objectives of the course were being met. The assessment measures allowed more flexibility in responding to the students' needs and specific problems, and contributed to recognising the full potential of the readers. Furthermore, the non-threatening environment of assessment resulted in qualitatively better performances than the one during test-based assessment. In fact, the students got relatively good marks for their homework, were more involved in classroom discussions about the chosen texts, and were motivated to read more, which was confirmed in their evaluation of the project.

Nevertheless, a few disadvantages of the described assessment did appear during the course. First of all, although the reading tasks were designed in such a way as to make the assessment process more manageable, it was definitely time consuming since the teacher had to read both students' comments and the texts they had been dealing with. It also required a lot of work and preparation on the part of the teacher to design reading lessons so that there should be enough time for reading instruction, as well as for individual and group discussions of the outcome of the project. After analysing all the obstacles, a certain modification of the assessment process was considered. It was suggested that the students' performance could be either based on a limited number of texts, previously read by the teacher, or the assessment process could be divided into parts where a limited number of strategies would be considered.

5. Conclusions

All in all, the advantages of informal assessment in the presented classroom research prevailed over the obstacles. It was beneficial for both the students; who became motivated to read more, were able to evaluate their progress, had an opportunity to discuss their work with the teacher

and their peers; and the teacher, who obtained extensive and constructive evidence of the outcome of her teaching, and of her students' progress.

The author of the article strongly believes that, after a necessary and adequate modification of its structure, informal assessment of reading skills of L2 learners can be applied at every level of language proficiency and at every type of school.

References

Alderson, J. Charles. 2000. *Assessing Reading*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Grabe, William, and Frederica L. Stoller. 2002. *Teaching and Researching Reading.* London: Pearson Education.

Schudt Caldwell, JoAnne. 2002. *Reading Assessment*. New York/London: The Guilford Press.

Spolsky, Bernard.. 1995. *Measured Words.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sweet, Anne Polselli. 2005. "Assessment of Reading Comprehension: The RAND Reading Study Group Vision", in *Children's Reading Comprehension and Assessment,* edited by Scott G. Paris and Steven A. Stahl, 3-12. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Urquhart, Sandy, and Cyril Weir. 1998. *Reading in A Second Language: Process, Product and Practice.* London: Addison Wesley Longman.

Wolf, Kenneth P. 1993. "From Formal to Informal Assessment: Recognizing The Role of The Classroom Teacher". *Journal of Reading* 36: 518-523.

PART TWO:

RESEARCHING LANGUAGE LEARNERS

"I Don't Want to Sound Like a Native Speaker of English!" and Other Opinions on L2 Pronunciation

Dorota Lipińska
Silesian School of Economics and Languages in Katowice

1. Introduction

Learning a second language is always a complex and complicated process (e.g. Arabski, 1997). It requires acquisition of numerous skills and elements of target language, the L2 phonetic system among them. Since phonetic systems of various languages differ greatly, achieving correct pronunciation in one's second language always poses a serious challenge for L2 learners (e.g. Rojczyk, 2010). Hence it is frequently unavoidable that, at least at the beginning, L2 learners apply their native sound categories to produce and perceive L2 segments (e.g. Best, 1995; Flege, 1995) as well as copying some suprasegmental features of their mother tongues' phonetic systems to their L2 speech.

Generally speaking, all L2 courses aim (at least to some extent) to teach "correct", native-like pronunciation. An abundance of both theoretical and empirical research projects has been devoted to L2 learners' phonetic successes and failures, the influence of the Critical Period on correct L2 pronunciation, learners' preferences concerning target L2 phonetic variants and their attitudes to pronunciation classes. And although some simplifications and Phonological Lingua Franca Core (Jenskins, 2000) have already been proposed, one question is still hardly ever asked: do L2 learners really want to sound like native speakers?

Originally inspired by a conversation with one L2 learner, this paper aims to answer the aforementioned question. Various groups of university students from the University of Silesia and the Silesian School of Economics and Languages in Katowice, high school students from the Second High School in Sosnowiec and students of various language

schools were interviewed and completed the questionnaires in order to determine whether native-like pronunciation in L2 English is still a desirable feature and which groups of learners want or do not want to achieve it. The obtained results came as a surprise and put further questions concerning L2 pronunciation teaching.

2. Learning the L2 Sound System

Second language phonology is very complex and it is one of the areas where SLA and linguistics intersect. It has to be said that the study of L2 phonology does not resemble any other areas of L2 acquisition as it attempts to account for the patterns of knowledge and use of L2 learners. In this case it is speech production and sound perception. The acquisition of a second language phonology is a complex process itself. An understanding of how L2 learners learn the new phonological system requires considering linguistic differences between L1 and L2 systems and also universal facts of phonology (Gass and Selinker, 2008). While talking about the acquisition of L2 phonology one must integrate the knowledge from the theory of SLA as well as current phonological theory. Advance in one of these, very frequently requires reinterpretation of implications of the other and recasting current theoretical models and experimental hypotheses (Brown, 2000). One should also add that the interest in interlanguage phonology and the acquisition of L2 phonology seems to be a quite recent phenomenon as studies concerning it began to be conducted in the 1980s (Ard, 1990).

It seems obvious that knowledge of the sound system of one's native language is complex. It necessitates being aware what sounds are possible in this language and what sounds are not. This knowledge is reflected in both recognition and production of sounds. Phonological knowledge also includes knowing what happens to words uttered very fast opposed to those articulated in more careful speech. Moreover, native speakers of a given language are aware what are possible and impossible sound combinations in particular parts of words (Gass and Selinker, 2008).

L2 learners should also acquire this kind of knowledge to become successful learners. It cannot be denied that the acquisition of the sound system of the second language should be regarded as one of the vital aspects of SLA as it enables learners to communicate with both native speakers of this target language and other learners from various countries (Littlewood, 1994; Setter and Jenkins, 2005). Nevertheless, correct pronunciation was neglected for a long time by both foreign language teachers and scholars. It is highly probable that this situation was caused

by the popular belief that pronunciation of second language is simply not important and that eventually the learners will somehow manage to communicate. It is obvious that this conviction was incorrect as the learners must acquire not only grammar rules and vocabulary, but they also should be intelligible to other speakers - both native speakers and non-native language users (Tarone, 1978; Beebe,1984).

This successful acquisition of phonological representations requires accurate perception of phonemic contrasts in the input – hence it is easy to notice that this process of acquisition needs the integration of a theory of SLA, a theory of phonological representation and also a theory of speech perception (Brown, 2000). However, since sound systems of various languages differ greatly, this task frequently turns out to be a very difficult one, especially for adult learners (Rojczyk, 2009; Rojczyk, 2010), and some learners never master the target language pronunciation at the satisfactory level (Littlewood, 1994). One also cannot forget that there is no ready phonological representation of L2 automatically available to a learner and that every learner must construct their own. Moreover, the representation which they construct may differ from the one constructed by a native speaker of a given language (Ard, 1990).

What is also very important, is the fact that certain L2 sounds are much more difficult to acquire than others, and this has been proved by numerous studies on SLA. Potential difficulties in acquiring some L2 sounds are frequently attributed to the influence of L1 phonological knowledge. Although the popular assumption is that learning a given L2 sound is easier when this sound is similar to a L1 sound and that it is more difficult when the L2 sound clearly differs from the L1 sound, research on L2 speech perception and production has clearly shown that perceiving L2 sounds is not as simple as just deciding whether given sounds in L1 and L2 are similar to each other or not. There are numerous linguistic and psychological factors contributing to the process of sound perception and then to production (Pilus, 2005).

English phonetics for foreigners must of necessity be prescriptive. It cannot be satisfied with just describing the sounds of English. It also has to include guidance and some advice on how to reach or approximate the English *phonetic norm* and how to avoid *errors*. These two issues seem to be crucial in second language learning and learners are preoccupied with them on all levels of language structure. L2 learners most often are interested in grammatical (syntactic) norm and errors and they ask such questions as "How should I use the Present Perfect correctly?" or "What is the plural of *crisis*?" at all stages of proficiency. Nevertheless, the grammatical norm is not the only type of norm which must be taken into

account if one wants to approximate the native English models. There are also pragmatic, morphological and orthographic norms. Finally, there are phonetic norms – certain generally accepted ways of pronouncing English (Sobkowiak, 2004). Unfortunately, it is a common situation when L2 learners care less for proper articulation and pay more attention to comprehension skills and grammatical rules, especially when they have not been trained to discriminate major phonetic differences since the early stages of learning L2 (Eddine, 2011).

On the other hand, it is difficult to state which ways of pronouncing English are commonly or generally accepted since each native speaker of English has a slightly different pronunciation from the other speakers. For many years, *Received Pronunciation* (RP) has been the norm commonly chosen in most countries, also in Poland, to be learnt and taught. The popularity of RP has been caused by the importance of London and of the British establishment and by the great influence of national radio and television (located in London) on what was regarded as "cultural" English. This effect spread beyond the UK, especially after the Second World War, with the growing importance of English as an international language. Later, this situation started to change as the political, cultural and economic importance of the United States of America began to grow. At present, it is *General American* (GenAm) that is taught in numerous countries, also in many Polish schools. However, if one wants to learn British English, RP remains the most advisable variety. It is most likely to be heard on British television channels and it carries the highest prestige in the British Isles and in some regions of the United States of America (Sobkowiak, 2004).

If it is not deliberate, any deviation from the norm is referred to as an error. Nowadays, generally speaking, there is much less interest in the foreign language error than there used to be when grammar-translation and audiolingual methods were popular. Both these methods were much concerned with definition, identification and elimination of errors. However, communicative approaches, which later became more common, focused on conveying the message without focusing on the formal (e.g. phonetic) correctness. It was believed that the knowledge of three tenses and basic vocabulary is enough to "speak" English communicatively. Fortunately, increasing numbers of teachers and learners have recently been returning to the conviction that formal correctness is essential in successful communication. This is especially important in phonetics where even a seemingly slight change in a sound may cause great problems in understanding one's utterance. Systematic mispronunciation of a few sounds may in fact make the utterance completely incomprehensible.

Moreover, inappropriate intonation can be regarded as offensive. It also should be added that learners of various linguistic backgrounds are characterised by having different typical errors. However, all learners' pronunciation is influenced by numerous factors (Sobkowiak, 2004).

Recently, a lot of research concerning the production and perception of phonetic segments and suprasegmentals in a second language (L2) has been conducted. Usually, the desire to understand why individuals who learn L2 (especially those learners who began L2 acquisition in late adolescence or adulthood) differ from monolingual native speakers of the target language has acted as a spur to this research (Flege, 2003). Studies on L2 production have been carried out on the production of individual L2 vowels and consonants, consonant clusters, words and whole sentences. Divergences from target language phonetic norms in the speech of L2 learners are commonly observed. There is always some controversy as to whether early L2 learners will differ from L2 native speakers in this matter. However, it is generally accepted that there are greater differences between late L2 learners and L2 native speakers than between early learners and native speakers (Flege, 2003).

As has already been mentioned, it seems that the phonology of a target language is one of the most difficult to acquire aspects of a given language. Most people also realize that it is very easy to recognise a non-native speaker by their foreign accent (Arabski, 1985; Towell and Hawkins, 1994; Crystal, 1998; Gass and Selinker, 2008). Second language acquisition is frequently compared to first language acquisition. In this comparison the fact that L2 acquisition is more difficult than the acquisition of L1 seems to be quite evident. It is perhaps most apparent with respect to the acquisition of the L2 phonological system. While children learning their mother tongue are not confronted with great problems in achieving native competence across the full range of subtle and complex phonological properties of their L1, L2 learners frequently encounter huge difficulties in mastering the pronunciation and intonation patterns of their target language (Brown, 2000).

Recently, there has been a variety of proposals as to whether L2 speech learning is constrained in any way in comparison to L1 speech acquisition, what could be the reason for such constraints, whether all the constraints differ for L2 speech production and perception and whether L2 learners must always differ from L2 native speakers (Flege, 2003). Generally speaking, the interlanguage phonology is always influenced by numerous factors. Among them, one can mention such phenomena as age, L1 interference, style and developmental factors (Major, 1987). Copious studies concerning L2 speech production and/or perception have shown

that L2 learners usually encounter difficulties in correct recognition and production of L2 speech. Their problems are frequently attributed to the aforementioned factors. Scholars usually focus on age, L1 interference or supposed lack of proper input. However, one question is very rarely asked: Do L2 learners really want to achieve correct or native-like pronunciation in their target language? Moreover, if learning L2 pronunciation is as complex and difficult as described above, maybe it would be better to simplify this process and find an easier way to communicate with other language users?

3. The Matter of Phonological Lingua Franca Core

There are proposals which stand in opposition to native-like pronunciation models. Jenkins (2000) observes that English is now the most widely used lingua franca in the world, and that there are more non-native speakers of English than native speakers of this language. She suggests that it is high time to introduce EIL (English as an International Language) which would be used only by non-native speakers of English to communicate with other non-native speakers of this language. Jenkins states that using any particular native speaker pronunciation model as a target, and insisting on more or less total phonetic accuracy as well, is rather counterproductive and inefficient. She has introduced a phonological Lingua Franca Core which is somewhat grounded in Received Pronunciation and General American, but with numerous changes, simplifications and omissions (for details, see: Jenkins, 2000).

However, this proposal, although it has many supporters, has also been widely criticised. Trudgill (2005), for instance, notices a couple of quite obvious difficulties in this theory. He highlights that a lot of EIL learners will be willing, at least from time to time, to understand, communicate with or even copy native speakers of English (e.g. via electronic media). Moreover, it is very difficult to decide whether a given language learner is going to be an EIL or EFL user in the future and thus what kind of English they should be taught. Trudgill goes even further and asks: "Why do we need this LFC? What is wrong with using a native-speaker model, as has traditionally been done, and as is always done with other languages?" (Trudgill, 2005: 79). This point of view has already been supported by some studies. For example, Bent and Bradlow (2003) show in their experimental study that native speakers of English are no less intelligible to Chinese, Korean and other learners of English than "relatively high proficiency" Chinese or Korean speakers. Trudgill (2005) notices also that the problems with understanding native speakers of

English by non-native speakers are not connected to native versus non-native phonological systems. Trudgill (2005), as well as Weber and Cutler (2004), say that they may be attributed rather to very fast speech and the use of idioms and formal words. Trudgill (2005: 88-90) mentions a number of inaccuracies and weaknesses of the proposed phonological LFC, too. Also Wells (2005) argues with the idea of an EIL pronunciation model. He lists numerous questions that arise while teaching/learning English. According to him, first of all, teachers must know whether they are teaching EFL, ESL or EIL. However, it is unrealistic to ask learners for a choice between EFL and EIL as they really need both. Moreover, learners of (any) English are likely to communicate with both native- and non-native speakers of this language. What is more, one must focus on aims in teaching and learning English. While some people want to speak a foreign language just at a basic level, others aim to achieve the best they possibly can. And suggesting to them that they should not aim so high may make them feel short-changed (Wells, 2005). Trudgill (2005), Scheuer (2005) and Wells (2005) notice also a number inconsistencies or problematic issues in phonological LFC which may be difficult for language learners (concerning intelligibility, reduction or deletion of sounds). Furthermore, Scheuer's (2005) experiment has shown that it is not native-like pronunciation that hinders communication, but foreign-accentedness. Irritating (= strongly foreign-accented) speech in L2 usually meets contemptuous reactions. MacKenzie (2003: 61) says that "it seems unlikely that any university-level English learner could get by with ELF (English as Lingua Franca) alone" highlighting that any formal enquiry containing errors or being too simplified would end up in the bin. Scheuer (2005) extends this theory to the area of phonetics and also to non-academic contexts. Sobkowiak (2005) notices that introducing phonological Lingua Franca Core on a wide scale in teaching pronunciation may have undesirable consequences. He criticises some inadequacies in the proposed model of pronunciation and reminds us that statistics cannot be the only and sufficient criterion to classify some behaviour as an error which seems not to be understood by the supporters of the phonological LFC. Additionally, such simplifications may be demotivating for language learners. "The introduction of English as an international language in pronunciation teaching might encourage students to maintain – without any alterations – their current accent of English" (Hüttner and Kidd, 2000: 76).

Still, a lot of studies show that native-like pronunciation is important and desirable for language learners. In her questionnaire study, Waniek-Klimczak (1997) discovered that among 120 Polish learners of English

(first-year English philology students) all believe that pronunciation is an important aspect of language learning, two-thirds of them state that "accent is important" and choose RP as "nicer" and easier to understand, and two-thirds perceive fluency and self-assurance as the most vital aims of pronunciation teaching. Smit and Dalton (2000) describe similar results in the Austrian context.

4. Current Study

4.1 Aims of the study

The aim of this study was to examine Polish learners' attitudes towards learning and teaching native-like pronunciation of English. It was motivated by the ongoing discussion concerning phonological Lingua Franca Core versus native speaker pronunciation. It was also inspired by the author's unusual experience while using English. She was talking to a native speaker of English while another non-native speaker was listening to the conversation. When the conversation ceased, the non-native speaker commented that her "intonation was disgusting". When asked why, he replied that "she sounded like a native Briton". These two factors acted as a spur to ask the following questions:

- Do EFL learners want to speak like native speakers?
- Do they think that correct, native-like pronunciation is important?
- Do they think that native-like pronunciation is attractive?
- Do they like native speakers' pronunciation?

4.2 Subjects

There were four groups of subjects in this study. They were chosen since it was supposed that they might have completely different opinions on the desired pronunciation models.

Group One consisted of 54 English philology students, recruited at the University of Silesia, Poland, and at the Silesian School of Economics and Languages in Katowice, Poland. They were fourth- and fifth-year students of a teacher training programme, a translation and interpretation programme, and a business English programme. They were advanced learners of English and had not reported any difficulties in communication with either native or non-native speakers of English. The informants had been learning English for 10 – 20 years (mean: 15). They were 24 – 40 years old (mean: 27). This group consisted of 42 female and 12 male

students.

Group Two consisted of 30 German and Spanish philology students (all females), also recruited at the University of Silesia, Poland, and at the Silesian School of Economics and Languages in Katowice, Poland. They were all second-year students of teacher training programmes. They were intermediate users of English and had been learning this language for 14 – 15 years (mean: 14.6). They had reported minor difficulties in communication with other users of English. These subjects were 21 – 30 years old (mean: 21.5). The combination of languages was as follows: L1 Polish, L2 German/Spanish, L3 English.

Group Three consisted of 45 final-year high school students, recruited at one of the best high schools in Sosnowiec, Poland. They were students of a Science/Maths profile and a Humanities profile and were intermediate users of English. They were preparing for a Basic Matura (school leaving) exam. Prior to the study, they had reported minor difficulties in communication with other users of English. All subjects in Group Three were 19 years old. They had been learning English for 3 – 12 years (mean: 11.6). There were 25 female subjects and 10 male subjects in this study group.

Group Four consisted of 24 subjects. They were students of various language schools in Sosnowiec, Poland. There were 19 female informants and 5 male informants. They were 15 – 39 years old (mean: 28). The study participants from Group Four were characterised by various levels of fluency in English (from elementary/A2 to advanced/C1) and had been learning English for 2 – 20 years (average: 8).

4.3 Study Design

A specially designed, anonymous questionnaire was administered in March 2014. The instrument was written in Polish, and its aim was to gather information on the participants' opinions related to target pronunciation in English, importance of correct pronunciation, and pronunciation learning. The main part of the questionnaire included four statements. The students had to mark the statements using a 7-point Likert scale with the response options: *(Definitely true)* 1 - 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 *(Not at all true)*. Then they were asked to answer three open-ended questions explaining their opinions. The participants were also asked to provide answers to several additional questions, which were to gather factual information used for delineating their demographic profiles presented in the previous section of the paper.

5. Results

For the readers' convenience the results were divided into four separate parts, one for each study group.

5.1 Group One

The figures and table below show the results of the research Group One, with the use of the following Likert scale: *(Definitely true)* 1 - 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 (*Not at all true).*

Fig. 2-1

Fig. 2-2

Fig. 2-3

I like native speakers' pronunciation

Fig. 2-4

Statement	Mode	Median	Range
I want to speak like a native speaker of English	2	2	2
I think that correct, native-like pronunciation in EFL is important	1	1	2
I think that native-like pronunciation in English is attractive	1	1	3
I like native speakers' pronunciation	1	1	2

Table 2-1

The figures and table above show the answers to the study questions provided by the subjects from Group One. It is easy to notice that they aim to speak like native speakers of English and their attitudes towards native-like pronunciation are positive. They find this kind of pronunciation both important and attractive. The mode and median for the aforementioned questions equal either 1 (=definitely true) or 2 (=true). The range also

shows that the opinions do not vary to a great extent. This is supported by the answers to the open-ended questions. Below are the most popular statements provided by the study participants from this group.

Question One: *Why do you want to speak like a native speaker of English?*
- It facilitates communication with other users of EFL and with the native speakers.
- It means I'm professional and fluent in English.
- I want to sound like a "well educated" person.
- I want to be understood.
- I want to teach my students correct pronunciation in EFL.
- It's just for my satisfaction.
- Only native-like pronunciation is really attractive.
- I want to be regarded as a native speaker of English.

Question Two: *Why is native-like pronunciation in EFL important?*
- It facilitates communication with other speakers of English.
- It guarantees conveying information.
- I want to understand similar words when others speak.
- I want to be understood correctly.
- It's more intelligible.
- It prevents multiplicating errors in learners' pronunciation.

5.2 Group Two

The figures and table below show the results of the research Group Two, with the use of the following Likert scale: *(Definitely true)* 1 - 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 (*Not at all true).*

Fig. 2-5

Fig. 2-6

Fig. 2-7

Fig. 2-8

Statement	Mode	Median	Range
I want to speak like a native speaker of English	3	3	1
I think that correct, native-like pronunciation in EFL is important	2	2	2
I think that native-like pronunciation in English is attractive	2	2	1
I like native speakers' pronunciation	2	2	1

Table 2-2

The figures and table above show the answers to the study questions provided by the subjects from Group Two. It is easy to notice that although the study participants from this group are not as determined as those from Group One, they still aim to speak like native speakers of English, and their attitudes towards native-like pronunciation are still positive. They find this kind of pronunciation both important and attractive. The mode and median for the aforementioned questions are mostly 2 (=true) or, in one case, 3 (=rather true). The range also shows that the opinions do not vary to a great extent. It is supported by the answers to the open-ended questions. Below are the most popular statements provided by the study participants from this group.

Question One: *Why do you want to speak like a native speaker of English?*
- If I speak like a native speaker of English I will finally feel that I know this language very well.
- I want to understand people from abroad.
- I want to be understood.
- It facilitates communication with other users of English.

Question Two: *Why is native-like pronunciation in EFL important?*
- People who speak English like native speakers are regarded as more intelligent.
- It facilitates communication.
- It's easier to understand other people.
- Other people can understand us.

5.3 Group Three

The figures and table below show the results of the research Group Three, with the use of the following Likert scale: *(Definitely true)* 1 - 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 (*Not at all true*).
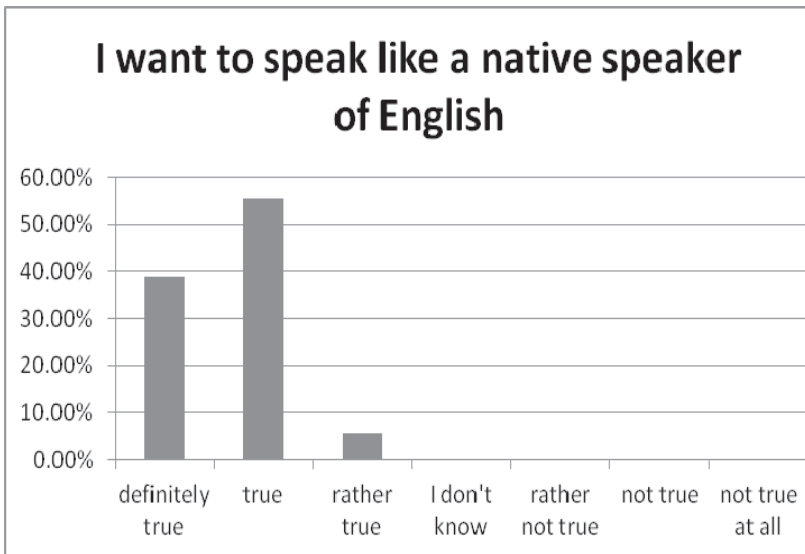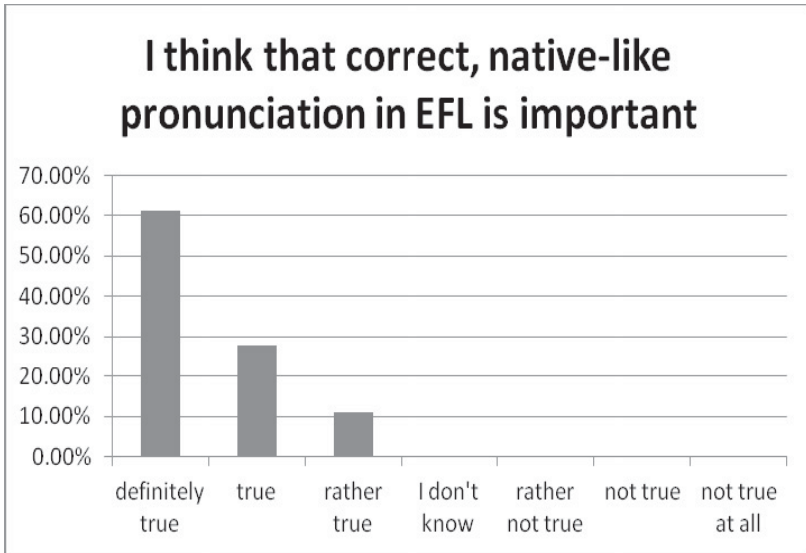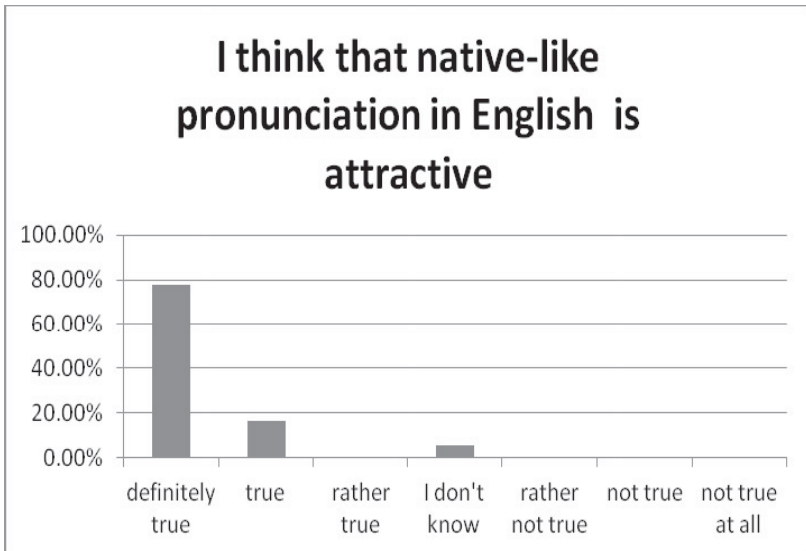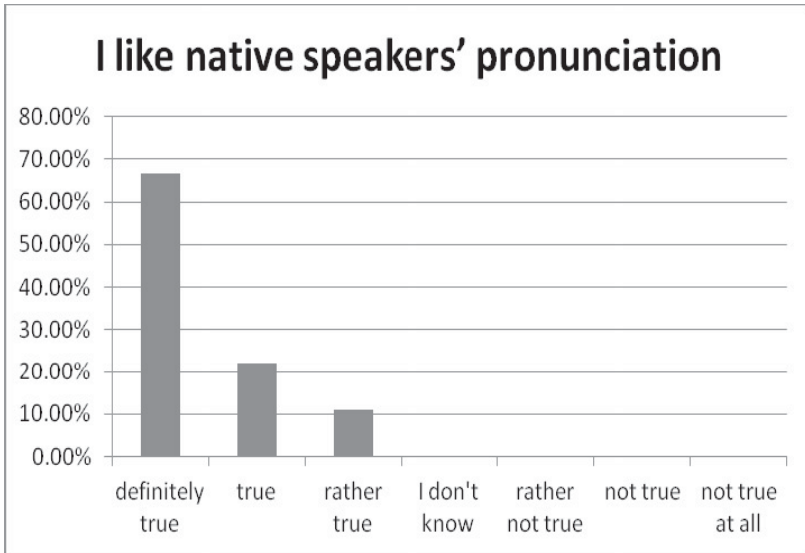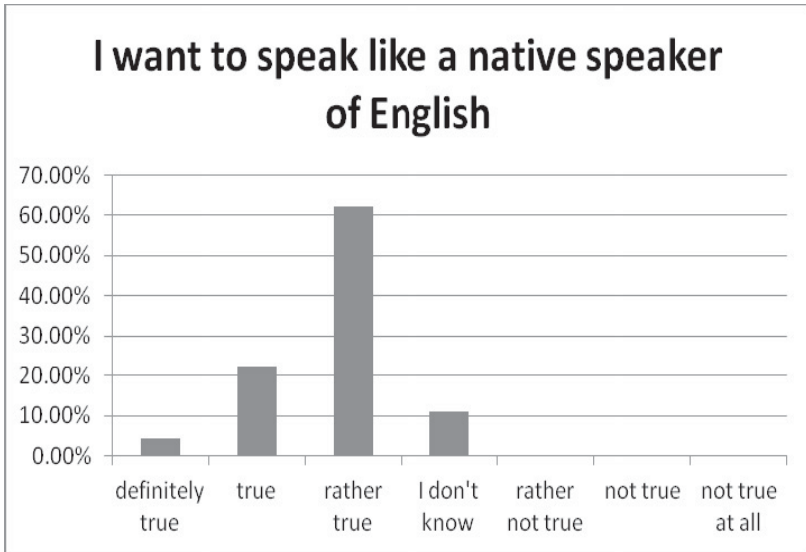

Fig. 2-9

Fig. 2-10
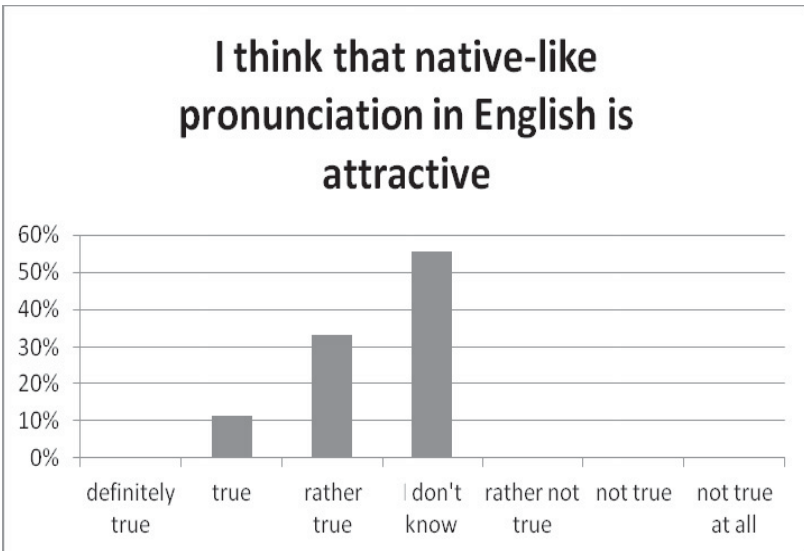
Fig. 2-11
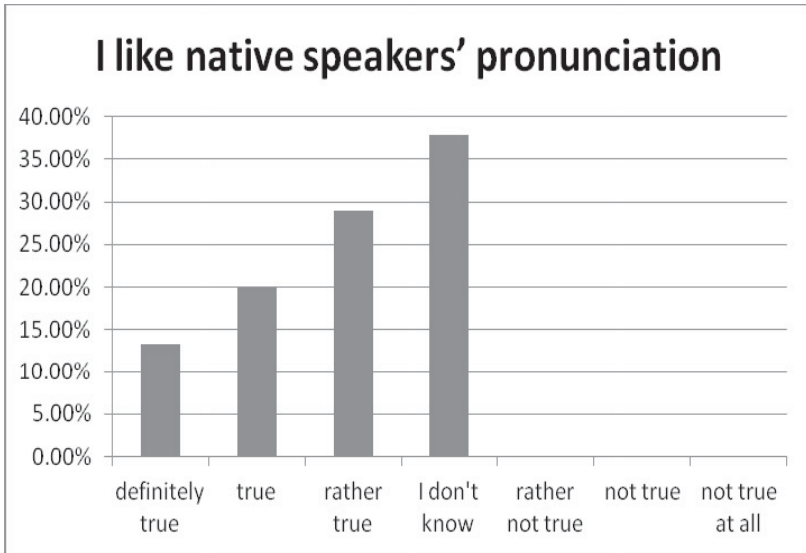
Fig. 2-12

Statement	Mode	Median	Range
I want to speak like a native speaker of English	3	3	3
I think that correct, native-like pronunciation in EFL is important	3	3	2
I think that native-like pronunciation in English is attractive	4	4	2
I like native speakers' pronunciation	4	3	3

Table 2-3

The figures and table above show the answers to the study questions provided by the subjects from Group Three. One can observe that although the study participants from this group are not as determined as those from Group One and Group Two, they are still rather willing to speak like native speakers of English, and their attitudes towards native-like pronunciation are still rather positive. They find this kind of pronunciation

rather important and quite attractive. The mode and median for the aforementioned questions are often 3 (=rather true) or, sometimes, 4 (=don't know). The range is rather higher than in previous cases, however it still shows that the answers ranged between "definitely true" and "don't know". The results are supported by the answers to the open-ended questions. Below are the most popular statements provided by the study participants from this group.

Question One: *Why do you want to speak like a native speaker of English?*
- It facilitates communication with other speakers of English.
- My teacher wants me to speak like that and she might be right.
- My favourite actors and singers are from the USA and I want to speak like they do.
- I want to go to London on holiday and I don't want to sound like somebody from Poland.

Question Two: *Why is native-like pronunciation in EFL important?*
- It facilitates communication with native speakers of English.
- It's prestigious.
- It helps people understand each other.
- It's more understandable than various foreign accents.
- Many people think it's cool.

5.4 Group Four

The figures and table below show the results of the research Group Four, with the use of the following Likert scale: *(Definitely true)* 1 - 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 (*Not at all true*).
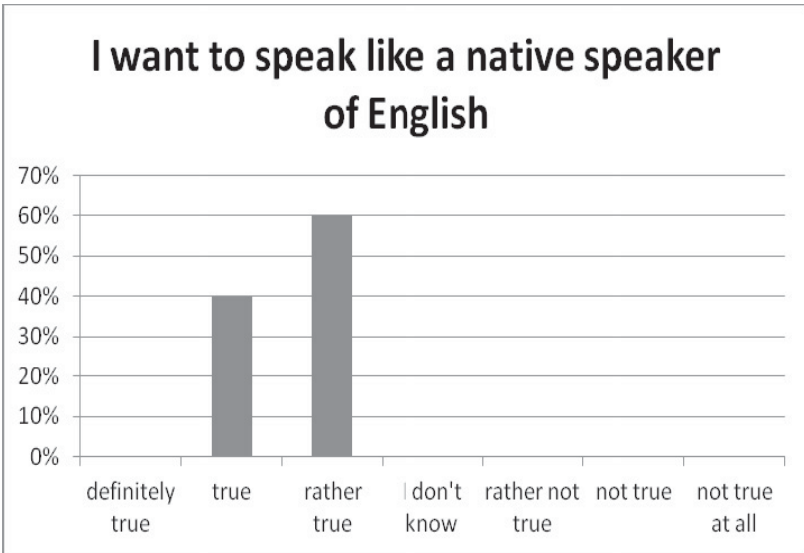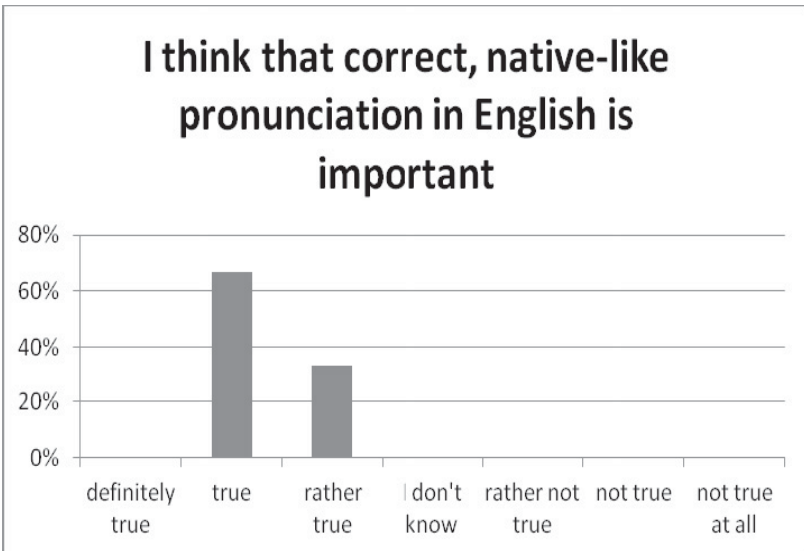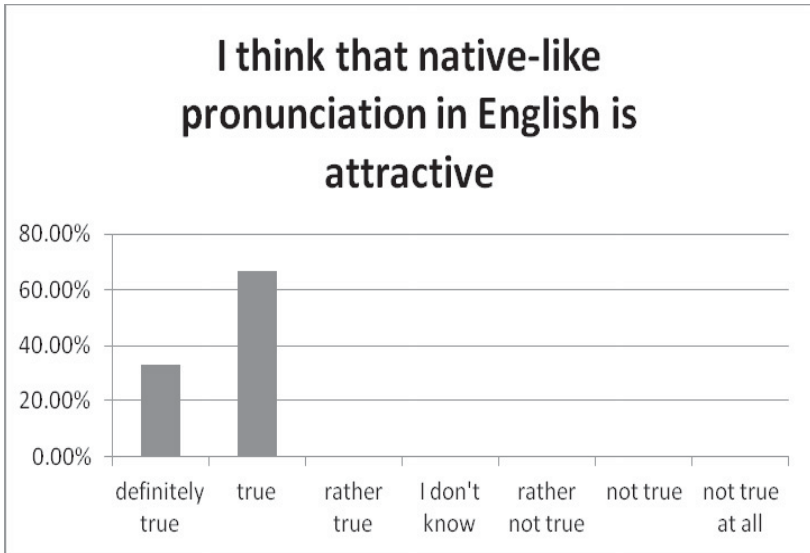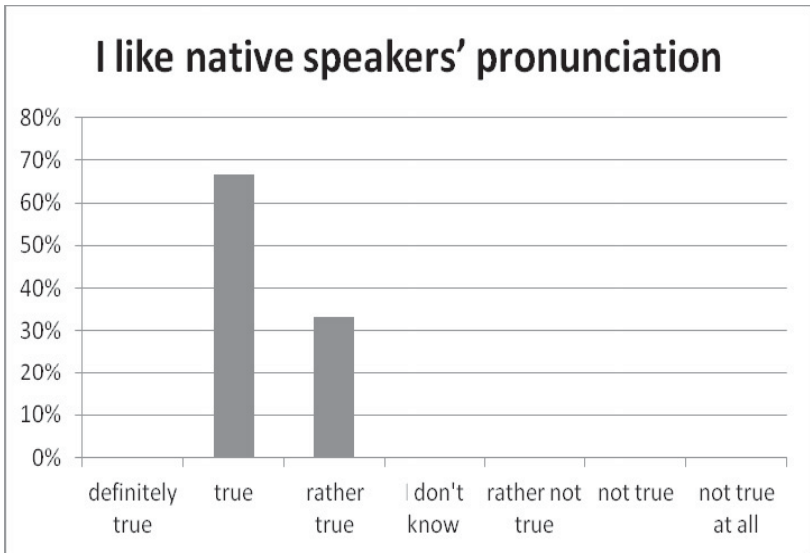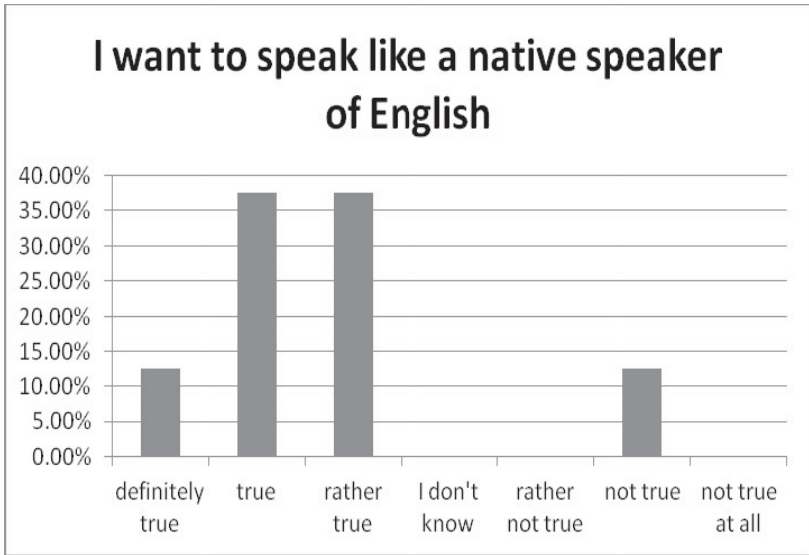
Fig. 2-13
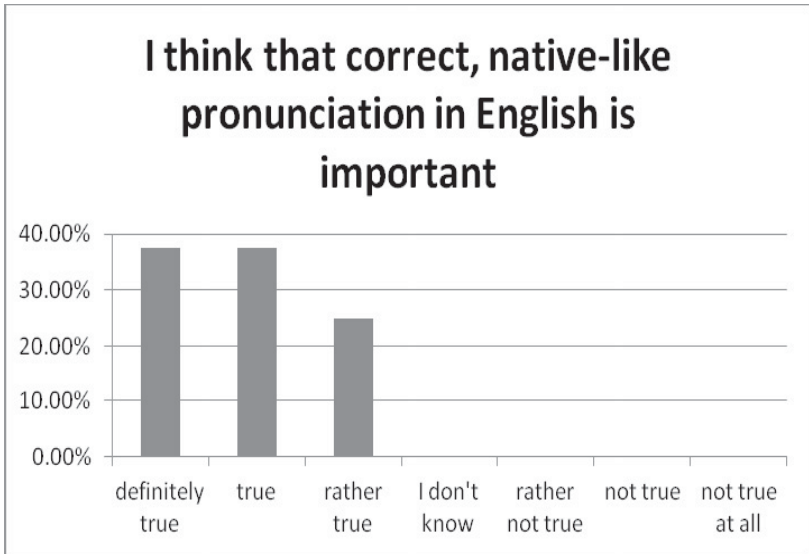
Fig. 2-14
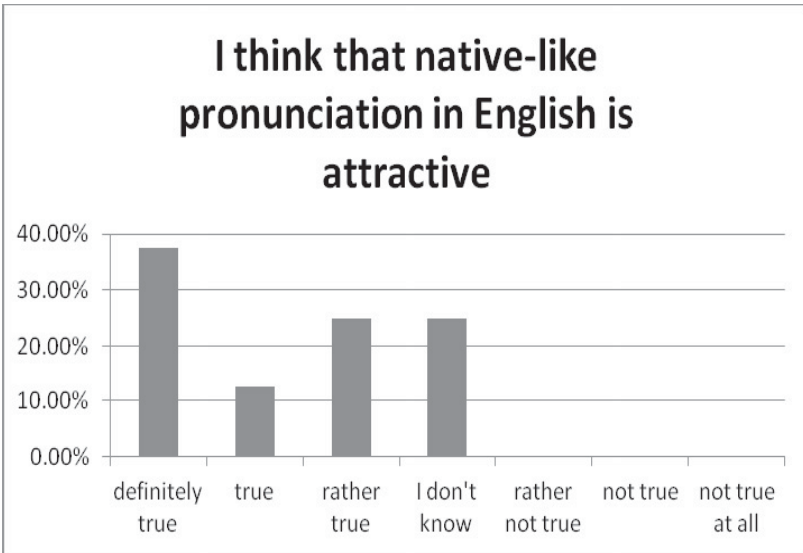
Fig. 2-15
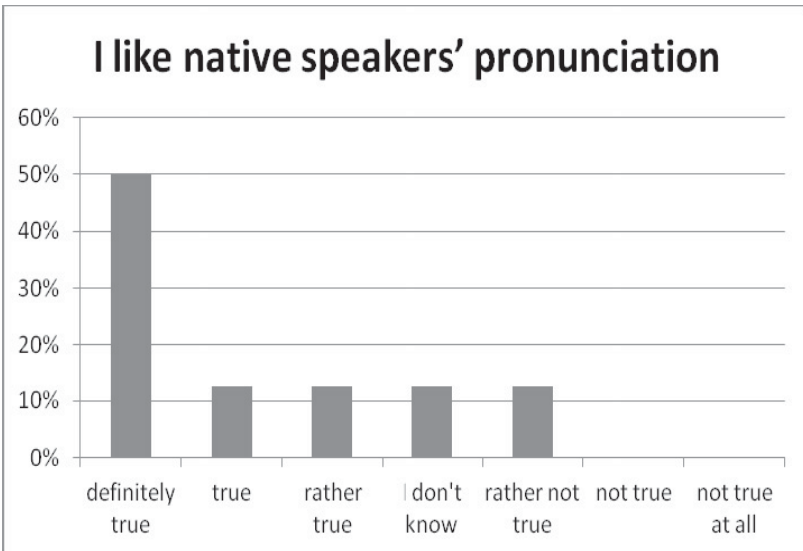
Fig. 2-16

Statement	Mode	Median	Range
I want to speak like a native speaker of English	2, 3	2.5	5
I think that correct, native-like pronunciation in EFL is important	1, 2	2	2
I think that native-like pronunciation in English is attractive	1	2.5	3
I like native speakers' pronunciation	1	1.5	4

Table 2-4

The figures and table above show the answers to the study questions provided by the subjects from Group Four. One can observe that most of them are willing to speak like native speakers of English, and their attitudes towards native-like pronunciation are still rather positive. However, three (male) subjects from this group did not agree with this statement and said that they did not want to speak like native speakers of English (=not true). What is surprising, all study participants (even those who did not want to speak like native speakers of English) decided that native-like pronunciation in English was important ("definitely true" to "rather true"), and that native-like pronunciation in English was attractive. The mode for the aforementioned questions is still quite low, ranging from 1 (=definitely true) to 3 (=rather true) and median ranges from 1.5 to 2.5. It means that, although some subjects were more negative about native-like pronunciation in English, the majority were still willing to achieve this kind of pronunciation. The range is higher than in all previous cases, showing the more diverse opinions. The results are supported by the answers to the open-ended questions. Below are the most popular statements provided by the study participants from this group.

Question One (positive answers): *Why do you want to speak like a native speaker of English?*
- It sounds nice.
- I want other people to understand me.
- I don't want my teacher to be angry.
- It's attractive.
- Native speakers' pronunciation is so pretty!
- I value professionalism.

- I just like it.
- I want to understand other people and be understood.

Question One (negative answers): *Why don't you want to speak like a native speaker of English?*
- I don't want other people to think I'm a stupid American or Englishman.
- I want to speak like myself. I don't want to sound like a native speaker of English!
- This kind of pronunciation is impossible to understand.

Question Two (positive answers): *Why is native-like pronunciation in EFL important?*
- It's important because some words are similar to each other and I want to understand them correctly.
- It facilitates communication.
- Others can understand us.
- It helps understand linguistic nuances.
- It gives the impression of professionalism.

Question Two (negative answers): *Why isn't native-like pronunciation in EFL important?*
- It's difficult to understand people who speak like that.
- It's impossible to understand people who speak like native speakers.
- Nobody speaks like that.

6. Conclusions

The study results described above clearly show that a vast majority of EFL (or any other kind of English) learners still aim to achieve native-like pronunciation in their English. What is noteworthy, the fluency in English does not affect subjects' answers to a great extent – no matter why they learn this language, they all are willing to achieve the same goal. What is more, the study participants think that native-like pronunciation in English is important for communication (with both native and non-native speakers of this language) and that it can be regarded as attractive. These answers and opinions suggest that native-like pronunciation in a target language is still worth teaching (and learning) and learners do not desire to change this situation. This study provides considerable support for the opponents of

the phonological Lingua Franca Core – not by enumerating weaknesses of this theory, but by presenting the opinions of learners, who do not want to stop learning native-like pronunciation in English in order to study any simplified model.

References

Arabski, Janusz. 1985. *O Przyswajaniu Języka Drugiego (Obcego).* Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne.

Arabski, Janusz. 1997. *Przyswajanie Języka Obcego i Pamięć Werbalna.* Katowice: Śląsk.

Ard, Josh. 1990. A Constructivist Perspective on Non-Native Phonology. In: Gass, Susan and Schachter, Jacquelyn. (eds.) Should be edited by, all the way through! *Linguistic Perspectives on Second Language Acquisition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Beebe, Leslie. 1984. Myths About Interlanguage Phonology. *Studies In Descriptive Linguistics,* Vol. 13. In: Eliason, Stig, (ed.), *Theoretical Issues in Contrastive Phonology.* Heidelberg: Julius Groos Verlag, 1984, 51-62.

Bent, Tessa. and Bradlow, Ann R. 2003. The Interlanguage Speech Intelligibility Benefit. In: *Journal of the Acoustic Society of America* 114, 1600-1610.

Best, Catherine. T. 1995. A Direct Realist View of Cross-Language Speech Perception. In: Strange, Winifred. (ed.), *Speech Perception and Linguistic Experience: Issues in Cross-Language Research.* Timonium: York Press: 171-204.

Brown, Cynthia. 2000. The Interrelation Between Speech Perception and Phonological Acquisition from Infant to Adult. In: Archibald, John. (ed.) *Second Language Acquisition and Linguistic Theory.* Malden: Blackwell Publishers Inc.

Crystal, David. 1998. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Eddine, A. Naser. 2011. Second Language Acquisition: The Articulation of Vowels and Importance of Tools in the Learning Process. In: Arabski, Janusz and Wojtaszek, Adam. (eds.) *The Acquisition of L2 Phonology.* Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Flege, James Emil. 1995. Second Language Speech Learning: Theory, Findings and Problems. In: Strange, Winifred. (ed.) *Speech Perception and Linguistic Experience: Issues in Cross-Language Research.* Timonium: York Press.

Flege, James Emil. 2003. Assessing Constraints on Second-Language Segmental Production and Perception. In: Meyer, Antje and Schiller, Niels. (eds.) *Phonetics and Phonology in Language Comprehension and Production, Differences and Similarities.* Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Gass, Susan and Selinker, Larry. 2008. *Second Language Acquisition.* New York: Routledge.

Hüttner, J. and Kidd, S. 2000. Reconstructing or Demolishing the 'Sprechpraktikum' – A Reply to: Daniel Sprichtinger "From Anglocentrism to TEIL: Reflections on Our English programme". In: *Vienna English Working Papers* 9/2, 75-78.

Jenkins, Jennifer. 2000. *The Phonology of English as an International Language.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Littlewood, William T. 1994. *Foreign and Second Language Learning : Language-Acquisition Research and its Implications for the Classroom.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

MacKenzie, Ian. 2003. English as Lingua Franca and European Universities. In: *The European English Messenger XII/1, 59-62.*

Major, Roy C. 1987. A Model for Interlanguage Phonology. In: Ioup, Georgette, Weinberger, Steven H. eds., *Interlanguage Phonology. The Acquisition of a Second Language Sound System.* Cambridge, MA: Newbury House Publishers, 101-124.

Pilus, Zahariah. 2005. Perception of Voicing in English Word-Final Obstruents by Malay Speakers of English: Examining the Perceptual Assimilation Model. In: Wijasuriya, Basil Srisena. (ed.) *Malaysian Journal of ELT Research* 1

Rojczyk, Arkadiusz. 2009. Modele Percepcji Systemu Dźwiękowego Języka Obcego. In: Joanna Nijakowska (ed.) *Język Poznanie Zachowanie: Perspektywy i Wyzwania w Studiach nad Przyswajaniem Języka Obcego.* Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego: 120-135.

Rojczyk, Arkadiusz. 2010. Forming New Vowel Categories in Second Language Speech: The Case of Polish Learners' Production Of English /ɪ/ and /e/. In: *Research in Language* 8: 85-97.

Scheuer, Sylwia. 2005. Why Native Speakers are (Still) Relevant. In: Dziubalska-Kołaczyk, Katarzyna and Przedlacka, Joanna. (eds.) *English Pronunciation Models: A Changing Scene.* Bern: Peter Lang.

Setter, Jane and Jenkins, Jennifer. 2005. Pronunciation. In: *Language Teaching* 38, 1-17.

Smit, Ute. and Dalton, Christiane. 2000. Motivational Patterns in Advanced EFL Pronunciation Learners. In: *International review of*

Applied Linguistics 38, 229-246.

Sobkowiak, Włodzimierz. 2004. *English Phonetics for Poles.* Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie.

Sobkowiak, Włodzimierz. 2005. Why Not LFC? In: Dziubalska-Kołaczyk, Katarzyna and Przedlacka, Joanna. (eds.) *English Pronunciation Models: A Changing Scene.* Bern: Peter Lang.

Tarone, Elaine. 1978. The Phonology of Interlanguage. In: Richards, Jack C. (ed.), *Understanding Second and Foreign Language Learning.* Rowley, MA: Newbury House, 15-33.

Towell, Richard and Hawkins, Roger. 1994. *Approaches to Second Language Acquisition.* Bristol: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Trudgill, Peter. 2005. Native-speaker Segmental Phonological Models and the English Lingua Franca Core. In: Dziubalska-Kołaczyk, Katarzyna and Przedlacka, Joanna. (eds.) *English Pronunciation Models: A Changing Scene.* Bern: Peter Lang.

Waniek-Klimczak, Ewa. 1997. Context for Teaching English Phonetics and Phonology at Polish Universities and Colleges: A Survey. In: Waniek-Klimczak, Ewa. (ed.) *Teaching English Phonetics and Phonology II,* Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 5-17.

Weber, Andrea and Cutler, Anne. 2004. Lexical Competition in Non-native Spoken-word Recognition. In: *Journal of Memory and Language* 50: 1-15.

Wells, John C. 2005. Goals in Teaching English Pronunciation. In: Dziubalska-Kołaczyk, Katarzyna and Przedlacka, Joanna. (eds.) *English Pronunciation Models: A Changing Scene.* Bern: Peter Lang.

THE INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES MYTH AND HOW TO RESPOND TO IT

MARTIN HINTON
UNIVERSITY OF ŁÓDŹ
NKJO SIERADZ

Introduction

The study of individual differences in foreign language learning has generally involved identifying a particular area in which learners may differ, say intelligence or motivation to study, and examining the degree to which variations in that particular factor are reflected in the differences of learner outcomes observable in groups of students. To a degree, this method has been successful, enabling the identification of a number of factors which might previously have been overlooked or were known only anecdotally to affect learning, while, at the same time, showing that certain other differences between individuals do not play as great a role in determining outcomes as had been previously claimed. However, more and more researchers have come round to the belief that the method of studying particular factors in isolation has severe limitations which make it impossible for the field to advance towards even greater understanding of learners as individuals. This change has taken place largely due to the realisation of the degree of interference and inter-dependence which all the relevant factors have upon one another, along with more focus on language learning as a process involving many stages of study and proficiency and lasting a very considerable length of time. All significant factors, whether of a cognitive or affective nature, are in a constant state of flux in the short-term and while they might be thought to fluctuate around a core mean value in the medium-term, they exhibit large scale alterations over the long-term: the process of learning a language can, after all, take many years. The inevitable interactions between these fluctuating variables are extremely difficult to predict, especially as factors not normally connected with the learning process, such as physical well-being or strong emotions like love, grief, happiness or disappointment, may also

be involved. There can be little doubt, therefore, that in order to take the study of individual differences to a new, deeper level, it will be necessary to question and possibly even abandon the very notion of an individual difference which has hitherto obtained.

This paper will discuss the achievements and limitations of 'traditional' individual differences (IDs) research before outlining Zoltan Dornyei's objection that it is based upon a myth; a conceptual misunderstanding of the processes involved and must, therefore, face drastic alteration. Dornyei's own suggestions as to how research can progress by means of a new, retrodictive methodology will then be set forth and commented upon, before, finally, an example of how this method might work in practice is offered based upon my own work into the individual factors affecting foreign language pronunciation.

1. The Traditional View of Individual Differences

Most readers will already be familiar with the broad outline of research into IDs. This section, therefore, will not attempt an exhaustive review of the hundreds of studies which have been carried out, but will draw attention to certain aspects of that research and how they led to the development of the traditional view of IDs and at the same time established its limitations.

IDs research has generally been concatenative in approach (see Skehan 1989), which means that the theory has been built around the results of research programmes rather than vice versa. Researchers have usually measured certain aspects of their subjects, assessed their language level or progress in a language learning environment and sought to find statistical relationships between the scales: often significant correspondences. Only then, once a relationship has been established, does theorising take place. For example, many studies have found the age of learners to be an important variable in their performance, but there are a large number of theories as to how age affects learning: neurological, psychological, social and cognitive among others (see Singleton 2005). This method has the great advantage that it allows practical adjustments and reasonably reliable predictions to be made, based on what has been observed among real learners, even when the understanding of how IDs influence the process of language learner is tentative or non-existent. Unfortunately, it also makes it possible for authors to suggest variables which they believe ought to be influential and be under no pressure to fit them into a general theoretical framework which would explain already published results. An example of this is the field independence/field dependence (FI/FD) distinction, which

initially appeared to have a bearing on language learner success in practical studies. Further studies were somewhat inconclusive and no satisfactory theory of how it might play the role claimed for it was produced. Ellis concluded that "the research into FI/FD has shed little light on the relationship between cognitive style and L2 learning" (Ellis 1994, 506) and Griffiths and Sheen went so far as to call the whole area of research a "wasteland, bereft of meaningful hypotheses" (1992, 145).

1.1 Key Variables

In spite of numerous disagreements over how IDs influence learning and how they should be categorised, scholars have, over time, generally come to accept certain key variables among individual learners as being of particular importance in determining the outcome of their learning process.

One set of such differences can be grouped under the name Cognitive Differences. Those which have received the most attention from researchers are intelligence, language learning aptitude and, more recently, working memory. The picture, however, is clouded by problems in defining what each of these actually is. Indeed, Oller and Perkins (1978) claim that verbal intelligence is identical with general intelligence (g) and is the main factor at work in language aptitude tests, while Miyake and Friedman (1989) concluded that working memory is probably the main factor in aptitude, and Colom et al. have suggested that working memory is 'the essence of g' (Colom et al. 2006, 288).

Whatever the problems with definition and overlap, numerous studies have been carried out into these cognitive variables. A famous study conducted by Genesee (1976), found that while performance on standardised intelligence tests predicted performance on pen and paper language tests, it had no correlation with the quality of speaking in a communicative task. It has generally come to be accepted that intelligence, however cognitive scientists may define it, is closely related to what Cummins (1979) defined as Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), but not to what he calls Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991). That is to say: intelligence predicts success at learning and using languages at school and in similar formal situations, but not in informal communication environments.

It was once thought that the same conclusion might be reached about language learning aptitude, however, Robinson (2005) lists a number of studies showing a link between aptitude and implicit learning conditions, suggesting that it remains a factor in all learning environments. The father

of aptitude research, John Carroll, was keen to point out that it is, and must be seen to be, different from general intelligence. His own research is a classic example of the approach discussed in the section above, where a large number of tests were employed, their results compared with results from an intensive language course, and only some time later did he make an attempt to define what it was he was actually testing. His four part division of language aptitude into Phonetic Coding Ability, Grammatical Sensitivity, Rote Memory and Inductive Language Learning Ability (Carroll 1965) has often been uncritically accepted as a full description of aptitude, but was long ago dismissed by serious aptitude researchers (see Dornyei and Skehan 2003). Their complaints are not so much that Carroll was wrong; more that he had very little evidence to reach the conclusions he did: a problem exacerbated by the absence of any tests for one of those elements (Inductive ability) in his well-known and publicly available tool, the Modern Languages Aptitude Test (MLAT).

More recent research has led to closer investigation of how cognitive processes actually relate to task completion at different levels of learning and this has led to an acceptance of the idea that the cognitive abilities of which aptitude is constructed will change as the learner advances in proficiency, meaning that special aptitudes for particular language uses and particular language levels need to be described (Spolsky 1989, Robinson 2005). In spite of this uncertainty over the meaning of the term and perhaps also because of its flexibility, Dornyei states that aptitude has generally been considered "the most important cognitive variable" (2010: 248). It is probably fair to say, in fact, that language learning aptitude has come to be used as shorthand for whatever cognitive factors contribute to language learning.

Something similar has happened in the second strand of ID study, which involves the influence of affective variables on learner success. Firstly, there is confusion over how broadly the term affective should be understood. In their 1993 paper on the measurement of affective factors, Gardner and MacIntyre identify four affective constructs: Integrativeness, Attitudes towards the learning situation, Motivation and Language Anxiety (Gardner and MacIntyre 1993). In contrast, Ellis considers only Anxiety under the heading "Affective State" and discusses Motivation and Personality separately (Ellis 1994, 522). Larsen-Freeman and Long, state explicitly that they want to avoid confusion which the word "affective" might cause and opt instead for "non-cognitive" (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991, 172). Dornyei sometimes refers to three categories of factors: cognitive, affective and motivational, and at other times is happy to describe motivation as the primary affective factor (Dornyei 2010).

Whether or not particular factors are properly grouped under particular terms is, of course, of less importance than the study of their effects upon the language learning process.

The two areas in which the most productive research has been carried out are undoubtedly motivation and anxiety studies. There is widespread agreement that personality traits ought to be influential but little hard evidence of how that influence might be felt. Clearly, learners of all types, be they introverts or extroverts, are perfectly capable of learning foreign languages and while certain tasks and activities may appeal more to some people than to others there is no reason to think that personality plays a large role in the likelihood of learning success.

Affective states are defined by feelings and emotions. All research into affect, then, is hampered both by the difficulty of measuring levels of emotion and by their inherently fleeting nature. These problems have cast doubt over the entire enterprise, and there are obviously some states which could influence learning efficacy but would be futile to attempt to measure, such as 'satisfaction with boyfriend/girlfriend/spouse' or 'irritation with public transport'. Anxiety research, however, has overcome these problems, thanks, initially to the work of Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, whose 1986 study identified Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety as a distinctly identifiable construct, and provided a test for it which has been used and adapted by many researchers, including myself (Hinton 2014). Rather than a case of the researchers deciding that anxiety ought to be a factor and going in search of it, this work was inspired by the high numbers of college students, a self-selecting group of those relatively comfortable with the demands of academic study, seeking help for problems on their language courses and expressing a variety of fears and anxieties connected with the study of a language. What made this notion of anxiety particularly accessible for researchers was the situational context: students found certain situations, frequently repeated in the classroom, such as being asked to speak in front of the group, especially stressful. These same situations were familiar to researchers and their subjects across the world. After reviewing a number studies into the relationship between anxiety and achievement, MacIntyre and Gardner conclude " it has been shown that anxiety negatively affects performance in the second language" (MacIntyre and Gardner 1991, 103).

The most serious questioning of this relationship has come from Sparks and Ganschow (1991) who believe that the direction of the correlation between anxiety and performance has been misunderstood. According to their paper, anxiety is most likely a result of poor performance rather than a cause of it. This poor performance is likely

caused by low language learning aptitude and is linked to "deficiencies in the efficient control of one's native language" (Sparks and Ganschow 1991, 10). While this view remains controversial, it raises the important question of interference between factors, here aptitude and anxiety, which will be considered in greater detail below.

Motivation in language learning has proved an extremely fruitful area of research and it is possible here to give only the briefest overview. A great deal of work was done by Gardner (1985) who developed a socio-cultural model of language learning, the primary factor in which is motivation. He created the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery to measure 19 different sub-scales of motivation and introduced the distinction between integrative and instrumental orientations: integrative orientation occurring when a learner wants to identify with the target language culture, and instrumental when the motivation is a different goal, such as passing exams or winning a promotion. One problem with this terminology is that a great deal of language learning takes place without any real feeling of "integration" with a particular culture or community; this is certainly true for learners of English who see it as a lingua franca rather than a gateway to Anglo-American culture. For this reason, Dornyei and Csizer (2002) have discussed the need to widen the concept to take account of ideas of self-concept where the identification of the learner is not with a speech community but with a possible self which approaches his own ideal self concept.

Cognitive psychologists have drawn a similar distinction to Gardner's, between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation which is not concerned only with the learning of languages. Simply, someone with intrinsic motivation has reasons to perform an activity which are found within the activity itself; it is interesting or enjoyable. Extrinsic reasons are those outwith the activity itself such as exams or financial rewards. This theory has been developed in relation to L2 learning by Kim Noels (Noels 2001) whose work has looked at the issue of learner-autonomy which is thought to increase intrinsic motivation (Williams and Burden 1997).

Another important aspect of motivation is that it is dynamic and liable to change over time. Dornyei points out that learners may experience a "fluctuating level of commitment even within a single lesson, and the variation in their motivation over a longer period (e.g., a whole academic term) can be dramatic" (Dornyei 2003, 17). Dornyei, therefore, recommends a process-oriented approach. In the model he proposes there are three stages of motivation: the Preactional Stage of Choice Motivation, the Actional Stage of Executive Motivation, and the Postactional Stage of Motivational Retrospection. The first of these is primarily concerned with

the setting of goals and expectations and the launching of an action, such as deciding to sign up for a course. The Executive stage is influenced by the actual experience of the learning environment and determines the willingness to complete the sub-tasks necessary for learning to take place. The final stage involves the assessment of feedback, the establishment of causal relationships, such as why learning was successful or not, and planning for the future. This model explains why many learners who have high Choice Motivation may lack the commitment to work on their studies at the Actional stage, since Choice Motivation does not necessarily translate into Executive Motivation. The third stage allows learners to make judgements about their learning which will enable to them make new choices in the future. The process is, therefore, circular, with Motivational Retrospection feeding into Choice Motivation, hopefully leading to better decision making in the future (Dornyei 2001, 22).

Given that Dornyei's three stage definition of motivation includes such wide-ranging factors as attitudes towards the target language community, expectation of success, pleasantness of the learning experience, use of learning strategies, and self-confidence, it is easy to see why motivation has come to stand for affective factors in general, with even language learning anxiety being subsumed as a negative influence on the wider construct rather than an entirely separate phenomenon in itself. The reasons for this amalgamation, which mirrors that described above concerning cognitive factors, are two-fold: the difficulty in drawing definite distinctions between supposedly different factors, and the increasing awareness of the interaction between the various elements. This does not concern interplay merely between different factors on one side of the cognitive/affective divide, but also the influence which the non-cognitive may have on the cognitive and vice versa. Once Aptitude has come to represent all cognitive factors and Motivation is seen as encompassing the non-cognitive, and it is understood that the two can radically affect each other, it is clear that they cannot be treated as monolithic and independent attributes which influence a learner's progress in a regular and easily predictable way. The following section sets out Dornyei's proposals for the understanding of IDs as fluid, interacting elements in a dynamic system.

2. The Individual Differences Myth

The existence, then, of a series of separate individual differences which can be measured in isolation and whose effects on the learning process can be studied and used to predict variations in learner performance, is

considered by Dornyei to be a myth. He states that, "the various learner attributes are neither stable nor context-independent, but display a considerable amount of variation from time to time and from situation to situation" and that "a closer look at both language aptitude and motivation reveals that neither construct is monolithic but is, instead, made up of a number of constituent components" (Dornyei 2010, 252). Dornyei gives a number of examples, citing the work of Smith and Kosslyn (2007) who describe how higher brain functions, such as those studied by researchers into learning, are made up of a large number of integrated processes and must be considered multicomponential. This realisation, however, forces us to acknowledge that some of those processes may contain elements from both sides of the cognitive/affective dichotomy. Indeed he points out that "almost all influential contemporary motivation theories in psychology are cognitive in nature" (Dornyei 2010, 254).

There is also a range of interactions which are familiar to the language teacher and student alike, but do not necessarily work in the same way for all. A feeling of well-being may help concentration and lead to more effective learning, while emotional discomfort is a distractor, disrupting both understanding and memory. For some learners a feeling of pressure may be off-putting, for others a deadline and the prospect of examinations is a necessary motivator. There are many feedback effects too: good cognitive skills may bring good classroom grades which create a positive feeling towards the subject and therefore the language itself, increasing motivation and encouraging further success. Alternatively, as Sparks and Ganschow have argued (section 1.1 above) weak classroom performance caused by certain cognitive deficits will result in poor grades and a growing fear of failure which can develop into a debilitating level of anxiety. Most importantly, it should be understood that these relationships are not fixed and predictable for all individuals or for any one individual in all situations: failure will demotivate some learners some of the time, but at other times may lead to a redoubling of efforts, success may encourage some learners to study more and others to simply coast, depending on a wide range of other factors about the situation in question. Dornyei, therefore, suggests a dynamic systems approach to understanding learner differences.

2.1 Dynamic Systems

A dynamic system is one in which there is a plurality of fully interconnected elements which change over time. The state of the system is a function of its prior state and some influencing factor working upon it.

The complex interactions between elements of the system make it unpredictable as the change is non-linear: small changes in one part of the system can have very large effects elsewhere, a phenomenon popularly known as the 'Butterfly effect'. Although the state of such systems is constantly fluctuating, they do exhibit a tendency to move towards certain, relatively stable attractor states. These are preferred patterns of behaviour in which the elements show a resistance to change (deBot, Lowie and Verspoor 2007). Change, however, is inevitable and it is the strength of these attractors which determine the degree to which the system is stable. Dornyei suggests that "ID variables can be seen as powerful attractors that act as stabilizing forces [...] this stability, in turn, translates into consistency and predictability" (Dornyei 2010, 261). MacIntyre offers an example: "when people feel willing to communicate, they also tend to have low anxiety. The frequency with which these states are connected leads to the patterns identified in communication traits research" (MacIntyre 2012, 364). That consistency and predictability, however, is of a limited nature: "Changing initial conditions can reverberate throughout the rest of the system, making communication processes notoriously difficult to predict in advance, even when the component parts are fairly well known" (MacIntyre 2012, 364).

2.2 The Response

There are, I believe, four possible responses to the suggestion that individual differences cannot be studied via the traditional approach, which conceives them as independent, monolithic structures, and must instead be considered to be part of an unpredictable, interconnected dynamic system. The first response to Dornyei's claims would be to simply ignore them. It could be argued, with some justification, that no-one ever believed in the myth anyway: aptitude and motivation were always considered complex constructs, not monoliths, and a degree of interaction between the intellectual and the emotional has long been acknowledged by researchers. Although all of this is to a degree true, it is not a tenable response to Dornyei because he is not so much saying that we should stop thinking of IDs as monolithic, as that we should stop treating them as such in our research. In particular, researchers must pay attention to how ID factors fluctuate over even quite short periods of time: producing a score for aptitude, motivation or level of anxiety for each participant at one point during an experiment and assuming that it represents a fixed level of influence of that factor is to gloss over far too much, but is accepted as a standard practice. However much researchers may have accepted that the

constructs they were examining were complex, and that some interaction with other factors was unavoidable, very little research, if any, has been conducted into the nature and extent of these interactions and whether or not results which do not take them into account can be considered meaningful at all. It should also be noted that Dornyei does not say that all previously conducted research should be abandoned; on the contrary, it remains the foundation for his newer ideas; rather that if we are to go further in the understanding of the individual learner, and thereby improve our methods of teaching, we must adapt our approach to studying him.

A second way to react to Dornyei is to argue against his conclusions and deny the validity of the dynamic system theory. This might be done either by supporting the idea of unified, stable IDs, and denying its mythical nature, or, perhaps, more promisingly, by refusing to accept that a dynamic systems model provides a better framework for research. In both cases, it would be possible to cite the large amount of work which has been done quite successfully linking certain learner factors to outcomes. The problem with both of these attitudes is all the evidence Dornyei cites in favour of his approach. There have never been clear and universally accepted definitions of the various ID factors, so much of the research which appears to have produced firm connections and correspondences between certain factors and learner performance is difficult to compare and impossible to fit into a common framework because the conceptualisations of the factors at work are so varied. Whether or not a dynamic systems approach has the potential to produce a better level of understanding is a question which can only be answered by practical application of such an approach. If Dornyei's supposition is to be proved wrong, it must be tested. It is, therefore, simply too soon to argue against him on the ground that his method doesn't work any better than traditional ones.

The third option is to accept that the doubts Dornyei raises over previous research methods are justified and to conclude that, given the complexity and unpredictability of human thought and emotion, attempting to establish any general rules or even tendencies, which will hold across societies and generations is a hopeless task, and that while we may acknowledge the types of factors involved in affecting individual performance, there is little point trying to establish a more detailed system of analysis since every case is, by definition, individual.

There are a number of things to say about this resigned conclusion: firstly, all sciences which deal with living organisms, and especially those which touch human cognition, work to establish recognisable patterns of behaviour and outcome, acknowledging that there are always unknown

factors which may skew results away from expectations and prevent the establishment of firm rules. This method is familiar to us all from our day to day interactions with one another and the fact that we can never be certain how another human will react to what we say or do does not stop us trying to communicate. Secondly, even if it is accepted that perfect understanding of the learner and predictability of his progress is unattainable, that does not mean that there is no reason to try to improve on current models. If the established model is imperfect because it does not allow for the dynamism of the system, then some account of that dynamism, even if very incomplete, should be enough to take the model one step forward. Finally, the 'giving up and going home' response presupposes that there is no methodology by which complex dynamic systems can be studied. The following section will describe two methods which have recently been proposed for doing just that. This then is the fourth response: to embrace Dornyei's critique of the traditional, accept his points as a challenge, create methodologies which can be used to study dynamic systems and test them in the field.

2.3 Studying Dynamic Systems

Studying dynamic systems is undoubtedly difficult. It is the usual method of all sciences to try to eliminate or control for other factors which may affect results and focus entirely on the particular factor under current investigation. Once it is accepted that a variety of factors must be taken into account and that the interaction between them is not well understood, and is in fact part of what is being studied, chaos may ensue. In order to make some sense of such systems, a different attitude is required of the researcher: he must look for patterns and probabilities rather than rules, and a different attitude is also necessary in those who come to assess the research. A certain inconclusiveness is built in to the conclusions. The rewards, however, for researchers who are able to accept and work with a degree of ambiguity and uncertainty, are potentially great.

The two methods discussed in this section are not in any way supposed to represent the only available possibilities. Rather, they illustrate how two leading researchers have approached the problem and make it clear that the very complexity of the systems under investigation may, of necessity, require the development of a great variety of ways in which they can be studied. The first is a method proposed by Dornyei himself and an example of its application, on a small scale, is given from a study conducted by the present author. The second is currently being used by Peter MacIntyre and is illustrated with a description of one of his studies.

2.3.1 Retrodictive Qualitative Modelling

Dornyei actually discusses three possible approaches to researching dynamic systems in his paper on the subject (Dornyei 2014) before settling on Retrodictive Qualitative Modelling (RQM) as the most promising. His first suggestion is to focus on "strong-attractor governed phenomena" (Dornyei 2014, 84). This is possible in a system where one attractor can convincingly be attributed enough strength to effectively govern the system, with very little deviation. To give an example, human behaviour is complex and unpredictable, but if a fire-alarm goes off in a lecture hall, audience and speaker alike will make for the exits. Whenever a complex system can be shown to have such a strong attractor, then empirical results from traditional methods would be considered legitimate. Even in an activity such as language learning, there may exist sub-systems to which this would apply.

The second approach Dornyei describes is to focus on "typical attractor conglomerates" (Dornyei 2014, 84). In cases where attractors come together to form what he calls "potent constructs", which create predictability, Dornyei suggests researchers may fruitfully seek to "identify the optimal combination of various variables and factors" (Dornyei 2014, 84). The example he gives is that of the construct "interest" (Dornyei and Ushioda 2011) formed from motivational, cognitive and affective factors which is recognised in motivation research. As with the first suggestion, this method may only be applicable in a limited number of systems where such conglomerates exist.

The third possibility suggested by Dornyei is more universal. RQM is a system for identifying patterns of behaviour which are produced by most systems, since even dynamic systems are not random and do produce recognisable outcome patterns. Dornyei points out that many real-world dynamic systems, such as the classroom, actually have a limited range of possible outcomes due to the system's internal self-organisation. The idea of a retrodictive analysis, then, is to accept that we cannot predict which of the limited number of outcomes will in fact be the case, but that we can work backwards from those outcomes and identify the main factors which led to those states being reached. Dornyei credits David Byrne (2002) with highlighting the value of retrodictive methods and Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008a; 2008b) and de Bot and Larsen-Freeman (2011) for suggesting its usefulness in SLA research.

Dornyei goes on to show how this approach might be applied in the classroom. We might begin by establishing common learner types within the group via observation and discussion. Learners can then be fitted to the

prototypes and interviewed. If the interviewing process is sufficiently thorough, it should be possible to draw up a list of all the relevant factors affecting learner behaviour. It is then hoped that an assessment of the qualitative data will reveal why each of the individuals studied ended up in the attractor state that he did and what Dornyei calls the 'trajectory' of his development may be plotted. In this process, it is, of course, the dynamic interactions between factors which are of particular interest. The interpretation of such results is, he admits, problematic; but perhaps not more so than qualitative research in general. The greatest weakness of the method is that it does not lead to any predictability: there is no reason to suppose that the dynamics of one system will be repeated in other, albeit similar, systems at other times and places, and no testable hypothesis can be made on the results of one study. There is, however, an important point to be made about predictability: classroom dynamics are, in fact, unpredictable, as even the most experienced teacher is aware. It is, therefore, unfair to criticise a research method whose results are unable to predict those dynamics. Rather, RQM allows researchers to "understand salient patterns - or essential underlying mechanisms - associated with typical system outcomes," (Dornyei 2014, 89). Dornyei finishes his discussion by urging caution and pointing to the lack of studies carried out using this methodology. I suspect, however, that retrodiction has frequently been applied in a way similar to that he suggests, without its being explicitly stated.

In a series of studies conducted by the present author into the relationship between performance on mimicry tests, various affective and motivational factors, and actual foreign language pronunciation in learners of English, it was noticed that while many learners matched the pattern of good pronunciation/good mimicry or poor pronunciation/poor mimicry, one group appeared to significantly under-perform in the mimicry tests. Investigation of the prototypical under-performers revealed a number of them to be young women with particularly high regard for their own appearance. It is important to point out that these attitudes of the learners were not elicited by interview, as Dornyei suggests, but by a questionnaire using a Likert scale to agree or disagree with certain statements about themselves. It was hypothesised that members of this group were unwilling to show themselves in a compromised way, that is to make fools of themselves, by trying to repeat unfamiliar sounds. This was identified as the "Cecily Effect", and led to the search for other types of outcome within the system, notably a group of over-achievers in the mimicry test who were males with high levels of boldness, for whom success in the test seemed to be more important than the risk to their image (Hinton 2014).

These discoveries do not mean that anyone with a high regard for their appearance will be a relatively poor mimic, nor that anyone with high self-confidence will be a good one: merely that these patterns do exist and may be useful in the understanding of the pronunciation performance of other individuals.

2.3.2 The Idiodynamic Method

Peter MacIntyre, however, has some doubts about the effectiveness of qualitative-retrospective studies. Although he sees them as an improvement on traditional statistical methods for investigating dynamic systems, his concern is that interviews which discuss events which happened at some time in the past or over a longer period of time are susceptible to a range of memory biases and lapses (MacIntyre 2012). His way of avoiding this problem and simultaneously tracking the dynamic process within his subjects is the idiodynamic method. Idiodynamics refers to the changes occurring within an individual during an ongoing event, and caused by factors internal to that person and his relationship with the environment surrounding him. In order to capture the idiodynamics of each individual, MacIntyre's team make video recordings of communication events (conversations, presentations, interviews). The recording is then played back to the individual speaking, or to another person, who rates the speaker for the particular cognitive or affective variable under consideration throughout the duration of the episode. Once these ratings have been noted, the individual is immediately interviewed about them and attempts to explain the causes behind variations. This interview is also recorded and can be subjected to further analysis. The point here is to capture the trajectory of the system and establish what fluctuations are taking place at what times for what reasons. It is also possible to compare and contrast the ratings given by the individual himself and those from his peers or behavioural experts, giving valuable information about the perception of affective states as well as how they are felt.

MacIntyre gives an example of the method in use reported in MacIntyre and Legatto (2011) where willingness to communicate (WTC) in subjects speaking a foreign language was plotted over time as they were asked to complete tasks of varying difficulty. One participant whom he describes, Mary, reports massive fluctuations in her WTC as the episode progressed (she even refused to attempt to answer one question), while another, Gertrude, is far more stable and only drops her WTC slightly while attempting the harder task. Plots of these fluctuations can then be compared with plots of other factors, such as anxiety, or compared to non-

verbal behaviour apparent in the recordings. Later experiments have also measured physical phenomena, such as heart rate, and looked at how they relate to the ratings (MacIntyre 2012).

This methodology might not be appropriate for all kinds of study, but its great advantage is that it abandons the no longer tenable idea that factors such as WTC are relatively stable in any one individual and attempts to actually capture the changes within the mind and body of the individual as they happen. MacIntyre describes the method as " a

sort of microscope with which to examine familiar traits, such as competence, anxiety, and WTC from a different angle, using a timescale that has not typically been investigated" (MacIntyre 2012, 366). As in the physical sciences, a microscope is not always the correct instrument to use to observe large scale phenomena, but it may well be able to open up to investigation their fundamental causes.

3. Conclusions

The difficulty in telling apart the various elements believed to influence foreign language learning, then, has already led researchers in the field to accept conglomerations of factors: the cognitive and the non-cognitive, Aptitude and Motivation. Whilst many authors will still refer to particular parts of those wider categories, it is with an understanding that they cannot really be separated from related concepts. To a degree then Dornyei is preaching to the converted, and it is unclear whether any serious IDs researcher still does, or, indeed, ever did, believe in the myth he exposes. There is no doubt, however, that little has been done to examine the complexities of interaction between factors. Where such studies have been undertaken they have tended to look at two factors rather than the whole range of influences on learners, and have tended to treat them as fixed once measured, rather than constantly in flux. The proper study of such dynamic systems is a major challenge. The methodologies set out above from the work of Dornyei and MacIntyre are not polished and proven, but represent the first attempts of researchers to take up that challenge. They do not do so blindly, however, since there is no reason to discard the work already done on a more static model of the individual: this work gives many hints as to what patterns the dynamic systems might display, but it is only through an acceptance of, and investigation into, that dynamism that a better, more complete and, ultimately, more useful, understanding of the individual learner may emerge.

References

Byrne, D. 2002. *Interpreting quantitative data*. London: Sage.

Carroll, J. B. 1965. "The prediction of success in foreign language training". In *Training, research and education, edited by* R.Glasser, 87-136. New York: Wiley.

Colom, R., P.C. Shih, C. Flores-Mendoza & M.A. Quiroga. 2006. "The real relationship between short-term memory and working memory". *Memory* 14: 804-813.

Cummins, J. 1979. "Cognitive/academic language proficiency, linguistic interdependence, the optimal age question and some other matters." *Working Papers on Bilingualism* 19: 197-205.

de Bot, K. & D. Larsen-Freeman. 2011. "Researching second language development from a dynamic systems theory perspective." In *A Dynamic Approach to Second Language Development: Methods and Techniques,* edited by M. H. Verspoor, K. De Bot & W. Lowie, 5-23. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

de Bot, K.,W. Lowie & M. Verspoor. 2007. "A Dynamic Systems Theory approach to second language acquisition." *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition* 10.1: 7–21.

Dornyei, Z. 2001. *Motivational strategies in the language classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dornyei, Z. 2003. "Attitudes, Orientations, and Motivations in Language Learning: Advances in Theory, Research, and Applications." *Language Learning*, Vol. 53, Issue S1: 3-32.

Dornyei, Z. 2010. "The relationship between language aptitude and language learning motivation: individual differences from a dynamic systems perspective." In *Continuum companion to second-language acquisition,* edited by E. Macaro, 247-267. London: Continuum.

Dornyei, Z. 2014. "Researching complex dynamic systems: 'Retrodictive Qualitative Modelling' in the Language Classroom." *Language Teaching*, 2014, 47.1:80-91.

Dornyei, Z. & K. Csizer. 2002. "Some dynamics of language attitudes and motivation: results of a longitudinal nationwide survey." *Applied Linguistics* 23:421-462.

Dornyei, Z. & P. Skehan. 2003. "Individual differences in second language learning." In *Handbook of Second Language Acquisition,* edited by *C.* Doughty and M. Long, 589-630. Oxford: Blackwell.

Dornyei, Z. & E. Ushioda. 2011. *Teaching and researching motivation* (2nd edn). Harlow: Longman.

Ellis, R. 1994. *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford

University Press.

Gardner, R.C. 1985. *Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitude and motivation*. London: Edward Arnold.

Gardner, R.C. & P.D. MacIntyre. 1993. "On the measurement of affective variables in second language learning". *Language Learning* 43:157-194.

Griffiths, R. & R. Sheen. 1992. "Disembedded figures in the landscape: a reappraisal of L2 research on field dependence/independence." *Applied Linguistics* 13:133-148.

Genesee, F. 1976. "The role of intelligence in second language learning". *Language Learning* 26(2):267-280.

Hinton, M. 2014, "The Bold and the Beautiful: how aspects of personality affect foreign language pronunciation." Research in Language. Doi:10.2478/rela-2014-0003, June 2014.

Horwitz, E.K. Horwitz, M.B & J. Cope. 1986. "Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety". *The Modern Language Journal* 70, ii, 1986:125-132.

Larsen-Freeman, D. & L. Cameron. 2008a. *Complex systems and applied linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Larsen-Freeman, D. & L. Cameron. 2008b. "Research methodology on language development from a complex systems perspective." *The Modern Language Journal* 92.2:200–213.

Larsen-Freeman, D. & M.H. Long. 1991. *An introduction to second language acquisition research*. London: Longman.

MacIntyre, P. 2012. "The Idiodynamic Method: A closer look at dynamic personality traits." *Communication Research reports* Vol. 29, No.4 October-December 2012:361-367.

MacIntyre, P. & R, Gardner. 1991. "Methods and Results in the study of anxiety in language learning: a review of the literature." *Language Learning* 41:85-117.

MacIntyre, P. & J. Legatto. 2011. "A dynamic system approach to willingness to communicate: Developing an idiodynamic method to capture rapidly changing affect." *Applied Linguistics* 32:149–171.

Mijake, A & N. Friedman. 1998. "Individual differences in second language proficiency: Working memory as language aptitude." In *Foreign language learning: Psycholinguistic studies on training and retention,* edited by, A. Healy & L. Bourne, 339-365. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Noels, K. 2001. "Learning Spanish as a second language: Learners' orientations and perceptions of their teachers' communication style." *Language Learning* 51/1:107-144.

Oller, J.W. & K. Perkins. 1978. "Intelligence and language proficiency as sources of variance in self-reported affective variables." *Language Learning* 28:85-97.

Robinson, P. 2005. "Aptitude and second language acquisition." *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 2005, 25:46-73.

Singleton, D. 2005. "The Critical Period Hypothesis: a coat of many colours." *International Review of Applied Linguistics* (*IRAL*) 43, 2005:269-285.

Skehan, P. 1989. *Individual differences in second language learning*. London: Edward Arnold.

Smith, E. & S. Kosslyn. 2007. *Cognitive Psychology: Mind and Brain*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson/Prentice Hall.

Sparks, R.L. & L. Ganschow. 1991. "Foreign language learning differences: affective or native language aptitude differences?" *The Modern Language Journal* 75, i, 1991:3-12.

Spolsky, B. 1989. *Conditions for second language learning - Introduction to a general theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Williams, M & R.L. Burden. 1997. *Psychology for language teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Exploring the Attitudes towards Word Clouds in Junior High Students with a Different Multiple Intelligence Type: A Research Project

Monika Madej and Zuzanna Kiermasz
University of Łódź

1. Introduction

The development of computer technology provides learners with modern techniques for acquiring vocabulary in a foreign language. One example of such a technique is a word cloud, also called a tag cloud, which is a collection of words that differ from each other with respect to size, colour and layout (McNaught and Lam, 2010). These features cause a cloud to be an unusual format of presenting or consolidating vocabulary that may motivate students to learn words. The motivating impact of word clouds on learning vocabulary in a foreign language is assumed by Łyp-Bielecka (2012); however, no research investigating learners' opinion on word clouds has been conducted so far. Importantly, it seems to be crucial not only to investigate attitudes to word clouds in general, but also to take individual differences among learners into account. Accordingly, the aim of the present study is to correlate opinions about tag clouds with intelligence types proposed by Gardner (2011) in his theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI).

2. The Characteristics of Word Clouds and Appraisal of Their Features

A word cloud is a group of words automatically derived from a source text and arranged in a distinctive shape. Its appearance gives a significant insight into the most characteristic features of words; namely, the facets that seem to be easily noticeable are various font sizes, font colours and

layouts of words. The following section provides the characteristics of the aforementioned aspects and it particularly emphasizes some studies that examine opinions about them.

One prominent feature of words presented in tag clouds is different font sizes. Obviously, those words which are bigger are more visible than words shown in a diminutive size. The aspect that causes differences in font sizes pertains to the way word clouds are generated. Since they can be created on the internet with the use of a few available tools, the font size is determined automatically by the programs. More precisely, it depends on the number of particular words in a source text – the items which are used more often are greater in size; analogically, less frequent words are less prominent or even excluded from a tag cloud (DePaulo and Wilkinson, 2014; McNaught and Lam, 2010). An example of the tool used for creating word clouds is Tagxedo (www.tagxedo.com). The application not only preserves the function connected with font size, but also increases the size of a word on which a mouse pointer is placed. Consequently, a tag cloud consists of selected words shown in a few different sizes that can be additionally expanded.

Presumably, font size may impact on students' attitudes to learning in general. Conjectures are discussed in the literature with respect to opinions about the influence of a particular font size on remembering vocabulary (Kornell et al. 2011; Mueller et al. 2014) or a preference for a particular magnitude (Ramadan, 2011). The study conducted by Mueller et al. (2014) was based on presenting three words in conjunction with three non-words, either in a larger or smaller size. The participants judged learning on a scale from 0 to 100 indicating the level of memorization of words. The results suggested that words shown in a larger font, namely the 48 point Arial font, were scored more highly than smaller items in the 18 point Arial font. Interestingly, the result was the same irrespective of time given to study words – self-paced or limited to 5 seconds. Similarly, beliefs about font size confirm the superiority of larger fonts to smaller ones (Kornell et al. 2011; Mueller et al. 2014). More precisely, participants predicting the results of an experiment assumed that learners would recall more large than small font words. Additionally, they provided explanations for their assumptions among which the most prevalent response was that words in a larger size are more distinctive. All in all it can be concluded that words in a larger font size are assumed to be better remembered.

Another study dealing with the same aspect, but concerning a preference for a particular magnitude was conducted by Ramadan (2011). The research examined the 12, 14, and 16-point sizes and combined them with three different font styles. Interestingly, preference towards a

particular magnitude depended on the particular font style. It meant that a larger font size was sometimes scored lower than a smaller magnitude and vice versa. However, these results could be affected by the fact that the differences among the font sizes were not distinctive enough.

Irrespective of the superiority of a given font size over another, the preferences towards that aspect need to be related to word clouds. As mentioned, tag clouds include a few different font sizes of words. In the light of the studies on font size, some of them would be preferred more whereas others would be favoured less. Considering the fact that it is impossible to present words in one particular font size in an entire tag cloud, the question about a preference for a particular font size needs to be substituted with an inquiry into variety of font sizes.

As already mentioned, another characteristic feature of words in tag clouds besides different font sizes is the various font colours. Considering the way word clouds are generated, it can be noted that there is no rationale behind a colour combination; in other words, a hue can be randomly chosen by a tool which generates word clouds or by a user. The colour theme depends rather on the program in which a word cloud is generated. For instance, the application Tagxedo enables users to include in every tag cloud not only a black font but up to 5 different colours or shades. Additionally, the program modifies not only the font but also the background that can be in one particular colour. Consequently, a tag cloud which is generated through the tool becomes a visual image embracing a number of different hues.

Probably, students' attitudes to learning may be mediated by colours, namely, colours of some learning materials. Since a preference towards a particular hue may be rather subjective, it seems to be appropriate to discuss colours and their features more generally. One of the facets that can be considered is the contrast between text and background, which was investigated by Ramadan (2011). More specifically, he studied four foreground and background colour combinations: white/black, black/white, blue/white and white/blue. The participants were asked to read text in those four different conditions and report their satisfaction scales. The study demonstrated significant preferences for a black foreground and a white background. Hence, it may be concluded that the darker the colour of text and the brighter the colour of background, the higher subjective preference.

This aspect is partially associated with contrast but what can be discussed in connection to colours themselves rather than to the background is colour saturation. This specific condition is described by Pitchford, et al. (2011) who referred to a study combining tasks of colour

preference with the presentation of hues, namely hue pairs that comprised one chip of the maximum saturation for a particular colour and the other desaturated chip. The results revealed that the subjects preferred saturated sets more than desaturated ones. As regards the reasons for their choice, it was likely that saturated colours being more prominent than desaturated colours led to greater perceptual salience and it might have influenced the students' attitudes.

When the aforementioned deliberation about colours is related to word clouds, the characteristic of colours in tag clouds can be developed more fully. More precisely, it can be noted that words presented in a word cloud differ from each other not only by colour, but also by saturation and contrast. Considering the fact that, with the except of the black hue, a tag cloud does not present words in one specific saturation and colour, it should be assessed with respect to a variety of font hues.

Last but not least, another characteristic feature of words in tag clouds is layout. The aforementioned application Tagxedo offers four different orientations of words: vertical, horizontal, orthogonal or any which way. Although each name of the arrangement seems to denote only one particular layout, in practice it represents simultaneously different orientations. For instance, if a word aligned vertically is related to surrounding words, it can be discovered that it is not only vertical, but also horizontal to other words at the same time. Interestingly, that direction is not static which means that after placing a mouse pointer on one particular item, its layout will be automatically changed. However, that function has a limitation since it converts words always to a horizontal direction, irrespective of their initial arrangement. Logically, the modification of orientation does not apply to a horizontal alignment that remains the same. Despite that constraint, it can be summarized that word clouds include items arranged in a few different directions which can be slightly changed to the horizontal layout provided that a tag cloud is demonstrated online.

Presumably, layout may impact on students' individual preferences. The existing studies examine attitudes to positioning of words with respect to corresponding information. For instance, in one study elements equivalent to vocabulary items were in the form of images (Chang et al. 2006). The research examined four layouts: a word arranged vertically was located above or under a picture and a word aligned horizontally was placed on the left or right of an image. The participants were individually demonstrated each of the four layouts in a random sequence. Then, they were asked to express their preference only for one design, which was followed by rating the remaining three orientations. The results revealed that the learners scored most highly the word located vertically under the

picture and the word positioned horizontally on the right. Although the preferences for the particular layout were statistically significant, the differences between the preferences for the horizontal or vertical direction were not confirmed. Hence, it may be assumed that the vertical and horizontal direction may play a marginal role in students' preferences and only the right-hand side or lower part of a presentation format might be taken into consideration.

Another study dealing with layout examined attitudes to the combination of a word, a phonic transcription and translation (Lee and Kalyuga, 2011). The study examined the horizontal format with the elements on the right of a word and the vertical format including information under a word. Since exactly three elements were nested, which might led to some encumbrances in comparison to two elements, the participants were asked to rate the level of difficulty they could experience in completing a post-test after learning words in those two arrangements. The results showed that information on the right of a word was scored higher so it seemed to be more difficult than elements arranged below a word. As a result, it is likely that the horizontal arrangement might be preferred more than the vertical one by the participants of that study. However, that generalization needs to be treated with caution as the participants' attitudes to the layouts were not investigated directly.

Similarly to the aforementioned studies that seem not to indicate a clear preference for one orientation, either vertical or horizontal, investigating word clouds in that respect probably would also demonstrate an ambiguous tendency. It might result from the fact that it appears to be a challenge to assess which layout a tag cloud has in practice because it simultaneously includes a few different arrangements of words in relation to the surrounding words. Therefore, it seems to be logical to concentrate on opinions about a variety of layouts in word clouds rather than one particular alignment.

To sum up, the most distinctive features of of tag clouds are their: font size, font colour and layout. As regards the opinions about tag clouds, they have not been investigated yet; nevertheless, a review of studies examining their features indicated some opinions. More specifically, greater font sizes and saturated hues seem to be more preferred. However, referring those preferences to the characteristics of word clouds seems to be possible only to some extent. Due to the fact that tag clouds simultaneously present words in different sizes, colours and layouts, it suggests a rather holistic approach to their features and nature. Additionally, the opinions need to be correlated with intelligence types, which are discussed in the next part of the article.

3. Multiple Intelligences

The following section is devoted to a short description of multiple intelligences. It includes some remarks on the nature of intelligence with a reference to multiple intelligences theory (Gardner, 2011) and attempts to depict the components of the multifaceted construct of intelligence. It concludes with the practical implications referring to the present research project.

The nature of intelligence, which is central to this section, can be seen from different perspectives and its perception has changed over the years. Intelligence, for a very long time, has been seen as a human property that can be described in terms of numerical values, such as intelligence quotient, which assumes a holistic view of this phenomenon. The theory of multiple intelligences assumes that the concept of intelligence is not a unitary one; on the contrary, it can be viewed as a multifaceted construct. This understanding of intelligence, in the innovative sense, was introduced by Howard Gardner (1983) in his seminal book "Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences". The core part of Gardner's model takes account of the modular design of the human mind, which implies that discrete psychological activities are involved in the processing of different symbolic data such as linguistic, gestural or numerical information which enters the human mind (Gardner and Hatch, 1989); thus, distinct components of human intelligence were seen as "forms of thinking" (Gardner and Hatch, 1989), "mental organs" (Chomsky, 1980) or information processing devices (Fodor, 1983). The feature of modularity provides evidence for human information processing, which does not happen in the same fashion and has applications as far as learning and teaching are concerned.

The theory of multiple intelligences assumes that human intelligence is a complex psychological construct. Gardner (2011) explains that there are a few types of intelligence and parallel inventories which designate these types of discrete mental activities in humans. Nevertheless, the theory that he proposed does not indicate that there are individuals who do not have a particular intelligence. In fact, all the constituents of intelligence are present in each person; however, the difference lies in the dominance of a specific category of intelligence or the interrelation of its different types. Although it is not the case that there is one classification of intelligence that all researchers interested in this area of study agree on, the most canonical stratification of its types include the following seven subcategories of intelligences: visual-spatial, musical, linguistic, logical-mathematical, bodily-kinaesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal.

All the types of intelligence described by Gardner have some

characteristic features, which allow us to discriminate between them. As regards visual-spatial intelligence, it designates the ability to mentally visualize objects as well as their location in space and, in general, this type of intelligence is associated with the manipulation of physical entities on the psychological level. The aspect of visual modality is indispensable in those humans who show a preference for the visual-spatial intelligence type as the spatial and the visual components are undoubtedly connected to each other (Gardner, 2006). The visual-spatial intelligence type is frequently found in students whose learning is facilitated by the application of visual aids including, for example, maps, diagrams, pictures and videos to name but a few. On the other hand, there is also musical intelligence which is paired with the aural channel and it implies certain abilities which are associated with either composing music or breaking it down to its basic elements. The learners who are described as auditory learners favour acoustic signals (Gardner, 2011). As far as linguistic intelligence is concerned, this property of the human mind is associated with both the receptive skills of reading and listening and the productive skills of speaking and writing. Moreover, this type of intelligence favours remembering information by means of linguistic data. As regards the logical-mathematical type of intelligence, it may be perceived as the most traditional type of intelligence and that which is closest to the conventional definition of intelligence. Learners sharing that type are likely to gain more from mental operations on numbers, logical and critical thinking as well as working in the abstract. Bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence, on the other hand, designates the abilities which are indispensable in the control of body motion; thus, it is applied when physical, especially complex activities are in process (Gardner, 2011). The distinction between the remaining two types of intelligence, interpersonal and intrapersonal, may be understood by means of the contrast between them since the former refers to the understanding of oneself, whereas the later denotes sensitivity to other people. In other words, intrapersonal intelligence is visible in the ability to manage one's own feelings such as motivation or anxiety while interpersonal intelligence enables one to recognize the emotions expressed and felt by other people (Gardner, 2011).

Now that the theory has been widely applied for more than three decades, its challenges and opportunities are more evident as a plethora of research has been conducted in this subject area. Although Gardner's (2011) theory is rooted in psychology, it has also its application in related disciplines, for example, pedagogy and foreign language teaching (Gardner and Hatch, 1989). The studies conducted on the basis of multiple intelligences theory include the interfaces between multiple intelligences

and gender (cf. Cheng, et al. 2010) or learning styles (cf. Silver, et al. 2000). It is unequivocal that the theory proposed by Gardner has it applications in learning, language learning included, and this aspect is emphasized in this paper. Moreover, the main focus is placed on the intelligence type which, in the authors' opinion, can show a closer association with the application of the word cloud technique for language learning. More specifically, as can be inferred from the description included above, it is assumed there may be a stronger relationship between the use of word clouds and visual-spatial intelligence than in the case of the remaining types. In the light of that assumption, the following research question was formulated: (1) Do the learners who have a preference for visual-spatial intelligence express a more positive attitude towards word clouds and their features than students sharing other intelligence types? It was supposed that the students having visual-spatial intelligence, due to the visual nature of tag clouds that seems to suit their needs, will express more positive opinions about word clouds in comparison to the remaining learners.

4. Method

4.1 Participants

The participants who took part in the present research were 33 junior high school learners from Poland. All of them were first grade students aged between 12 and 14. The group consisted of 13 males and 20 females. They had been learning English as a foreign language, on average, for 6 years. When it comes to their level of proficiency, the participants represented A2/B1 level of English. However, the group was not homogeneous as some of the participants were much better in English than the others.

The students participating in the present study were divided according to their intelligence type. More specifically, 20 participants were of the visual-spatial intelligence type, 7 learners had a preference towards musical intelligence, 4 students from the group displayed logical-mathematical intelligence and 2 of the students were of the kinaesthetic intelligence type. Due to the limited number of learners having logical-mathematical and kinaesthetic intelligence, both groups were excluded from the analysis. Additionally, the interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences were also not taken into account as they seemed irrelevant to the research project.

4.2 Instruments

The instruments used in the research project were the Multiple Intelligence Test (MIT) designed by Alistair Smith (1983) on the basis of Gardner's theory and a questionnaire. The former instrument examined the learners' intelligence types and comprised 28 Likert scale questions whereas the latter one measured the students' attitudes to word clouds and included 10 Likert scale questions and 2 open-ended questions based on sentence completion. The statements in all 10 questions were scored on a scale ranging from 1 to 5 (completely disagree = 1, disagree = 2, neutral = 3, agree = 4, completely agree = 5). Both tests were in Polish and they were conducted anonymously–the students were asked to use pseudonyms so that their result indicating an intelligence type and answers in the questionnaires could be easily identified.

4.3 Procedure

Before the word clouds were presented to the participants during regular English lessons, the MIT was administered. The word clouds were generated by the teacher in Tagxedo (see Figure 2-14) before the classes. Next, the lessons aiming at expanding vocabulary were conducted. They were based on the tag clouds which became their central element. At the beginning of each lesson each student was given a colourful printout of the word cloud. The words presented in the word clouds were in different sizes, colours and positions. They were both in English and Polish, which made the word clouds bilingual. The size of the tag clouds was A6 so that it was small enough for the students to glue into their notebooks.

The students used the word clouds in a number of ways. At the beginning of the lessons they were asked to predict the subject matter of the class on the basis of the words included in the tag clouds. Then, the students conducted a task in which they were asked to memorize as many words appearing in the word clouds as they could within the time limit of two minutes and to say all the words they remembered in both languages. Later, they also were given a task in which they were supposed to find as many words in English as they could and write them down. After that they looked for the translations in the bilingual word clouds and instead of rewriting a list of words from the blackboard, they created the list themselves. Also, the use of word cloud was accompanied by lexical-grammatical exercises in which the students were asked to match words with the elements of a picture and fill in the gaps. As for homework, apart from the regular lexical tasks from the workbook, the learners were asked

to use the word clouds to learn vocabulary at home. A week after the lessons the participants filled in the questionnaire examining their attitudes to the word clouds.

Fig. 2-14

4.4 Results and Discussion

The results obtained from the study can be divided into three types of data: descriptive statistics, independent sample t-test results and the opinions expressed in the open-ended questions. All the results include references to the visual-spatial and musical intelligence types.

The descriptive statistics for the statements included in the questionnaire are presented in Table 2-5. According to the values, the learners having visual-spatial intelligence scored almost all the statements higher than the

students sharing musical intelligence. More specifically, they expressed a greater determination to create word clouds themselves and expressed readiness to apply word clouds during lessons. Moreover, the group liked the presentation of words and performing tasks on word clouds; in addition, they claimed more frequently than the other group that the technique was interesting and it could help them to remember vocabulary faster. As regards the specific aspects of tag clouds, the students sharing visual-spatial intelligence expressed also a greater preference for the technique due to the variety of font sizes, colours and layouts which were applied. The only statement scored higher by the students sharing musical intelligence referred to the level of familiarity with the technique of word clouds during lessons of a foreign language – they had already encountered them more times than the visual-spatial group.

The independent sample t-test results are shown in Table 2-6. The t-test indicated that four statements were statistically significant. For instance, one of them concerned the level of familiarity with word clouds – as already mentioned, the students having musical intelligence claimed that they were familiar with the technique. Other significant aspects were connected with the visual-spatial students' determination to create word clouds themselves and also their eagerness for tag clouds being applied during lessons. Moreover, the tasks conducted on word clouds were liked significantly more by the students with visual-spatial intelligence.

Exploring the Attitudes towards Word Clouds in Junior High Students

No	Statements	Multiple Intelligence Type	N	Mean	Median	Mode	Minimum	Maximum	Range	SD
1.	I have encountered word clouds during lessons of a foreign language.	Visual-spatial	20	3,40	3	3	1	5	4	0,73
		Musical	7	4,00	4	4	3	5	2	0,53
2.	I create or I will create word clouds in the future.	Visual-spatial	20	3,13	3	3	1	5	4	1,01
		Musical	7	2,29	2	2	1	4	3	1,16
3.	I would like a teacher to use word clouds during English lessons.	Visual-spatial	20	3,73	4	4	2	5	3	0,94
		Musical	7	1,43	1	1	1	3	2	0,73
4.	I like it when vocabulary is presented with the use of word clouds.	Visual-spatial	20	3,34	4	4	1	5	4	1,42
		Musical	7	2,86	3	3	1	4	3	0,84
5.	I like tasks conducted on word clouds.	Visual-spatial	20	3,44	3,5	multiple	1	5	4	1,12
		Musical	7	2,43	2	1	1	5	4	1,68
6.	I like that there is a variety of font sizes when it comes to words in tag clouds.	Visual-spatial	20	2,69	3	1	1	5	4	1,45
		Musical	7	2,43	2	2	1	4	3	0,90
7.	I like that there is a variety of colours when it comes to words in tag clouds.	Visual-spatial	20	3,40	3,5	3	1	5	4	1,32
		Musical	7	2,57	3	3	2	3	1	0,49

No	Statement	Type	N	Mean							SD
8.	I like that words in word clouds are in the horizontal and vertical position at the same time.	Visual-spatial	20	3,49	4	4	5	1	5	4	1,20
		Musical	7	2,86	3	1	5	1	5	4	1,73
9.	I think that word clouds could help me to remember vocabulary faster.	Visual-spatial	20	3,83	4	4	5	1	5	4	1,15
		Musical	7	3,29	4	4	4	2	4	2	0,88
10.	I think that word clouds are an interesting technique.	Visual-spatial	20	3,84	4	4	5	1	5	4	1,29
		Musical	7	3,43	4	2	5	2	5	3	1,06

Table 2-5

No	Statements	Multiple Intelligence Type	N	Mean	SD	F	Sig.
1.	I have encountered word clouds during lessons of a foreign language.	Visual-spatial	20	3,40	0,73	0,53	**0,03**
		Musical	7	4,00	0,53		
2.	I create or I will create word clouds in the future.	Visual-spatial	20	3,13	1,01	0,49	**0,04**
		Musical	7	2,29	1,16		

Exploring the Attitudes towards Word Clouds in Junior High Students

			N				
3.	I would like a teacher to use word clouds during English lessons.	Visual-spatial	20	3,73	0,94	0,64	**0,00**
		Musical	7	1,43	0,73		
4.	I like it when vocabulary is presented with the use of word clouds.	Visual-spatial	20	3,34	1,42	0,23	0,21
		Musical	7	2,86	0,84		
5.	I like tasks conducted on word clouds.	Visual-spatial	20	3,44	1,12	0,12	**0,05**
		Musical	7	2,43	1,68		
6.	I like that there is a variety of font sizes when it comes to words in tag clouds.	Visual-spatial	20	2,69	1,45	0,30	0,33
		Musical	7	2,43	0,90		
7.	I like that there is a variety of colours when it comes to words in tag clouds.	Visual-spatial	20	3,40	1,32	0,03	0,07
		Musical	7	2,57	0,49		
8.	I like that words in word clouds are in the horizontal and vertical position at the same time.	Visual-spatial	20	3,49	1,20	0,16	0,15
		Musical	7	2,86	1,73		
9.	I think that word clouds could help me to remember vocabulary faster.	Visual-spatial	20	3,83	1,15	0,62	0,13
		Musical	7	3,29	0,88		
10.	I think that word clouds are an interesting technique.	Visual-spatial	20	3,84	1,29	0,38	0,21
		Musical	7	3,43	1,06		

Table 2-6

The last source of information about word clouds are open-ended questions in which the participants stated why they, in general, liked or disliked them. Among the opinions, it turned out that word clouds were, in fact, a source of amusement for the participants, especially for those participants who were visual-spatial. The factor which increased the positive attitude to the application of word clouds in a foreign language classroom was enjoyment, which can be exemplified by the following opinion of a student with visual-spatial intelligence dominance: "It's a nice way to learn English words quickly and effectively. Additionally, there's a lot of great fun." The same group of students also believed that the use of word clouds for language learning could be perceived as a memory technique which made the memorization of vocabulary easier and less painful for some of the learners. There were also answers referring to a more holistic view of word clouds as facilitating the process of language learning in general; for example, one student who exhibited the musical intelligence type wrote that he could learn a given language faster due to the application of word clouds. One needs to bear in mind that he did not refer to English but viewed this technique as possible to be used with different languages as well. There was also an opinion expressed by a participant with musical intelligence according to which the word clouds made English lessons more attractive: "It makes it possible to spend time in a nice way during English lessons." This indicates that the application of word clouds is interesting and stimulating for students because the teacher adds yet another element to their methodological repertoire. One of the participants, of visual-spatial intelligence, responded that he liked the variety of opportunities which were given by word clouds and interesting tasks that could be done when working with them.

The use of colours was recognized by the respondents as being particularly helpful and attractive and that quality drew learners' attention to a given word cloud or the technique in general. This opinion was held by many different participants, irrespective of their intelligence type, but it was more frequent among the students with visual-spatial intelligence. However, one of the visual-spatial respondents wrote that the colours used in the words clouds and the way the words were organized in the space made his attention wander. Hence, it indicated that whereas for some of the participants vivid colours were attractive and helpful, for others they might be a source of distraction, which meant that it was almost impossible for them to learn in that way. The additional aspect that turned out to be appreciated be a number of participants, both with visual-spatial and musical intelligence, concerned the Polish equivalents that were easily available in the word clouds. The students believed that it aided the

learning process and they did not have to search for the translation elsewhere, which saved their time.

However, not all of the responses for the open-ended questions were positive. One of the students with musical intelligence responded that he did not like the word clouds because they were boring. Another learner having visual-spatial intelligence stated that: "I have no intention of learning from this. I prefer regular lessons." Moreover, yet another student having the musical type of intelligence, replied that he hated such things as word clouds and he did not need them. Those responses were clearly negative, but they did not reflect the qualities of word clouds which could be adverse, but rather showed an unenthusiastic attitude that some of the participants might have irrespective of the circumstances and materials used by their teachers. When it came to constructive criticism, it turned out that many students disliked the word clouds because they were packed with too many vocabulary items. That point of view was expressed by the students of both intelligence groups. As one of the learners stated: "There are too many words some of which are big and small". Too large a number of words might, in fact, be a distraction for the learners especially when they had problems in distinguishing separate elements from a bigger picture.

To sum up, the results obtained from the study provided the answer to the research question. More precisely, the learners demonstrating the dominance of visual-spatial intelligence expressed a more positive attitude towards the word clouds and their features than the students having the musical intelligence type. Analogically, the latter group of learners seemed to be more sceptical about the word clouds.

5. Conclusion

A word cloud is a collection of words whose characteristic features are different font sizes, various font colours and layouts of words. These aspects and tag clouds as a whole can be considered from the perspective of learners' general attitudes which can be additionally related to their intelligence types. The results of the present study confirmed a more positive attitude to word clouds among the students sharing visual-spatial intelligence than those who had musical intelligence.

Despite demonstrating differences of opinion about word clouds in reference to intelligence, this research had some restraints. First of all, the main limitation concerned the selection of participants. More specifically, only two groups of learners sharing the same intelligence type, either visual-spatial or musical, were identified. The limited range of intelligence

types meant only a fragment of information pertaining to the connection of intelligence and opinions about word clouds was indicated. Moreover, the discrepancies in the numbers of students divided into the two groups according to the intelligence type might have influenced the validity of the results. Similarly, the low number of participants having the musical intelligence type might have hindered the authenticity of the results.

Another limitation pertained to Tagxedo, the tool used for generating the word clouds used in the research. Due to the fact that the program combines different font sizes, colour saturations and layouts of words in each tag cloud, it was impossible to present the words in one particular font size, intensity of colour or arrangement. As a result, the students evaluated only the general character of word clouds, namely the variety of their features, without dividing them into individual subcomponents, for instance, bigger or smaller font sizes.

In the light of the aforementioned limitations, some implications for further research have arisen. Future studies investigating attitudes to word clouds should address not only other intelligence types, but also various age groups and gender. Such data would show a more detailed assessment of word clouds. Additionally, more research is needed to examine word clouds in terms of their particular subcomponents. Probably, it would require the development of a new tool and the creation of functions that would enable users to visualize words in one font size, colour saturation or arrangement.

The findings of the present study provide a practical implication for the EFL classroom. As they emphasize adjustment of techniques to students' needs resulting from their intelligence type, teachers should offer only those teaching aids that seem to develop learners' potential. For instance, the use of word clouds would probably motivate visual-spatial learners to learn vocabulary in a foreign language, but may not be for everyone.

References

Chang, Yu-Ming, Lin, Chien-Yu, Lee, Yi-Kuan, and Lai, Hsin-His. 2006. "Optimized PDA Orientation and Screen Layout for Chinese Vocabulary Learning by Young Children." *Displays* 27:73–79. Accessed February 19, 2014. doi:10.1016/j.displa.2005.11.002.

DePauolo, Concetta, A., and Wilkinson, Kelly. 2014. "Get your Head into the Clouds: Using Word Clouds for Analyzing Qualitative Assessment Data." *TechTrends* 58:38-44. Accessed June 5, 2014.

Cheng, Hsueh-Yu, Hou, Yen-Ji, Hou, Yi-An, and Chung Wei-Yu. 2010. "Gender Differences in Multiple Intelligences, Learning Behaviour and

English Performance: A Case Study in Taiwan." *International Journal of the Humanities* 8:255-270.

Chomsky, Noam. 1980. *Rules and Representations*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Fodor, Jerry. 1983. *The Modularity of Mind*. Cambridge, MA: MTI Press.

Gardner, Howard. 1983. *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.

Gardner, Howard. 2011. *Frames of Mind, the Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.

Gardner, Howard. 2006. *Multiple Intelligences: New Horizons*. Basic Books United States of America.

Gardner, Howard, and Thomas Hatch. 1989. "Multiple Intelligences Go to School: Educational Implications of the Theory of Multiple Intelligences." *Educational Researcher* 18:4-10.

Kornell, Nate, Rhodes, Matthew, G., Castel, Alan, D., and Sarah, K. Tauber. 2011. "The Ease of Processing Heuristic and Stability Bias: Dissociating Memory, Memory Beliefs, and Memory Judgement". *Psychological Science* 22:787–794. doi: 10.1177/0956797611407929.

Lee, Chee, Ha, and Slava, Kalyuga. 2011. "Effectiveness of Different Pinyin Presentation Formats in Learning Chinese Characters: A Cognitive Load Perspective". *Language Learning* 61:1099–1118. Accessed February 19, 2014. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9922.2011.00666.x.

Łyp-Bielecka, Aleksandra. 2012. "Nauczanie i Uczenie się Słownictwa Przy Pomocy Narzędzi Sieci 2.0." In *Neofilologie na Przełomie Tysiącleci. Najnowsze Tendencje w Literaturze, Językoznawstwie, Przekładzie i Glottodydaktyce*, edited by Przemysław Sznurkowski, Elżbieta Pawlikowska-Asendrych and Beata Rusek, 501–517. Częstochowa: Oficyna Wydawnicza ATUT.

McNaught, Carmel, and Paul Lam. 2010. "Using Wordle as a Supplementary Research Tool." *The Qualitative Report*, 15:630–643. Accessed June 13, 2014.

Mueller, Michael. L., John, Dunlosky, Sarah, K., Tauber, and Matthew, G. Rhodes. 2014. "The Font-Size Effect on Judgments of Learning: Does It Exemplify Fluency Effects or Reflect People's Beliefs about Memory?" *Journal of Memory and Language* 70:1-12. Accessed September 26, 2014.

Pitchford, Nicola, J., Emma, E., Davis, and Gaia, Scerif. 2011. "Look and Learn. Links between Colour Preference and Colour Cognition." In *New Directions in Colour Studies,* edited by Carole P. Biggam, Carole A. Hough, Christian J. Kay and David R. Simmons, 377–388. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Ramadan, Mohamed, Zaki. 2011. "Evaluating College Students' Performance of Arabic Typeface Style, Font Size, Page Layout and Foreground/Background Colour Combinations of E-book Materials." *Journal of King Saud University – Engineering Sciences* 23:89-100. Accessed September 26, 2014. doi:10.1016/j.jksues.2011.03.005.

Silver, Harvey, F., Richard, W., Strong, and Matthew J. Perini. 2000. *So Each May Learn: Integrating Learning Styles and Multiple Intelligences*. Association for Supervision & Curriculum Deve.

Smith, Alistair. 1998. *Accelerated learning in practice*. London: Network Educational Press.

BLIND LEARNERS AND COMPREHENSION TASKS

AGNIESZKA PISKORSKA
UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW

1. Introduction

It is common knowledge that blind people experience the world in a different way from sighted people and that limited access to sensory inputs can cause gaps in knowledge and impair cognition. We all seem to be aware that words denoting visual concepts, such as colours, may be deprived of meaning for blind individuals. Important though it may be, this is a relatively minor deficiency of the cognitive system, and there are certainly many more grievous problems caused by congenital or early blindness. Since sight is the only sense which makes it possible to perceive an object as a whole, or to perceive a distant object, such as the horizon or the moon, deficits in knowledge about the surrounding environment are only to be expected. Despite the fact that many such deficits can be compensated for by careful and thorough instruction, it is impossible to eliminate gaps in knowledge totally, since explanations about objects and their properties cannot always replace perception and interaction.

Such gaps in the representation of the world inevitably affect communication both on the production side and on the comprehension side. As far as production is concerned, the range of topics undertaken by speakers may be limited by their experience. Comprehension, on the other hand, hinges on the accessibility of mental representations to be used as context for processing communicated input. It follows that addressees with gaps in general knowledge may not be able to grasp the intended meaning of utterances due to the inability to activate the necessary contextual resources. This, as will be argued below, may in turn affect blind individuals' performance with reading and listening comprehension tasks.

The dependence of comprehension on contextual knowledge is a universally accepted observation - we can only understand messages which tie up with a context we have access to. In this paper I shall apply

Relevance Theory (henceforth RT) (Sperber and Wilson 1986/95, 2004) to explore the link between context accessibility and comprehension at greater depth and to demonstrate that blind learners of English as a foreign language are put at a disadvantage in comprehension tasks, as difficulties caused by lack of contextual knowledge cannot be offset by extra time granted to solve these tasks.

The structure of the paper is as follows: Section 2 presents the relevance-theoretic account of ostensive-inferential communication, Section 3 offers a brief description of the typical cognitive and language development of blind children and the resulting condition of adults, Section 4 addresses the main point of the paper, namely what components are embraced by pragmatic competence and what is tested in listening/reading comprehension tasks used in Polish secondary school leaving exams (equivalent to A-level exams). Arguing that contextual knowledge is tested as part and parcel of pragmatic competence, I put forward the claim that blind examinees are bound to have greater comprehension problems than sighted examinees of otherwise comparable level of language proficiency. Finally, Section 5 concludes the paper by pointing towards possible solutions to the problem.

2. Communication and Comprehension
from the Relevance-theoretic Perspective

RT is an account of cognition and communication originally put forward by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson (1986/95; Wilson and Sperber 2004) and developed in a number of subsequent publications. Applications of RT contributed by various scholars cover fields ranging from non-literal language to grammar, translation studies, second language acquisition and many others (cf. Relevance Theory Online Bibliographic Service). One of the fundamental assumptions underlying the theory is that communication is ostensive and inferential (Sperber and Wilson 1986/95, Ch.1). It is ostensive on the part of the speaker, whose intention to communicate a message has to be fully overt, and inferential on the part of the hearer, whose task of understanding the speaker's message goes beyond an act of decoding the meaning of words and syntactic rules, and involves several elements of inferential nature. Since the objective of this paper is connected with the comprehension side of communication, the discussion from now on will be confined to the hearer's perspective. To illustrate the role of inference in comprehension, consider the following:

(1a) Mary: What are you working on?
(1b) Peter: My paper is too long.

It can be observed that understanding Peter's utterance as an answer to Mary's question takes much more than merely understanding the meaning of words and the relations among them specified by the syntactic structure of the utterance. First of all, there are several indeterminacies in the linguistic form of the utterance that the hearer has to resolve:

a. "my paper" has to be understood as "Peter's paper", and more specifically as "the paper Peter is writing", rather than a paper he happens to own;

b. the noun "paper" is ambiguous, or polysemous between the readings "(a piece of) physical substance" and "academic article", therefore the hearer has to choose the latter as the speaker-intended meaning;

c. the adjective "long" can relate to physical objects, such as "a long ruler" or to entities of various degrees of abstractness, such as "long walk", "long (academic) paper", "long life". In each of these cases, the actual conceptualisation of length will be different and the hearer has to recreate the right concept LONG*[2], i.e. the one communicated on this occasion.

d. the adverb "too" combined with an adjective or another adverb yields a notoriously vague expression. Even if it has already been established that "too long" refers to an academic paper, its meaning has yet to be specified as, for instance, "too long with respect to the word limit set by the journal editor".

It has to be noted that the interpretive steps a–d are mutually dependent. Thus, the relationship between Peter and his paper, i.e. the fact that it is the one he is writing (step a) hinges on the disambiguation of "paper" as "an academic paper" (step b). Constructing the contextually appropriate concept LONG* (c) and narrowing down the meaning of "too long" (d) also depend on steps a and b. Crucially, all the steps are inferential in the sense that on the basis of the utterance and contextual information, the hearer draws conclusions about what the speaker intended

---

[2] This notation, i.e. CAPITALS* is standardly used in RT to refer to what is called 'ad hoc' concepts, i.e. concepts communicated on a specific occasion of use. It is assumed that the meaning of ad hoc concepts can, and often does, diverge from the dictionary meaning of words (Carston 2002, Wilson 2003, Wilson and Carston 2007).

to communicate.

It is evident that when Mary (or more precisely her mental comprehension device), has gone through steps a–d and obtained something like:

(2) The article Peter is writing is too long to be accepted for publication in journal X

this still does not count as an answer to her question (1a), but can be used as a premise for further inference. Combining (2) with her knowledge about writing academic papers and about Peter's ambition to have his paper published in journal X, Mary can infer the following:

(3) Peter is revamping his paper to cut down on the number of words.
(4) Peter has to revise and shorten some sections of his paper.
(5) Peter is not going to watch TV.

In relevance-theoretic terms, interpretive steps strictly connected to the linguistic form of the utterance, such as a–d above lead to the recovery of an *explicature* of an utterance, such as (2). Inferences drawn from the combination of the explicature and contextual information, such as (3)–(5) are called *implicatures*, a term inherited from Grice (1975).

Much as the analysis above is intuitively plausible, it remains to be explained why the hearer draws these particular inferences in the situation depicted above. Surely, the interpretation stipulated for utterance (1b) is not the only one possible and a different hearer might have come up with a different explicature and different implicatures. If Mary were Peter's four-year-old daughter with no background knowledge on writing academic papers, she could have inferred that Peter is meticulously counting and deleting the excess words so that his essay has exactly the required number of words.

Resorting to intuition, again, one could say that it is context that decides which interpretation is selected as the speaker-intended one and since speakers share context with hearers, the former can predict the interpretive route taken by hearers and hence its final outcome. For this intuition to be explanatory, however, we would have to assume that context is given prior to producing an utterance. Is it really so? It is true that Peter and Mary share some knowledge before exchange (1a–b) starts, such as knowledge about their physical environment, possibly including information that Peter is using a computer, about Peter's job, etc. But they also share numerous pieces of information that will not be brought forth and actively used in the processing of utterance (1b), such as that Peter is

pressing some keys on the keyboard. In other words, not all shared information and not even all shared information related to the act and content of communication is used as context in the comprehension process. It is therefore much more realistic to assume that context is selected during this process rather than predetermined before an utterance is produced. If both context and interpretation are variables, some principle must be stated which would explain how they are fixed so that the hearer grasps the speaker-intended meaning.

According to Sperber and Wilson (1986/95 Ch.3), such a principle follows from a universal trait of the human mind, namely the tendency to optimise relevance. A stimulus, such as an utterance, is relevant to the extent the cognitive gains obtained by its processing are large and the effort expanded is small. Thus, optimising relevance consists in keeping the optimum balance between cognitive benefits, understood as positive modifications in one's representation of the world and processing effort, understood as an expenditure of energy spent by the organism. Formalised as The Communicative Principle of Relevance[3], the principle governing utterance interpretation states that "every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance" (Sperber and Wilson 1986/95, 156). That means that context for processing every communicated utterance is spontaneously and automatically selected in such a way as to guarantee that the interpretation so obtained will be optimally relevant. As Sperber and Wilson (1986/95, 142) put it, "in verbal comprehension […], it is relevance which is treated as given, and context which is treated as a variable".

I would like to emphasise two points following from the discussion of the RT model so far: first, understanding the speaker's message is an inferential process, also at the level of explicature, and cannot be therefore reduced to understanding the meaning of individual words/expressions and grammatical structures; second, the ability to draw inferences in the comprehension process depends on the hearer's access to mental representations which the speaker had originally intended to be used as context. Access to such representations, in turn, is limited by the organism's tendency to minimise processing effort: if some representations are only remotely accessible to an individual, they are extremely unlikely to be used in spontaneous processing of utterances. According to the relevance-theoretic comprehension heuristic, hearers "(f)ollow a path of

---

[3] There are two Principles of Relevance: the Cognitive Principle, which concerns processing stimuli of all kinds, and the Communicative Principle, which governs comprehension in ostensive-inferential communication (Sperber and Wilson 1995, 261). Only the latter is germane to the present considerations.

least effort in computing cognitive effects", they test interpretive hypotheses in order of accessibility and stop when their "expectations of relevance are satisfied" (Wilson and Sperber 2004, 613). These two points appear to have a serious bearing on the ability to understand any text in accordance with its author's intention by individuals with limited knowledge resources, such as the blind. Before I explore and exemplify this issue in greater detail in section 4, I shall briefly describe the nature of these limitations in the next section.

3. Blindness, Cognition and Language

Although human beings are endowed with five senses, the role of sight in general development and language acquisition seems to be more essential than that of any other sense. First of all, no other sense offers an opportunity to interact with objects spontaneously, effortlessly and automatically to such an extent as sight. Sighted children need not be encouraged to look at things, and seeing the way things are often provokes curiosity and questions, which stimulate further accrual of knowledge. Blind children, on the other hand, may not be even aware of an object's existence or presence unless they are intentionally shown that object and encouraged to examine it.

Providing a blind child with tactile and auditory stimuli together with verbal instructions can surely stimulate development too (Warren 1984; Krzeszowski, Marek and Piskorska 2008). It has to be kept in mind, however, that tactile and/or auditory stimuli often give only a fragmentary characterization of an object, as evidenced by drawings made by blind people (Marek 1999). One of the drawings pictures a bus consisting of three horizontal lines representing steps and one vertical line representing a rail, that is, precisely those parts of the vehicle the author of the drawing had interacted with when getting on and off a bus. No wonder then that when a blind child is shown a toy bus, he or she does not perceive any obvious similarity between it and a real bus. For such similarity to be noticed, much careful explanation and practice is needed. Predictably, an ability to interpret two-dimensional tactile drawings does not come naturally as an ability to recognize objects on photos and pictures to a sighted child but has to be acquired through training. In comparison to photos, tactile drawings are relatively schematic and display few details. It may be difficult to represent details of landscape in such a way that a blind person can distinguish, say, a path from a river. Images of people are also schematic: one can distinguish a happy person from a sad person by the shape of the lips but it is definitely not possible to represent more nuanced emotions. Although pictures can play a role in the process of learning by

blind children, including learning foreign languages, this role is hardly comparable to that played by pictures in the development and education of the sighted. For blind children, pictures provide useful tools for practising the correlation between three-dimensional real objects and their two-dimensional representations or for establishing proportions among various dimensions. Using pictures can also make learning more attractive by breaking the monotony of auditory input. But it cannot be really expected that tactile graphics can be a rich source of information from which blind individuals could genuinely learn much about the world the way sighted individuals can find out about objects and places they have never seen.

Due to a lack of visual stimuli and the limitations of experiencing the world mostly via tactile and auditory stimuli, the conceptual basis of language is different in visually impaired children than in sighted children. Moreover, it has to be noted that learning words is not a simple activity involving showing objects and saying their names to make a child remember the connection. According to Wilson (2000) and Wharton (2004), language acquisition is to a large extent inferential, exactly the way communication is, and in order to discover the meaning of words, a child has to infer communicators' intentions behind the use of words rather than merely fix their denotations. Crucially important in this process is the ability to interpret natural non-verbal cues to communicators' intentions, such as facial expression, gaze direction and gestures. Thus, of all the paralinguistic elements of communication playing an auxiliary part in language acquisition, blind children can only take advantage of prosodic features, such as stress, intonation and tone of voice.

Despite following a path based on a different sensory experience, blind children do not diverge significantly from their sighted peers with respect to such important parameters of language development as number of words, or complexity of syntactic structures at a given age (Finello, Hanson and Kekelis 1992). Given the nature and extent of sensory deprivation, the fact that blind individuals master language and communication so that their performance is often undistinguishable from that of sighted people is truly impressive. For instance, blind and visually impaired children were found to have a good mastery of aesthetic concepts, such as *pretty*, *beautiful*, or *cute*, which are typically associated with visual experience (Piskorska 2008). Blind children and adults often want to find out about colours and other visual characteristics of particular objects, which proves that such terms are not deprived of meaning but rather acquire idiosyncratic understanding based on one's individual experience and associations. On the other hand, a number of studies (Marek 1999; Lewis 2003; Sak-Wernicka 2012, forthcoming) indicate that

representations of the world held by blind people can include numerous gaps or inadequate conceptions of reality. Such gaps or misconceptions can be revealed through questions such as those attested in conversations with the blind and reported in Marek (1999):

(6) What colour is the wind?
(7) How can you see a big mountain through a small window?
(8) I know how fish swim but how do they walk?
(9) If you can see me through a closed window, why can't you see me through a wall?

As Sak Wernicka (2012, 125) puts it:

It is thought-provoking to explore whether the gaps in […] knowledge are the result of accepted but not fully comprehended concepts or wrongly interpreted concepts presented by a sighted person; and how seriously the existence of such gaps influences blind people's life and communication with sighted people.

The author then goes on to argue that in many cases the gaps result from the combination of the natural human tendency to seek analogies between known and unknown phenomena and the lack of visual information which could help verify the results of faulty reasoning by analogy. Thus, a blind person who knows that many objects including natural phenomena, such as the sky, or the rainbow have colours extends this property to the wind. Here, seeking analogy between more familiar concepts and concepts currently being explored leads to overgeneralisation. The same can be said about examples (7)–(9), where information about correlations between spatial dimensions, human beings or properties of glass panes, respectively, is transferred to other phenomena and entities to which it does not, in fact, apply.

Following up on the question to what extent gaps or misconceptions in knowledge about the world affect blind people's communication, Sak-Wernicka (forthcoming) reports on an experiment testing comprehension of apparently uncomplicated dialogues, such as (10) and (11) below:

(10) Tom: What did you do on Saturday?
       Ben: I went to the zoo with my kids.
       Tom: Did you enjoy it?
       Ben: The twins didn't give a damn about animals and were playing caps. Alice wanted to see a baby ostrich, but it refused to come out of the enclosure. In the end all we saw was a cleaning lady.

The participants, who were congenitally or early blind adults, were asked to specify how many children Ben had taken to the zoo. It turned out that only 58% of the subjects provided the correct answer that there were three children – the twins and Alice. Sak- Wernicka hypothesises that the result can be explained by the fact that to give the correct answer it is essential to know that playing caps is a visually engaging game, therefore one who is playing caps is unlikely to be interested in seeing a baby ostrich at the same time. The inference that Alice is a third child rather than one of the twins could be drawn only on the basis of this information, which was not accessible to the blind.

Consider another dialogue used in the same experimental study:

(11) Wife: We need a new bedspread … and carpet…
       Husband: If a carpet, then chairs, if chairs, then a mirror, wardrobe
       … and then our kids will hate us.
       Wife: Why?
       Husband: Because we will get a divorce.

Here, the participants were asked the question if the man would divorce his wife. Despite clear evidence that the people in the dialogue were talking calmly rather than fighting, many participants were reported to be confused and unable to recognise the man's intention to make a joke. Here, drawing the right inference did not seem to depend so much on visual clues but on access to stereotypical assumptions about marriage, mock-quarrels, reasons for a divorce, etc. Although it is difficult to provide a straightforward explanation why this dialogue posed comprehension problems, it can be hypothesised that blindness, as any disability in general, hampers access to information about social stereotypes because it contributes to social isolation. Additionally, for obvious reasons, blind people can observe how such stereotypes are exploited in movies, sitcoms, etc. only to a limited extent.

In my personal interactions with congenitally blind people, I have also come across many situations in which it was necessary to provide extra background information to ensure mutual understanding. In a conversation following the news of a rally driver being killed by a train, my interlocutor asked me how it is possible that a sighted person can fail to see an approaching train. On another occasion I was talking about a concert that took place in an Evangelical church and mentioned that unlike the majority of Catholic churches, many Protestant churches are not richly decorated inside. At this point I felt it was necessary to exemplify the idea of an interior being "richly decorated" and to add that there can be numerous gold-plated sculptures, pictures, etc. Despite this explanation

being probably helpful, I realised that the information that there is a difference between the Catholic and Protestant attitudes to displaying wealth in churches may have little relevance for a person who cannot directly experience that visually striking observation.

Having presented a cursory account of blind children's cognitive development and inevitable gaps in knowledge, leading in turn to comprehension problems, I would like to conclude this section by stating that if occasional misunderstandings attested in every-day conversations are virtually inconsequential for blind interlocutors, there are situations in which not being able to infer a communicator's intentions is critical. Such situations can include foreign language proficiency exams, which seek to test, among other skills, communicative competence in L2. As will be argued in the next section, such competence, whether this is overtly acknowledged or not, includes the ability to draw spontaneous inferences about speaker-intended meaning, for which accessibility of contextual information is crucial.

4. Pragmatic Competence, Gaps in Knowledge and Comprehension

Until recently, the implications of the relevance-theoretic model of communication and comprehension for the methodology of second/foreign language teaching were not extensively discussed. To the extent that L2 didactics was informed by pragmatics, it was mostly concerned with such elements of pragmatic competence as performing and understanding specific speech acts (requesting, complaining, greeting, complimenting, responding to a compliment, etc.) in pre-determined contexts. A number of popular models of communicative competence in L2 (e.g. Canale and Swain 1980; Canale 1983, Bachman 1990; Celce-Murcia et al. 1995) focus mostly on the socio-cultural aspect of communication, involving familiarity with social conventions which enable a learner to perform speech acts in a socially acceptable way and to understand their conventional meaning, typically going beyond the literal meaning of words.

The importance of being able to abide by social conventions governing conversations in L2 culture(s) can hardly be disputed, yet communicative or pragmatic competence cannot be reduced to this. Ifantidou (2013, 95) argues that "(s)ocio-cultural knowledge and competence are part of background assumptions facilitating the interpretation process", rather than part of pragmatic competence as such. How then is pragmatic competence in L2 to be defined? As postulated by Jodłowiec (2010),

linguistic inputs used in second language acquisition are processed and comprehended in exactly the same way as utterances communicated in L1, i.e. by optimizing the balance of cognitive effects and processing effort and selecting both context and interpretation to meet expectations of relevance. Therefore, it seems that no special definition of pragmatic competence in L2 is needed beyond that following from the general ostensive-inferential account of communication: pragmatic competence involves the ability to communicate one's intentions and to infer speaker-intended meaning at the level of explicature and implicatures (cf. analysis of Ex. 2, Section 2 above). As a corollary to this definition, it can be stated that pragmatic competence depends on three components: familiarity with linguistic input to inferential comprehension, accessibility of context to be used as the other part of input to inferential processes, and inferential abilities themselves.

Regardless of whether this or some other view of pragmatic competence is officially adopted by examination boards designing proficiency tests in L2, what is effectively tested by reading and listening comprehension tasks is learners' ability to inferentially arrive at the author-intended meaning of texts. Comprehension questions are typically so constructed as to avoid the situation in which a sentence from the text could be used verbatim to answer any of them, to make sure that to give a correct answer, the testee must understand more than the dictionary meaning of individual words, i.e. they must arrive at the author-intended interpretation of a text. Since understanding of what a text communicates explicitly and implicitly relies on drawing inferences on the basis of linguistic information and contextual information, the range of contextual assumptions necessary to understand a text should be generally accessible to all testees. And if we take mainstreaming to be a policy genuinely aimed at giving equal educational chances to all learners, this should be so also for congenitally blind individuals taking examinations in foreign languages as part of their school curriculum.

To probe into the matter of understanding texts by blind learners, consider fragments of a text uased as part of a standard level secondary school leaving exam, designed by the Central Examination Board in Poland.

It was Sue's nineteenth birthday and she was in Italy on a gap year, working as an au pair.

[…] It was her first birthday away from home. […] *And suddenly Niccolo, the three-year-old she looked after, ran into her room and presented her with a colourful picture of some long-tailed creatures. He had drawn it himself.* "How sweet of him," she thought. She hadn't

expected a present like that.

When Sue started to look after Niccolo, he was a very naughty child. He screamed and cried if he didn't get what he wanted. There were lots of things he didn't eat and items of clothing he refused to wear. He was also terrified of water, so he didn't want to take a bath. *Sue looked at him and realized that the boy was just like she used to be when she was three years old.* Back then water was something scary for her too. And she also hated clothes that fitted too tightly and had to be pulled over her head. At that moment she understood how the boy felt, and immediately wanted to help him but didn't quite know how.

And then one week later, when Niccolo's parents went away on business, she had an idea. When he ran after her into the bathroom where she was filling the bath with water, she didn't ask him to get in it. Instead she played with the water, ignoring him. Keeping his eyes on her, he played too. In the end he asked her if he could get in. She didn't answer at once, pretending she was thinking about it, then agreed. Sue did the same with food. She didn't force him to eat, but she ate one sandwich after another in front of him. He looked at her hungrily while she told him stories about children who weren't afraid of anything. As he listened to the stories, he picked up his sandwich and began to eat. Sue pretended not to notice. He finished his plate[4].

To interpret the text, it is crucial to infer that first Niccolo did not get on well with Sue but that situation changed thanks to the girl cleverly handling Niccolo's attitude to bathing and eating. Please note that events in the story are not given in the chronological order, which probably puts greater demands on the testee's processing effort. A crucial bit of information enabling the inference that the boy changed is based on the first underlined fragment, saying that on her birthday, he ran into her room and gave her a picture with "colourful […] long-tailed creatures". The scenario of a little child drawing a picture for a person s/he likes is well familiar to the majority of people. Part of stereotypical knowledge on three-year-olds is that they are rather unskilled as painters and that their pictures are likely to present distorted images of their favourite animals. It seems very unlikely, however, that this scenario is highly accessible to congenitally blind learners and that it can be used in the automatic and spontaneous process of interpretation leading to the implicature that the boy was nice to his au pair. It is only the following sentence, "How sweet of him", which should help in arriving at the intended meaning.

Another interpretive clue essential for understanding the text is given in the second underlined sentence, namely "Sue looked at him and realized

---

[4] Full text available at http://www.cke.edu.pl/files/file/Arkusze-2013/Matura-2013/angielski_PP.pdf, underlining mine.

that the boy was just like she used to be when she was three years old". It is obvious to any sighted learner that what Sue noticed was similarity of behaviour and character rather than similarity of looks; this triggered in her the intention to help the boy because she felt sympathetic to his problems. Again, the assumption that when one looks one can not only see physical characteristics but also make other observations is far from being easily accessible to blind learners and therefore very unlikely to be used in the comprehension process. Finally, it has to be noticed that Sue encouraged Niccolo to take a bath and to eat by pretending she was ignoring him, whereas in fact she intended him to see what she was doing – an act of pretence to which a blind person cannot fully relate. One of the comprehension questions required the examinee to decide whether Sue "tricked Niccolo into doing things he didn't like", the whole trick exploiting the pretence based on visual clues.

The accumulation of the interpretive steps discussed above, which either draw on visual information directly, or require the familiarity of stereotypes and scenarios involving visual elements, may render the apparently simple text very hard to follow for a blind learner. Other texts used in the school leaving exams do not diverge from the one discussed above with respect to reliance on knowledge which is easy to retrieve from the memory for any sighted person and not necessarily so for a blind learner. The question that can be legitimately asked at this point is what element of pragmatic competence is the primary target of testing in the case of blind learners: is it familiarity with the linguistic input to comprehension, or is it availability of contextual information to be used in processing? Taking into account the existence of blind people's gaps in knowledge, revealed in numerous experiments and communicative situations, one cannot help thinking that it is the contextual component of inferential processes that has greater impact on exam results rather than the linguistic component. This, in my opinion, contravenes the fundamental idea underlying foreign language proficiency testing.

I would like to emphasise that my main objective was to indicate that blind learners or at least some blind learners can be put at a disadvantage in solving listening and reading comprehension tasks due to inevitable deficiencies in general knowledge. I did not intend to suggest that texts which are fairly easy to follow for sighted people are incomprehensible for blind learners. Instead, I argued that the actual performance of the blind may be more dependent on their ability to provide contextual information than it is for the sighted, for whom the availability of such information can be safely taken for granted. In the case of blind learners, familiarity with certain every-day scenarios can be of a more idiosyncratic matter. For

instance, whether a blind learner knows something about drawing skills typical of a three-year-old sighted child may depend on his or her having sighted younger siblings – a circumstance hard to predict and rely on in solving comprehension tasks. Much as such deficiencies can be overcome in face-to-face communication, they are bound to manifest themselves in testing situations and negatively affect the results. As Kasper (1984, 17) observes "it may […] be cognitively more demanding to process pragmatic information in a simulated than in a natural environment, as the former necessarily provides less contextual support and requires more conscious decision-making than the latter." To this statement I would like to add that the decision-making has to be not only more conscious but also more specifically goal-oriented, the goal being answering comprehension questions and scoring an overall good result.

5. Towards a Solution?

The bulk of research on the development of blind children and cognitive idiosyncrasies of blind adults seems to legitimise the claim put forward in this paper, namely that testing conditions are not equal if the blind and the sighted are confronted with the same texts in listening and reading comprehension tasks. Although the comprehension experiments I drew on (Sak-Wernicka forthcoming) were conducted for other purposes than testing L2 comprehension, their results seem to be a good indicator of the problem: if pragmatic competence has been found to be somewhat deficient in L1 due to gaps in knowledge, it is even more likely to affect comprehension in L2 in testing situations. The next step to be undertaken in future research should be to verify the current predictions in an empirical study on L2 comprehension tasks. However, it has to be kept in mind that it may be impossible to isolate a single component of pragmatic competence responsible for an individual's performance in comprehension tests. Thus, comparing results obtained by groups of blind learners with those of sighted learners without giving due recognition to specific pragmatic factors responsible for these results would not shed much light on the problem. A plausible alternative would be to assess a blind individual's performance in tests distributed over time and correlated with instruction intended to fill in gaps in knowledge related to topics dealt with in tests.

The issues discussed in this paper are not merely of theoretical interest but they touch upon real problems concerning young people and the life choices they can afford to make on the basis of examination results obtained in obligatory subjects. Can anything be done to ensure equal

chance is given to all examinees irrespective of their cognitive and/or communicative deficiencies for which L2 learning cannot be blamed? Under current regulations, disabled students taking examinations in mainstream schools are given more time than typically developing students to complete tasks. This is necessary for blind students, since reading Braille is more time-consuming than reading black print but can hardly solve the problem. The study by Ifantidou (2013), lists explicit instruction in pragmatic competence as a factor which helped improve L2 comprehension scores in university students. Such instruction explaining what communication involves and how hearers understand speakers' intentions could take place during rehabilitation classes, to which every disabled student is entitled. Practising pragmatic competence could even take place in L1, since as Padilla Cruz (2012) observes, pragmatic competence is universal and one draws on the competence developed within L1 when using L2. Besides, when doing comprehension tests, blind learners could be provided with extra background information facilitating comprehension. Additional contextual assumptions which are easily inferable for the sighted could be incorporated in the versions of texts intended for the blind. For example, the information that the au pair girl realised that the little boy had similar problems to her at his age and that he was unhappy rather than malicious could be given explicitly as part of the text discussed in the previous section. Alternatively, some information contributing little relevance to overall interpretation could be omitted, such as that the little boy drew "colourful long-tailed creatures" on the picture, a detail that is very likely to cause puzzlement and disrupt comprehension by making a blind learner seek some significance in "long-tailed creatures".

It can only be hoped that test designers and examination boards will soon take into account the implications that inferential models of communication and pragmatic competence have for testing foreign language comprehension in blind learners.

References

Bachman, L.F. 1990. *Fundamental considerations in language testing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Canale, M. 1983. "From communicative competence to communicative language pedagogy". In *Language and communication*, edited by J. C. Richards and R. W. Schmidt, 2–27. London: Longman.

Canale, M. and M. Swain. 1980."Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing." *Applied Linguistics* 1: 1–47.

Celce-Murcia, M., Z. Dörnyei and S. Thurrell. 1995. "Communicative competence: A pedagogically motivated model with content modifications." *Issues in Applied Linguistics* 5: 5–35.

Finello, K. M., N. Hedlund Hanson, and L. S. Kekelis. 1992. "Cognitive focus: Developing cognition, concepts, and language in young blind and visually impaired children." In *Early focus: Working with young blind and visually impaired children and their families, edited by* R. L. Pogrund, D. L. Fazzi, and J. S. Lampert. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.

Ifantidou, E. 2013. "Pragmatic competence and explicit instruction." *Journal of Pragmatics* 59: 93–116.

Grice, H. P. 1975. "Logic and conversation." In *Syntax and Semantics 3: Speech Acts*, edited by P. Cole, and J. L. Morgan, 41–58. New York: Academic Press.

Jodłowiec, M.2010. "The role of relevance theory in SLA studies." In *Cognitive Processing in Second Language Acquisition*, edited by M. Pütz and L. Sicola, 49-66. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Kasper, G. 1984."Pragmatic comprehension in learner-native speaker discourse." Language Learning 34: 1–20.

Krzeszowski, T. P., B. Marek, and A. Piskorska. 2008. *Uczeń z dysfunkcją wzroku na lekcji angielskiego. Wskazówki metodyczne dla nauczycieli*. Warszawa: Uniwersytet Warszawski.

Lewis, V. 2003. *Development and disability*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Marek, B. 1999."A blind child in an English classroom." *Network* 2/1: 3–8.

Padilla Cruz, M. 2012 ."Cautious optimism in second language learning, or how to make L2 learners more competent hearers." In *Relevance Theory: More than understanding*, edited by E. Wałaszewska and A. Piskorska, 279–305. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Piskorska, A. 2008. "Concepts reflecting aesthetic judgments in blind children." In *Relevance Round Table I*, edited by E. Mioduszewska and A. Piskorska, 87–96. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.

Relevance Theory Online Bibliographic Service. http://personal.ua.es/francisco.yus/rt.html

Sak-Wernicka, J. 2012. "Gaps in blind learners' knowledge–can Relevance Theory account for them?" In Relevance Studies in Poland vol.4: Essays on language and communication, edited by A. Piskorska, 124–133. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.

Sak-Wernicka, J. forthcoming. "The guru effect in blind people's comprehension."

Sperber, D. and D. Wilson. [1986] 1995. *Relevance: Communication and cognition*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Warren, D. 1984. "Language development." In *Blindness and early childhood development*. American Foundation for the Blind.

Wharton, T. 2004. Lexical acquisition and pragmatics. *UCL Working Papers in Linguistics* 16: 323–341.

Wilson, D. 2000. "Metarepresentation in linguistic communication." In *Metarepresentations*: *A multidisciplinary perspective, edited by D. Sperber,* 411-448. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wilson, D. and D. Sperber. 2004. "Relevance theory." In *Handbook of Pragmatics,* edited by G. Ward and L. Horn, 607–632. Oxford: Blackwell.

British English
versus Polish Compassion:
An Individualistic-Collectivistic
Perspective

Paul A. Wilson
University of Łódź

1. Introduction

Despite abundant evidence showing that emotions do not translate well across languages, relatively little attention has been given to the precise features of emotions that make them particularly susceptible to cross-cultural influences. The initial focus of the present study is to determine the possible grounding of these differences in the structure and creation of emotions. In order to demonstrate how culture shapes the conceptual structure of emotions one of the main cultural influences on differences in emotion conceptual representation – individualism vs. collectivism – is subsequently examined in terms of its possible influence on British English vs. Polish emotions. Specifically, British English *compassion* is compared with its Polish counterpart, *współczucie*, to assess whether the differences follow the pattern that is predicted on the basis of what one might expect of the relatively more individualistic British English version of this emotion in comparison with the more collectivistic Polish equivalent.

2. Conceptual Structure and Creation of Emotions

It is the inherent prototypical, fuzzy nature of emotion concepts that is at the root of their susceptibility to cultural influences. To understand this more fully one needs to first appreciate the role of the construction of emotions. Rather than viewing emotions in the traditional sense as discrete entities with hard-wired brain mechanisms, we follow proposals that the

experience of emotions is constructed as outlined in detail in Russell's (2003) ideas regarding the psychological construction of emotion and Barrett's (2006) *conceptual act model* of emotion. In the creation of an emotion, whether *core affect*, a simple non-reflective emotional feeling of pleasure-displeasure and activation-deactivation, is experienced as a certain kind of emotion rather than another depends on the conceptual knowledge, such as sensory, motor and somatovisceral information, that is brought to bear in that particular situation (Russell, 2009; Barrett, 2006). When one considers that the interplay between the different levels of pleasure-displeasure and activation-deactivation is likely to produce a large array of different feelings associated with *core affect*, and that this is combined with a vast number of different possible instances of conceptual knowledge, then one can infer the extent of the emotional repertoire that humans can experience. Indeed, given the scale and number of the variables involved in the creation of an emotion, it can be deduced that each instance of an emotion might be unique. This challenges the typical assumption that, for a given individual, emotion concepts such as *anger* are the same for that individual on different occasions. These different types of emotion experiences can be classified as anger-like emotions, sadness-like emotions, fear-like emotions, happiness-like emotions, etc. Taking anger-like emotions as an example, the anger-like emotion experiences that an individual accumulates in their lifetime are likely to cohere into a cluster that could be termed the anger cluster. The more prototypical anger-like emotions will cohere around the centre of the anger cluster, with those anger-like emotions that are blended with other emotions, such as fear or sadness, being more peripheral. As Russell (2005) explains, at a particular point in time during a situation an individual might become aware that certain components cohere to form a pattern that resembles a mental script of a specific emotion. This awareness leads to a perceptual Gestalt being created from these components or elements that has a specific meaning that forms the basis of an emotional experience.

It is the top-down influence of language on the prototypical nature of emotion structure that is at the heart of cross-cultural influences on emotions. Staying with the example of anger, if one considers the instances of anger that a British English individual has experienced, it is clear that each of these experiences is unique to that person. Despite this collection of individual experiences of anger being different, albeit similar, to the unique array of individual experiences of anger in other individuals, each individual in a particular culture holds an approximation of the prototypical structure of each emotion in that culture. What is the

conceptual glue that binds the emotion structure of each individual of a culture to the emotion structure that is representative of that culture? According to Barrett's (2006) *conceptual act model*, the anchoring mechanism that serves to cohere prototype-like instances of anger experiences to the generally regarded cultural prototype of anger is language. As a child grows up, for example, in the British English language environment it acquires an understanding of the concept *anger*, and through observation of the linguistic labels applied by parents and significant others to its own and others' instances of anger it learns which of its anger-like experiences are more similar to prototypical anger in British English and which are more peripheral. In this way the child gains an appreciation of the graded structure of the anger concept, from the most prototypical instances at one pole through to the most peripheral experiences, which share a relatively greater degree of similarity with other emotion clusters. However, it is clear from this that there are many different manifestations of the same emotion or types of the same emotion, such as anger. As Barrett (2006) states, the expression of anger, for example, can take many forms depending on the circumstances, including a driver shouting and shaking their fist in a moment of road rage, an employee sitting quietly in a boardroom while listening to unfair criticism from the boss, or a teacher speaking sternly but cordially to a pupil because of their misdemeanour. The actual type of anger that is represented by an anger term, such as *anger* in British English, in a specific culture is moulded by cultural influences so that the prototypical anger that represents that culture is forged into a concept that is encapsulated by the specific culture term. We argue (see Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk and Wilson, forthcoming) that British English *anger*, for example, is relatively more expressive because individuals in British English culture, who are regarded to have a self-construal based on individuality and autonomy (i.e., individualism) are less likely to be concerned about the social disharmony that such expressive anger might cause than Polish individuals, who place greater importance on the maintenance of good social relations (i.e., collectivism) and are therefore likely to conceptualise anger as being less expressive.

To conclude, adhering to Russell's (2003) ideas regarding the psychological construction of emotion and Barrett's (2006) *conceptual act model* of emotion, it has been demonstrated that the very nature of emotion concepts and the creation of emotion experiences are at the root of cultural influences on emotions. Each creation of an emotion experience is determined by *core affect* and the conceptual knowledge such as sensory, motor and somatovisceral information that is brought to bear in a

particular situation. The experiences of these emotions are stored as simulations that contain the accrued content for all these context-specific emotion memories. Through the learning of the linguistic labels associated with different instances of emotions, a child develops an understanding of emotion concepts, including the different prototypical models that are salient for each emotion term, pertaining to its own particular culture. These emotion concepts differ across cultures according to cultural variation in dimensions such as individualism vs. collectivism, which is elaborated more fully in the following section.

3. Individualism vs. Collectivism

There is accumulating evidence that emotions are culturally and linguistically determined. For example, Ogarkova, Soriano and Lehr (2012) found that people of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (English, German, French, Spanish, and Russian) provide different labels for emotional experiences pertaining to anger, shame, guilt, and pride. Further support comes from the lack of cross-linguistic equivalence between emotions. Wierzbicka (2009) explains that many languages do not have an equivalent to the English word *happy*, and Goddard (1997) observes that Malay lacks a word denoting English *surprised*. As self-conscious emotions, such as shame and guilt are central to cultural identity, it is important to examine the role of culture on the shaping of these particular emotions. Through socialisation and interactions with their parents and significant others, children learn the norms, values and emotions of their culture. One of the major cultural influences that shapes cultural identity and how we construe ourselves in terms of our relationships with others is the extent to which we see ourselves as individuals vis-à-vis connected with others. It was Hofstede's (1980) original work that led to the mapping of world cultures on the basis of individualism versus collectivism and spawned a plethora of studies investigating cross-cultural variation. Indeed, Hui and Yee (1994) reported that the results presented in over one third of published cross-cultural studies were interpreted in terms of individualism and collectivism at least to some extent.

3.1 Individualism

In individualistic cultures one perceives oneself as an individual, autonomous entity and there is less emphasis placed on one's relationships to others. The various accounts of individualism share the fundamental

features of more of an individualised construal of goals, uniqueness and control (Oyserman, Coon and Kemmelmeier 2002). Highlighting the personal autonomy associated with individualism, Hofstede (1980) views the inclusion of self-fulfilment and personal accomplishments in one's identity, the importance of rights in comparison with duties, and a focus on oneself and immediate family as central features. In contrast with collectivistic individuals who have relatively more interdependence within their in-groups (e.g., family, nation), individualists show a greater degree of independence from their in-groups, which is evidenced in the importance they place on personal goals in comparison with the goals of their in-groups, the emphasis that they place on personal attitudes over in-group norms, and their social behaviour conforming relatively more to exchange theory principles of individual costs and benefits (Triandis 2001). This relatively greater emphasis on the balance of the exchange of costs and benefits in their interpersonal relationships results in the formation and termination of their relatively more impermanent relationships being based on the shifts in these costs and benefits. According to Waterman (1984), individualists value the freedom to make choices on important issues, to take responsibility for themselves, to gain the maximum achievement with the abilities that they are endowed with, and to respect others. Schwarz (1990) states that individualism is characterised by contractual professional relationships, the importance of status achievement, and the negotiation of duties within social relationships. Individualists regard the formation of a positive self-concept as a fundamental personal characteristic that they closely associate with personal achievement and having unique rather than shared personal opinions and attitudes (Triandis 1995). For individualistic individuals, life satisfaction is based on how one feels about oneself – one's attitudes, emotions, and cognitions (Diener and Diener 1995). Furthermore, in judgements and reasoning based on the causal inferences gained from person perception, responsibility for actions is decontextualised and deemed to fall on the individual rather than the situation (Choi, Nisbett and Norenzayan 1999).

To summarise, in individualism relatively greater emphasis is placed on the following:

- the perception of oneself as an individual, autonomous entity with individualised goal construal designed to gain personal optimal achievement, self-fulfilment and accomplishments that differ to those of the in-group

- importance of personal attitudes, emotions and cognitions over in-group norms; how a person feels about him- or herself is relatively more correlated with life satisfaction
- social behaviour that is based on the exchange theory principles of individual costs and benefits, leading to relatively more impermanent relationships; emphasis is placed, however, on respect to others
- a greater independence from in-groups and more stress on the importance of rights, taking responsibility for oneself and freedom to make choices compared with duties
- contractual professional relationships
- in causal inferences gained from interpersonal perception, more responsibility for actions is ascribed to the individual than the situation

3.2 Collectivism

The fundamental feature of collectivism is the closer interpersonal relationships that are present within groups, which result in these groups being more cohesive. Individuals within these groups have a greater obligation to fulfil their responsibilities towards other group members (Oyserman, Coon and Kemmelmeier 2002). Schwartz (1990) explains that the mutual obligations and expectations that exist within the communal, collectivistic groups are determined by the statuses held by the individual members. A central feature of collectivism is the in-group vs. out-group comparison as it emphasises the outcomes, aims and values that are common to the in-group (family, clan, ethnic religions, or other groups) vis-à-vis the out-group. The social, interconnected ties within the in-group are more important than the individual, autonomous functioning of the person within that group (Triandis 1995). Rather than being a certain rigid set of values that operate within a fixed in-group, Triandis proposes that the broad range of possible in-groups dictates that collectivism, in comparison with individualism, encompasses a relatively wider set of disparate values, attitudes and behaviours that cohere according to the different social dynamics of the specific in-groups (Hui 1988). Consistent with the more social elements of collectivism, self-concept is based on group membership (Hofstede 1980), and includes characteristics such as the sacrifice of the self for others and common goals, and the maintenance of good relations (Markus and Kitayama 1991). Well-being for the collectivist is determined by successful performance in social roles and the completion of duties (Markus and Kitayama 1991). Emphasis is placed on

the achievement of in-group harmony by controlling the outward expression of emotions. As meaning is contextualised, social context and the situation are deemed more significant than the individual when drawing inferences from and attributing meaning to behavioural observation (Morris and Peng 1994). When it comes to relationality, collectivism regards membership of certain in-groups as relatively permanent and the natural way of things. Relationships within these in-groups are based on egalitarian principles, which engender a culture of generosity, but this does not extend to the out-group because of the rigid, relatively impermeable boundary that exists between them.

To summarise, in collectivism relatively greater emphasis is placed on the following:

- a greater distinction between the in-group and out-group, between which is a relatively impermeable boundary – the features outlined below pertain to the in-group as opposed to the out-group
- the relatively stronger social, interconnected ties within the in-group, which are based on egalitarian principles that encourage a culture of generosity, are more important than the individual, autonomous functioning of the person within that group
- interpersonal obligations and responsibilities within groups are determined by the statuses of individual members
- life satisfaction is based on a self-concept that derives from the successful performance of social roles and the completion of duties that aim towards common goals and the maintenance of good relations within in-groups that are treated as relatively permanent, and include characteristics such as the sacrifice of the self for others
- a relatively wider range of distinct values, attitudes and behaviours arising from the social identities of different in-group membership
- the regulation of the outward expression of emotions to maintain in-group harmony
- greater emphasis placed on the role of social context and the situation than the individual when attributing meaning during interpersonal perception

4. The Role of Religion

One of the possible underlying reasons for Britain being relatively more individualistic than Poland is the role played by the rise of Protestantism. One of the major historical influences that led to the

predominance of individualism in western and English-speaking cultures was the Protestant work ethic, which is generally regarded as a major factor in the evolution of capitalism (Jones 1997). As Tamis-LeMonda et al. (2008) note, it was Max Weber (1904-1905/1958) who introduced the concept of the Protestant work ethic, proposing that its focus on innovation, achieving goals, hard work and personal responsibility are at the heart of capitalism and individualism. Weber (1985) (cited in Arslan 2001) believed that at the heart of the Protestant work ethic was religious individualism, which, unlike Catholicism, refers to a direct relationship between believer and God without the mediation of a clergy and the church, and that it is this that engenders the individualistic outlook associated with Protestantism. Weber further argued that this leads to the social loneliness as well as the individual responsibility that is central to capitalism. In contrast with the individualism associated with the Protestant work ethic, in collectivistic religious cultures, such as Catholicism, people enjoy more tightly-knit connections with each other and their communities (Cohen and Hill 2007).

It is not necessary for an individual to be a practising Protestant to have the characteristic features and values normally associated with individualism. As Arslan (2001) observes, any individual brought up in a Protestant family, regardless of their beliefs and church involvement can be inculcated with Protestant work ethic values from their practising Protestant parents and other family members. It is easy to see how such values might propagate within cultures across generations. Parents in individualistic cultures have been described as instilling in their children these Protestant work ethic values in order to encourage autonomy and independence (Tamis-LeMonda et al. 2008). The characteristic features of such autonomous upbringing are *personal choice*, which have been identified with fostering motivation, achievement and a unique identity; *intrinsic motivation*, which is associated with being optimistic about future success; *self-esteem*, which is based on the belief that one's personal achievements are based on a positive feeling about oneself; and *self-maximization*, which refers to being able to reach one's maximum potential (Iyengar and Lepper 1999). Equally, Catholic parents are likely to foster the more collectivistic values that are central to Catholicism in their children in a similar way. To summarise, it is easy to see how the relatively more individualistic Protestant values and the relatively more collectivistic Catholic values are maintained in their respective cultures by upbringing practice, regardless of religious conviction or church involvement.

5. Individualism and Collectivism:
Criticisms and Influences

More recent research has questioned the established view of the stable social constructs of individualism and collectivism presented above. The main focal point of this challenge has centred on both conceptual and methodological criticism. Other research has highlighted the possible dynamism in these constructs, calling into question whether the traditional distinction between the relatively more individualistic Britain and the more collectivistic Poland might need to be revised.

5.1 Conceptual and Methodological Criticism

One of the main criticisms is that individualism and collectivism are conceptually "fuzzy" with many definitions and assessments being too broad and diffuse (Brewer and Chen 2007). Bond (2002, 76) similarly calls for more detailed understanding of these multifaceted constructs that permit "many different operationalizations". Fiske (2002, 87) questions the validity of the "characterization of cultures according to IND and COL" and proposes that instead of merely identifying how collectivistic cultures differ from individualistic cultures, we need to gain a more complete understanding of the intrinsic nature of the many collectivistic cultures around the world. It has also been argued that the individualistic and collectivistic construct has been applied too readily in attempts to understand a wide range of diverse cross-cultural issues (Bond 2002; Earley and Gibson 1998).

A number of methodological criticisms have been directed at empirical investigations into individualism and collectivism. Oyserman, Coon and Kemmelmeier (2002) highlight a number of methodological limitations in their comprehensive review of the literature. By using undergraduate participants, who may be more individualistic and less collectivistic (Fiske 2002), the generalizability of the results of many studies to the wider society is restricted. Other studies restrict the generalizability of the results to other nations, racial groups, or ethnic groups as they focus narrowly on a comparison between European American undergraduates and either undergraduates from a single Asian country or a single ethnic minority group within America. Another problem concerns the different ways that researchers use and conceptualise individualism and collectivism. For example, when collectivism is assessed on the basis of belonging to in-groups and seeking advice from others, Americans see themselves as relatively collectivistic; however, they rate themselves as low in collectivism

when researchers use duty to in-group in their measurement of collectivism. Finally, Oyserman, Coon and Kemmelmeier (2002) found that very few of the cross-cultural comparisons that they reviewed provided information on the ethnic background of their samples.

This criticism of individualism and collectivism has not received unanimous support. Schimmack, Oishi, and Diener (2005) argue in favour of individualism as an important and valid element of intercultural differences and that the apparent inconsistencies in the results can be explained by cross-cultural differences in self-report response styles. As noted by Brewer and Chen (2007, 134), when these response styles are statistically controlled "horizontal individualism shows high convergent validity with Hofstede's (1980) original rankings of emotions on the I-C dimension". However, in contrast with individualism, which is deemed to have a valid definition and assessment, Schimmack, Oishi, and Diener (2005) propose that the concept of collectivism may need to be reassessed. Such a distinction alludes to a rejection of the position that individualism and collectivism are conceptual opposites. Accumulating evidence supports the statement by Oyserman, Coon and Kemmelmeier (2002, 8) that individualism and collectivism "are better understood as domain-specific, orthogonal constructs differentially elicited by contextual and social cues".

More research is required to address these conceptual and methodological concerns. The validity of these objections notwithstanding, the classification of cultures on the basis of individualism and collectivism has provided a great deal of insight in cross-cultural investigations.

5.2 Political and Social Influences in Poland and Britain

When one considers Hofstede's (1980) assessment of countries in terms of individualism versus collectivism, one could be forgiven for drawing the conclusion that the assessment of cultures on the basis of individualism and collectivism measures permanent and fixed characteristics of cultures that are not influenced by contextual pressures. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide an in depth analysis of such influences, and so in keeping with the focus of the present chapter I will restrict the discussion to Poland and Britain. An attempt will be made to assess the possible specific effects of the fall of communism on collectivism in Poland, as well as political and social reform in the 19th and 20th centuries and the effects of the Second World War on individualism in Britain, and to provide a contemporary view of these two cultures.

5.2.1 The Fall of Communism in Poland

It is interesting to consider whether the political changes that occurred in 1989 in Poland had an influence on the relative individualism versus collectivism in that culture. It is easy to imagine the simple distinction between a relatively more collectivistic Poland becoming more individualistic in the post-communist, capitalist era. However, as Zondag, Van halen and Wojtkowiak (2009) argue, it is important to distinguish between the different spheres that might have been affected to a greater or lesser extent by this transition. Employing more fine-grained distinctions, it becomes clear from Skorowski (2007) that it is politics that has largely been affected. In contrast, the social and cultural realms, despite some increases in individualism in certain aspects, maintain similar levels of collectivism to those found under communism. It might also be the case that younger adults, such as students, who are probably more influenced by Western and American culture, would have been more prone to individualism over collectivism during the period since the fall of communism. However, individualism and collectivism are deeply entrenched within cultures and are capable of withstanding external influences such as revolution and political turmoil for many generations (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005 (cited in Zondag, Van halen and Wojtkowiak 2009)). The recent possible exposure of Poland to more Western individualistic influences following the political changes in 1989 might therefore have made little impact on the relatively more collectivistic Polish culture. This is supported by the finding that a strong sense of collectivism has persisted in Poland (Reykowski 1994, 1998).

5.2.2 Possible Collectivistic Influences in 18th and 19th Century Britain

Britain has undergone transitions in the past which have been viewed as steps towards collectivism. It is important to determine whether these changes were grounded more in the political sphere or permeated into the social and cultural fabric of British life. Perkin (1977), for example, points to the general acceptance of the social policy changes in nineteenth-century Britain as a transition from individualism to collectivism and outlines seven collectivistic policy changes that were introduced. These were the state prevention of moral transgressions and physical dangers (e.g., regarding the employment of women and children in factories and mines); the provision of services by certain individuals or companies (e.g., the education of factory children); state finance to help the private provision of certain services (e.g., funding given to societies offering

elementary education; the provision of a service directly by the state); voluntary work to provide a service (e.g., the Manchester Police Commissioners in 1819 initiated the provision of municipal services by extending their activities of lighting streets to selling gas to householders); the monopolisation by the state of an essential service or public utility (e.g., the Post Office takeover of the telegraph system in 1870); and the nationalization of the means of production, distribution, and exchange. Although these social policy changes were collectivistic in nature and improved the social conditions and welfare of many British people, it is questionable whether they had much of an impact on the collectivism expounded by Hofstede (1980). It can similarly be questioned whether social policies that led to the establishment of the welfare state and the national health service in the period after the second world war in Britain influenced the predominantly individualistic nature of British society.

It could also be deemed that during the Second World War there was a relatively greater influence of collectivism in Britain. However, although there was a great sense of common fight and pulling together, as one would expect from any nation in such a situation[5], it is not clear whether this represented a shift towards a greater degree of collectivism in the culture of Britain. It is quite likely and probable that the motivation to work with and help others in a time of need was based on a sense of duty that individuals felt was necessary at the time. Such action, based on an individualistic viewpoint, would not require individuals to change how they perceived their interpersonal relations with others. The possible sense of duty that encouraged greater collective action did not require a shift in self-perception from that based on an individual autonomous entity to one resting on closer interpersonal relationships. A possible important factor influencing how one construes oneself is the contextual reference frame, which can be wider or more locally focused on one's immediate environment. During the Second World War, individuals were more likely to be engaged in the collective war effort at a national level out of a sense of duty, while at the same time viewing themselves as autonomous individuals with relatively loose connections with those in their immediate environment. The contextual reference frame can also possibly explain the

---

[5] Although both Poland and Britain were affected by the possible collectivistic influence of the Second World War, Britain, being more individualistic, had the greatest possibility to change. It is also worth noting that the First World War also possibly exerted a collectivistic influence on Britain. However, the rousing speeches by Churchill and the isolation that Britain experienced between 1940 and 1941 when it stood alone against the Nazis could be deemed to have instilled a particularly strong sense of collectivism at this time.

apparent paradox between the relatively more individualistic culture of Britain and the civic sense of duty exhibited by British individuals to serve the local community and the nation, with the former having a more local reference frame and the latter a wider one.

5.3 Summary

With regard to the more general conceptual and methodological criticisms of individualism and collectivism, the objections that have been voiced need to be balanced with the plethora of information that has been gained. As a consequence of the political changes that occurred in Poland in 1989, it could be considered that Poland could have been more recently exposed to more influences than Britain to its relative standing in terms of individualism vs. collectivism. However, the speculation that Poland has recently experienced a shift towards a greater degree of individualism as a consequence of greater exposure to Western influence needs to be tempered with the possibility that these changes were more political than social or cultural in nature (Skorowski 2007) and the length of time taken by such changes to permeate and instigate change within a culture (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005). Considering the periods of collectivistic influence in Britain over the past 200 years, which have most notably included the social policy changes of the 19th century, two world wars, and the establishment of the welfare state and the National Health Service after the Second World War, it might be deemed surprising that Britain scored relatively high in individualism on Hofstede's collectivistic-individualistic scale in 1980. However, similar to the transition in Poland in 1989, it could be deemed that these changes were political in nature, exerting an influence at the societal level rather than influencing the collectivism associated with strengthened interpersonal relations with others at a more local level. The relatively greater sense of civic duty in Britain could also be deemed consistent with an individualistic focus on responsibility at the community or national level rather than a stronger influence of the in-group on the formation of personal identity. On balance, the speculation that Poland might have become less collectivistic due to recent political changes is not supported by empirical evidence. Similarly, the apparent social and political collectivistic influences in Britain over the last two centuries, and the British civic sense of duty are inconsistent with Hofstede's (1980) more local definitions of collectivism and individualism. To conclude, there is no direct evidence to suggest a revision of Hofstede's observation that Poland is relatively more collectivistic than Britain. On the contrary, evidence shows that Polish

participants exhibit collectivistic patterns in a number of spheres, including compliance behaviour (Cialdini et al. 1999) and aggression (Forbes et al. 2009).

6. Compassion in Individualistic versus Collectivistic Cultures

An understanding of the nature of compassion must precede an assessment of the conceptual representation of this emotion in individualistic and collectivistic cultures. Feelings of sorrow and the concern about the plight of others are central features in the definition of compassion, along with a desire to ease suffering (Goetz et al. 2010). Compassion is further characterised by strengthened interpersonal relationships and cooperation with others over longer periods of time (Valdeslolo and Desteno, 2011); the activation of the ventromedial prefrontal cortex, a region that has been identified as important for perspective taking (Lotze, Veit, Anders, and Birbaumer, 2007); and feeling tender and warm towards others, but also feelings of sadness under some circumstances (Goetz et al. (2010). Oveis, Horberg and Keltner (2010) show that compassion engenders a greater sense of perceived similarity between oneself and others, who are often vulnerable.

The apparent paradox between the association of positive feelings (e.g., warmth) and negative feelings (e.g., sorrow and sadness) that can both characterise compassion is a likely candidate for the source of cross-cultural variation in the meaning of this emotion. The need to address both the more typical positive meaning and the unpleasant meaning of compassion is further highlighted by Condon and Barrett (2013), who showed that participants' experiences of compassion were either pleasant or unpleasant depending on whether they listened to a neutral induction audio clip or an audio clip that focused on another's suffering, respectively. Further empirical support for this division comes from a study showing that reports of positive compassion and distress were simultaneously elevated after viewing images of poverty and vulnerable infants (Simon-Thomas et al., 2012). Placing these dichotomous meanings within the context of individualism-collectivism, allows one to gain insight into possible cross-cultural differences. The greater focus on interpersonal relationships in collectivistic cultures would probably engender an outward focus on the suffering person and hence the more salient meaning of compassion is likely to be sorrow, sadness or distress. Individualists, however, being more independent, autonomous entities are more likely to focus on themselves when confronted with an individual

who is suffering, which engenders a conceptualisation of compassion that is characterised relatively more by their own possible attempts to provide the help and care that the afflicted person needs. It is therefore easy to see how tenderness and warmth are more salient features of the more individualistic meaning of compassion. The aim of the present study is to assess the differences in the concept of compassion in British English and Polish. It is hypothesized that whereas British English *compassion* has a relatively positive evaluation, Polish *współczucie* is by comparison more negative.

7. GRID Methodology

The GRID instrument (Fontaine, Scherer and Soriano 2013; Scherer 2005) employs a system of dimensions and components, which bring about insight into the nature of emotion prototypical structures. The GRID project is coordinated by the Swiss Center for Affective Sciences at the University of Geneva in collaboration with Ghent University and is a worldwide study of emotional patterning across 23 languages and 27 countries. The GRID instrument comprises a Web-based questionnaire in which 24 prototypical emotion terms are evaluated on 144 emotion features. These features represent activity in all six of the major components of emotion. Thirty-one features relate to appraisals of events, eighteen to psychophysiological changes, twenty-six to facial, vocal or gestural expressions, forty to action tendencies, twenty two to subjective experiences and four to emotion regulation. An additional three features refer to other qualities, such as frequency and social acceptability of the emotion. Participants are asked to rate the likelihood of these features for the various emotions. This methodology is comprehensive in its scope as it allows the multicultural comparison of emotion conceptualisations on all six of the emotion categories recognised by emotion theorists (Ellsworth and Scherer 2003; Niedenthal, Krauth-Gruber and Ric 2006; Scherer 2005).

7.1 Procedure

Participants completed the GRID instrument in a controlled Web study Reips (2002), in which each participant was presented with four emotion terms randomly chosen from the set of 24 and asked to rate each in terms of the 144 emotion features. They rated the likelihood that each of the 144 emotion features can be inferred when a person from their cultural group uses the emotion term to describe an emotional experience. A 9-point scale

was employed that ranged from extremely unlikely (1) to extremely likely (9)—the numbers 2 to 8 were placed at equidistant intervals between the two ends of the scale, with 5 'neither unlikely, nor likely' in the middle and participants typed their ratings on the keyboard. It was clearly stated that the participants needed to rate the likelihood of occurrence of each of the features when somebody who speaks their language describes an emotional experience with the emotion terms presented. Each of the 144 emotion features was presented separately, and participants rated all four emotion terms for that feature before proceeding to the next feature.

7.2 Participants

The mean ages and gender ratios of the participants for the British English and Polish participants were as follows: *compassion* (33 British English-speaking participants; mean age 23.2 years, 21 females); *współczucie* (29 Polish-speaking participants; mean age 25.6 years, 26 females).

7.3 GRID Dimensions

In an initial study of the dimensional structure of emotions using the GRID instrument, Fontaine et al. (2007) derived a four-dimensional structure for English, French and Dutch that comprised valence, power, arousal and novelty. Analyses performed on the data from all of the languages represented in the GRID project have reproduced this dimensional structure (Fontaine, Scherer and Soriano 2013). To determine the dimensional structure of the Polish and British English data in the present study, principle components analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation was performed on the combined dataset of these two languages. There were 201 British English participants (124 females) with a men age of 21.5 years, and 124 Polish participants (95 females) with a mean age of 23.2 years. The four-dimensional solution that was selected comprised the same dimensions as Fontaine et al. (2007) and Fontaine, Scherer and Soriano (2013), and accounted for 81.9 % of the total variance. The first dimension (valence) accounted for 52.9 % of the variance, the second dimension (power) for 15.5 %, the third dimension (arousal) for 8.3 % and the last dimension (novelty) for 5.1 %. As the present study compares *compassion* and *współczucie* the analyses (see below) are based on the valence dimension. The valence dimension is characterised by appraisals of intrinsic pleasure and goal conduciveness. Other features include action tendencies of approach versus avoidance, and pleasant emotions versus

unpleasant emotions (e.g., *felt positive, wanted to sing and dance, in itself unpleasant for the person, felt inhibited or blocked, and incongruent with own standards and ideals*). Loadings on the GRID dimensions were determined by a 0.6 loading cut-off (see ''Appendix'' for loadings of GRID features on the valence dimension).

7.4 Analyses and Results

7.4.1 Anova

The means of the low valence and the high valence features were determined for each participant. A 2 x 2 Anova was performed on these means that had one between-subjects variable (language group: British English *compassion* vs. Polish *współczucie*). There was also one within-subjects variable that was the GRID features loading at the level of 0.6 or above on low vs. high valence (valence: low valence features vs. high valence features – see Appendix). There was a main effect of language group, $F_{(1, 58)} = 9.75$, $p < 0.01$. There was also a significant interaction between language group and valence, $F_{(1, 58)} = 34.88$, $p < 0.001$. Contrasts were performed to break down this interaction. There was a significant difference between *compassion* and *współczucie* on the high valence features, $F_{(1, 58)} = 44.44$, $p < 0.001$. *Compassion* was relatively more associated with experiences of higher high valence than *współczucie* (means of 5.66 and 4.12, respectively). There was a significant difference between *compassion* and *współczucie* on the low valence features, $F_{(1, 58)} = 4.41$, $p < 0.05$. *Współczucie* was relatively more associated with experiences of higher low valence than *compassion* (means of 4.85 and 4.33, respectively). There was also a significant difference between high valence and low valence *compassion* features, $F_{(1, 58)} = 31.17$, $p < 0.001$. *Compassion* is characterised by high levels of high valence and low levels of low valence (means of 5.66 and 4.33, respectively). There was also a significant difference between high valence and low valence *współczucie* features, $F_{(1, 58)} = 8.20$, $p < 0.01$. *Współczucie* is characterised by low levels of high valence and high levels of low valence (means of 4.12 and 4.85, respectively).

To summarise, whereas *compassion* was rated significantly higher on high valence than *współczucie*, the reverse was found for low valence. This means that *compassion* has a higher likelihood of positive evaluation than *współczucie*.

7.4.2 Pearson Correlations

Pearson correlations were performed between compassion and four negatively valenced emotion terms (being hurt, sadness, despair and anxiety) and between compassion and three positively valenced emotion terms (happiness, joy and love) for both the British English and Polish data on the complete set of GRID features and the valence dimension features. From Table 2-7 it can be seen that whereas *współczucie* correlates more highly with negative emotions, *compassion* correlates more highly with positive emotions. As expected, these effects are more pronounced for the valence features (e.g., the British English and Polish values for the compassion – being hurt correlation for the valence features are -0.51 and 0.42, respectively; in contrast, the British English and Polish values for the compassion – happiness correlation for the valence features are 0.68 and -0.35, respectively).

	British English (all GRID features)	British English (valence features)	Polish (all GRID features)	Polish (valence features)
Compassion-Being Hurt	-0.24 **	-0.51**	0.4**	0.42**
Compassion-Sadness	-0.08	-0.36**	0.51**	0.43**
Compassion-Despair	-0.22**	-0.45**	0.32**	0.36**
Compassion-Anxiety	-0.14	-0.35**	0.36**	0.47**
Compassion-Happiness	0.61**	0.68**	-0.19*	-0.35**
Compassion-Joy	0.56**	0.65**	-0.18*	-0.28**
Compassion-Love	0.64**	0.72**	-0.09	-0.25*

* significant at the 0.05 level; ** significant at the 0.01 level (one-tailed)

Table 2-7

8. Conclusions

The more positive evaluation of *compassion* relative to *współczucie* is what one would expect when comparing compassion in a more individualistic culture vs. a more collectivistic culture, respectively. The GRID results therefore support the hypothesis that whereas *współczucie* will be associated with negative emotions due to a greater collectivistic, outward focus on the plight of a suffering person, *compassion* will be characterised by positive emotions as a consequence of a greater focus on oneself as an autonomous entity, and on one's actions that will aim to help to provide the care needed to relieve suffering. In short, whereas the salient feature of the conceptualisation of *współczucie* is the negativity associated with the suffering of others, *compassion* is relatively more positively characterised by a focus on the help offered to those in need. Such a comparison between *współczucie* and *compassion* therefore confirms the evidence showing that the meanings of this emotion can be both pleasant and unpleasant (Condon and Barrett 2013; Simon-Thomas et al. 2012). In terms of a wider, cross-cultural relevance, the comparative patterning of *współczucie* and *compassion* can be added to other observations in our laboratory showing that English and Polish differ in their emotional profiles of shame and guilt (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk and Wilson 2014), fear (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk and Wilson 2013); happiness and contentment (Wilson, Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, Wilson, and Niiya 2013); and surprise (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk and Wilson 2010). However, as the focus of these studies, including the present investigation into compassion, is conceptual representation, the results do not have a bearing on any cross-cultural differences in attitudes and behaviour between British and Polish individuals.

In terms of second language learning, it is clear that there is a need for students to appreciate the differences in putative equivalent emotion terms such as those demonstrated here for *compassion* and *współczucie*. Another practical application is in the field of emotion-sensitive socially interacting Robots. The differences in the conceptual representation of *compassion* and *współczucie* demonstrate that such robots need to be sensitive to the unique profiles of emotion features that are present in different cultures (Wilson and Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, 2014).

References

Arslan, M. 2001. "The Work Ethic Values of Protestant British, Catholic Irish and Muslim Turkish Managers." *Journal of Business Ethics* 31: 321-339.

Barrett, L. F. 2006. "Solving the Emotion Paradox: Categorization and the Experience of Emotion." *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 10(1): 20-46.

Bond, M. H. 2002. "Reclaiming the Individual from Hofstede's Ecological Analysis—A 20-year Odyssey: Comment on Oyserman et al. (2002)." *Psychological Bulletin* 128: 73–77.

Brewer, M. B., and Ya-Ru. Chen. 2007. "Where (Who) are Collectives in Collectivism? Toward Conceptual Clarification of Individualism and Collectivism." *Psychological Review* 114: 133-151.

Choi, I., Nisbett, R. E., and A. Norenzayan. 1999. "Causal Attribution Across Cultures: Variation and Universality." *Psychological Bulletin* 125: 47–63.

Cialdini, R. B., Wosinska, W., Barrett, D. W., Butner, J., and M. Gornik-Durose. 1999. "Compliance with a Request in Two Cultures: The Differential Influence of Social Proof and Commitment/Consistency on Collectivists and Individualists." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 25: 1242-1253.

Cohen, A. B., and P. C. Hill. 2007. "Religion as Culture: Religious Individualism and Collectivism Among American Catholics, Jews, and Protestants." *Journal of Personality* 75: 709-742.

Condon, P and L. F. Barrett. 2013. "Conceptualizing and Experiencing Compassion." *Emotion* 13(5): 817-21.

Diener, E., and M. Diener. 1995. "Cross-Cultural Correlates of Life Satisfaction and Self-esteem." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 68: 653–663.

Earley, P. C., and C. B. Gibson. 1998. "Taking Stock in our Progress on Individualism– Collectivism: 100 Years of Solidarity and Community." *Journal of Management* 24: 265–304.

Ellsworth, P. C., and K. R. Scherer. "Appraisal processes in emotion." In *Handbook of affective sciences*, edited by R. J. Davidson, K. R. Scherer, and H. Goldsmith, 572-595. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Fiske, A. P. 2002. "Using Individualism and Collectivism to Compare Cultures–A Critique of the Validity and Measurement of the Constructs: Comment on Oyserman et al." *Psychological Bulletin* 128: 78–88.

Fontaine, J. R. J., Scherer, K. R., Roesch, E.B., and P. C. Ellsworth. 2007. "The world of emotions is not two-dimensional." *Psychological Science* 18(12): 1050-1057.

Fontaine, J. R. J., Scherer, K. R., and C. Soriano. *Components of Emotional Meaning: A Sourcebook*. Oxford: OUP, 2013.

Forbes, G., Zhang, X., Doroszewicz, K., and K. Haas. 2009. "Relationships between Individualism-Collectivism, Gender, and Direct or Indirect Aggression: A Study in China, Poland, and the US." *Aggressive Behavior* 35: 24-30.

Goetz, J. L., Keltner, D., and E. Simon-Thomas, E. (2010). "Compassion: An Evolutionary Analysis and Empirical Review." *Psychological Bulletin.* 136(3):351-74.

Goddard, C. 1997. "Contrastive Semantics and Cultural Psychology: "Surprise" in Malay and English." *Culture and Psychology* 3: 153–181.

Hofstede, G. *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-related Values*. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1980.

Hofstede, G., and G. J. Hofstede. *Allemaal Andersdenkenden: Omgaan met Cultuurverschillen*. Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Contact, 2005.

Hui, C. H. 1988. "Measurement of Individualism–collectivism." *Journal of Research in Personality* 22: 17–36.

Iyengar, S. S., and M. R. Lepper. 1999. "Rethinking the Value of Choice: A Cultural Perspective on Intrinsic Motivation." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 76: 349–366.

Jones, H. B. 1997. "The Protestant Ethic: Weber's Model and the Empirical Literature." *Human Relations* 50: 757–778.

Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, B., and P. A. Wilson. 2010. "A contrastive perspective on emotions: surprise." *Review of Cognitive Linguistics* 8(2): 321-350.

Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, B., and P. A. Wilson. "English Fear and Polish Strach in Contrast: GRID Approach and Cognitive Corpus Linguistic Methodology." In *Components of emotional Meaning: A Sourcebook*, edited by J.R.J. Fontaine, K. R. Scherer & C. Soriano, 425-436. Oxford: OUP, 2013.

Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, B., and P. A. Wilson. "Self-Conscious Emotions in Collectivistic and Individualistic Cultures: A Contrastive Linguistic Perspective." In *Yearbook of Corpus Linguistics and Pragmatics 2014: New Empirical and Theoretical Paradigms*, edited by J. Romero-Trillo, 123-148. Berlin: Springer, 2014.

Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, B., and P. A. Wilson. *Emotion Clustering in Contrast*. John Benjamins, forthcoming.

Lotze, M., Veit, R., Anders, S., and N. Birbaumer. 2007. "Evidence for a Different Role of the Ventral and Dorsal Medial Prefrontal Cortex for Social Reactive Aggression: An Interactive fMRI Study." *Neuroimage* 34: 470–478.

Markus, H. R., and S. Kitayama. 1991. "Culture and the Self: Implications for Cognition, Emotion, and Motivation." *Psychological Review* 20: 568–579.

Morris, M. W., and K. Peng. 1994. "Culture and Cause: American and Chinese Attributions for Social and Physical Events." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 67: 949–971.

Niedenthal, P. M., Krauth-Gruber, S., and F. Ric. *Psychology of Emotion*. New York:

Psychology Press, 2006.

Oveis, C., Hosberg, E, J., and D. Keltner. 2010. „Compassion, Pride, and Social Intuitions or Self-Other Similarity." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 98(4): 618-634.

Ogarkova, A., Soriano, C. and C. Lehr. "Naming Feeling: Exploring the Equivalence of Emotion Terms in Five European Languages." In *Dynamicity in Emotion Concepts. Łódź: Studies in Language,* Volume 27, edited by P. A. Wilson, 253-284. Frankfurt a. Main: Peter Lang, 2012.

Oyserman, D., Coon, H. M., and M. Kemmelmeier. 2002. "Rethinking Individualism and Collectivism: Evaluation of Theoretical Assumptions and Meta-analysis". *Psychological Bulletin* 128: 3–72.

Perkin, H. 1977. "Individualism versus Collectivism in Nineteenth-Century Britain: A False Antithesis." *Journal of British Studies* 17: 105-118.

Reips, U. D. 2002. Standards for Internet-based Experimenting. *Experimental Psychology* 49: 243–256.

Reykowski, J. "Collectivism and Individualism as Dimensions of Social Change." In *Individualism and Collectivism: Theory, Method, and Applications (Cross-Cultural Research and methodology, No. 18)*, edited by U. Kim, H. Triandis, C. Kagitcibasi, S. C. Choi, and G. Yoon, 276-292. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994.

Reykowski, J. 1998. "Belief Systems and Collective Action: Changes in Poland from the Psychological Perspective." *Applied Psychology: An International Review* 47: 89-108.

Russell, J. A. 2003. "Core Affect and the Psychological Construction of Emotion." P*sychological Review* 110: 145–172.

Russell, J. A. 2005. "Emotion in human consciousness is built on core affect". *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 12: 26-42.

Russell, J. A. 2009. "Emotion, Core Affect, and Psychological Construction. *Cognition and Emotion*. 23(7): 1259-1283.

Scherer, K. R. 2005. "What are Emotions? And How can they be Measured?" *Social Science Information* 44: 693–727.

Schimmack, U., Oishi, S., and E. Diener. 2005. "Individualism: A Valid and Important Dimension of Cultural Differences between Nations." *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 9: 17–31.

Schwartz, S. H. 1990. "Individualism–collectivism: Critique and Proposed Refinements." *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 21: 139–157.

Simon-Thomas, E. R., Godzik, J., Castle, E., Antonenko, O., Ponz, A., Kogan, A., and D. Keltner. 2012. An fMRI Study of Caring vs. Self-focus During Induced Compassion and Pride. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience* 7: 635–648. doi:10.1093/scan/nsr045.

Skorowski, H. "Churches and the Polish Transformations." In *The Political System of Poland*, edited by S. Sulowski, 106-119. Warsaw, Poland: Dom Wydawniczy, 2007.

Tamis-LeMonda, C. S., Way, N., Hughes, D., Yoshikawa, H., Kahana-Kalman, R., and E. Niwa. 2008. "Parents' Goals for Children: The Dynamic Co-Existence of Collectivism and Individualism." *Social Development* 17: 183-209.

Triandis, H. C. *Individualism and Collectivism*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995.

Triandis, H. C. 2001. "Individualism-collectivism and Personality." *Journal of Personality* 69: 907–924.

Valdesolo, P., and D. DeSteno. 2011. "Synchrony and the Social Tuning of Compassion." *Emotion* 11: 262. doi:10.1037/a0021302.

Waterman, A. S. *The Psychology of Individualism*. New York: Praeger, 1984.

Weber, M. 1958. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Translated by Talcott Parsons. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. (Originally published as two separate essays 1904–1905).

Weber, M. *The Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism*. London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1985.

Wierzbicka, A. 2009. "Language and Metalanguage: Key Issues in Emotion Research." *Emotion Review* 1: 3-14.

Wilson, P. A., Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, B., & Y. Niiya. "Happiness and contentment in English and Polish: GRID and cognitive corpus linguistics." In *Components of Emotional Meaning: A Sourcebook*, edited by J.R. J. Fontaine, J. Scherer, & C. Soriano, 477-481 Oxford: OUP, 2013.

Wilson, P. A., and B. Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk. 2014. "Affective robotics: Modelling and Testing Cultural Prototypes." *Cognitive Computation* 6(4): 814-840.

Zondag, H. J., Halen, C. P. M. van., and J. Wojtkowiak. 2009. "Overt and Covert Narcissism in Poland and the Netherlands." *Psychological Reports* 104: 833-843.

Appendix

GRID features characterised by the valence dimension (loadings of 0.6 and higher)

Low Valence Features	High Valence Features
In itself unpleasant for the person (0.979)	Wanted to sing and dance (0.975)
Fell negative (0.975)	Consequences positive for person (0.969)
Frowned (0.962)	Smiled (0.967)
incongruent with own standards and ideals (0.962)	Felt at ease (0.969)
felt the urge to stop what he or she was doing (0.953)	Felt good (0.966)
Felt inhibited or blocked (0.947)	Felt positive (0.964)
wanted to break contact with others (0.943)	In itself pleasant for the person (0.963)
Felt bad (0.94)	Wanted the ongoing situation to last or be repeated (0,961)
Wanted to keep or push things away (0.94)	Wanted to submit to the situation as it is (0.955)
Wanted to undo what was happening (0.938)	Wanted to be near or close to people or things (0.951)
Wanted to prevent or stop sensory contact (0.927)	Wanted to get totally absorbed in the situation (0.936)
Treated unjustly (0.922)	Wanted to be tender, sweet and kind (0.93)
Pressed lips together (0.921)	Wanted to go on with what he or she was doing (0.922)
Wanted to destroy whatever was close (0.907)	Muscles relaxing (whole body) (0.905)
Withdrew from people or things (0.882)	Felt calm (0.904)
Wanted to oppose (0.877)	Consequences positive for somebody else (0.893)
Wanted to flee (0.874)	Important and relevant for person's goals (0.892)

Wanted to do damage, hit, or say something that hurts (0.871)

Wanted to run away in whatever direction (0.862)

Violated laws or socially accepted norms (0.855)

Irrevocable loss (0.854)

Felt powerless (0.845)

Wanted to disappear or hide from others (0.841)

Produced a short utterance (0.827)

Felt exhausted (0.827)

In danger (0.814)

Wanted to withdraw into her/himself (0.801)

Felt nervous (0.801)

Tried to control the intensity of the emotional feeling (0.798)

Muscles tensing (whole body) (0.783)

wanted to be in control of the situation (0.778)

in itself unpleasant for somebody else (0.774)

wanted to be hurt as little as possible (0.759)

Felt weak (0.758)

consequences negative for somebody else (0.751)

Felt tired (0.747)

felt cold (0.743)

Got pale (0.726)

Inconsistent with expectations (0.725)

Had stomach troubles (0.7)

In itself pleasant for somebody else (0.885)

Wanted to comply to someone else's wishes (0.85)

Felt in control (0.844)

Moved toward people or things (0.837)

Felt energetic (0.833)

Important and relevant for person's goals (0.892)

In itself pleasant for somebody else (0.885)

Wanted to comply with someone else's wishes (0.85)

Felt in control (0.844)

Moved toward people or things (0.837)

Felt energetic (0.833)

Important and relevant for person's goals (0.831)

Centre of attention (0.825)

Felt strong (00.812)

Consequences able to live with (0.8)

Wanted to show off (0.8)

Felt warm (0.796)

Felt powerful (0.795)

Wanted to be seen, to be in the centre of attention (0.794)

Wanted to take care of another person or cause (0.755)

Confirmed expectations (0.705)

Caused by person's own behaviour (0.688)

Felt dominant (0.687)

Produced speech disturbances
(0.679)
Wanted someone there to provide
help or support (0.651)
Had a trembling voice (0.643)
Hid the emotion from others by
smiling (0.639)
Lacked the motivation to pay
attention to what was going on
(0.606)

Felt an urge to be attentive to what
is going on (0.676)
Produced a long utterance (0.667)

Familiar (0.662)