



**ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE  
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**Alecu Russo State University of Bălți**

**Faculty of Philology**

**English and German Philology Department**

# **Reflecting Upon English Language Teaching in a Culturally Diverse World**

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The 2nd International Spring Symposium was designed to consolidate a tradition that started in the year of 2015. The yearly Symposiums aim at responding to the numerous issues concerning language development and innovative English language teaching practice. We hope that the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Spring Symposium contributed to strengthening the

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## ON THE TRANSLATION OF CULTURE- SPECIFIC METAPHORS

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**Summary:** Metaphor is viewed as a special stylistic device that makes language colourful. It is used both in literature and in everyday speech. Language learners and translators might face difficulties while working with metaphors. Thus, translators whose task is to produce a target language text that bears a close resemblance to the source language text should be aware of cognitive and cultural issues when translating from one language into another. Therefore, it is not enough for translators to be bilingual, but they should be bicultural as well.

**Keywords:** culture-specific metaphors, linguistic style, conceptual metaphors, metaphorical expression, connotation, figurative meaning.

*“Metaphor is a universal category of a human culture, a tool that creates and enriches the languages”.* T. Vianu.

Metaphor is a stylistic device specific for poetry and rhetoric, yet, linguistic literature states that metaphor is successfully used in every day speech. In fact, we can say that the language itself in its deep root is metaphorical. Many of such famous linguists as V. Maslova and Șt. Avadanei speak of the so-called **protolanguage** that was metaphorical by all means (Maslova 1994:28) This fact leads to the conclusion that

language developed from a metaphorical meaning to a literal one.

This article dwells on main strategies and methods of translating metaphors, namely, of culture-specific metaphors and the difficulties language learners face while meeting them in literature or in everyday speech. Thus, the aim of this paper is to find the most appropriate translations for them in order to avoid ambiguity.

Studying the nature of metaphor, a Romanian scholar defined it as a figure of speech “*in which a name or a descriptive term is transferred to some object different from, but analogous to, that in which it is properly applicable*” ( St. Avadanei 1997: 28). G. Lakoff quoting from Aristotle’s “*The Poetics*” remarked that, “*the greatest thing by far is to have a command of metaphor*” (Lakoff 2004: 431) and he defined it as “*a shift carrying over a word from its normal use to a new one*”. In a sense metaphor, the shift of a word, is occasioned and justified by a similarity or analogy between the object it is usually applied to the new object. Culture, on the other hand, has been defined by him as “*a design for living*” and as the “*shared understandings that people use to coordinate their activities*”. It means that the members of a society must share certain basic ideas about how the world works, what is important in life, how technology is used, and what their artifacts and their actions mean. Whereas “*social structure*” refers to the practical/ instrumental aspects of social relationships, and “*culture*” refers to the “*symbolic/expressive aspects of social relations*”.

Scholars claim that culture, is the historical objectivity of the spirit in shapes that last, in shapes that turn into traditions, that become historic shapes describing man’s own world, man’s own universe ( Blaga 1977: 164). Additionally,

they consider that the spirit is nothing else than activity capable of creation, it is creativity itself, not something that creates but the creative activity, activity which is anterior to the concept of any dynamism, of any learned or experimented technique. Accordingly, when man creates culture he is a creator. Thus, we can say that it is a very important problem for translation, as a translator must perfectly know not only a language but also (s)he should know two languages very well. What is very important here, is the fact that (s)he should take into consideration the culture of the nation the language (s)he speaks or works with. It is certain that each language has its own linguistic style. Language determines thought as well as a particular vision upon the universe. Any linguistic system comprises within itself an analysis of the exterior world--an analysis that is its own and which is different from that of the other languages or from the other stages known by that particular language. L. Blaga goes on saying that it is a utopia to imagine that two words from two different languages presented in the dictionary as the translation of the other one refer to exactly the same things. Every language was formed within a definite landscape depending on a distinct and non-repeatable experience ( Blaga 1977: :174). It is a fallacy to assume, for example, that the English expression *to call a spade a spade* is to be rendered as such into Russian / Romanian, that is by *a numi casaba lopatǎ / называть совок лопатой*. Camelia Frunza points out that we need to take into account the fact that when trying to translate, we should preserve the semantic as well as the stylistic equivalencies of what has been expressed in the source text (Frunza 1975: 157). Therefore, a more appropriate translation would be *a spune lucrurilor pe nume / называть вещи своими именами* as this

is the Russian / Romanian expression that renders the same exact message.

We can say that the need for a more dramatic rendering of thought led to the creation of expressions that represent the way in which we usually think or act. We can affirm that these are linguistic instances of conceptual metaphors. Metaphor is present in absolutely all perceived dimensions of human existence being not a matter of words but conceptual in nature. It is the main mechanism through which we comprehend abstract concepts and perform abstract reasoning. In G. Lakoff's opinion "*Metaphor allows us to understand a relatively abstract or inherently unstructured subject matter in terms of a more concrete or at least more highly structured subject matter*" (Lakoff 2004: 430). He remarks that the situations in which metaphor facilitates the understanding of new fields or dimensions of experience that are difficult to comprehend in conceptual terms are difficult to comprehend in any language. One example lies in comprehending the abstract notion of life by way of a metaphorical expression, e.g. *a se afla la răscruce de drumuri / быть на перепутье – to be at crossroads*. In the following examples that render anger emotions which are equaled to temperature by way of verbal idioms: *a fi foc și pară / метать громом и молнией; / a fierbe sângele în cineva / вскипела кровь ; a fierbe de mînie / кипеть от злости – to get steamed up, to blow one's tops*. Based on these very examples we could say that being steamed out of a nation's customs and traditions they are the expression of the imagination as well as an emotional response to the environment. The place of a metaphor in these metaphorical expressions is "*a major and indispensable part of our ordinary conventional way of conceptualizing the world and our everyday behaviour reflects our metaphorical understanding of*

*experience*” (Kintsch 2002: 193). Every person is a part of culture and at the same time, contributes to its development. Human cultures are all alike in furnishing sets of systematized answers to the universal problems of human existence, but these answers are all different answers, and each culture is therefore unique. Another famous Romanian linguist asserts that what makes a language different from the others is not the way it expresses ideas but the way it analyses experience (Lacoff 2004: 437) Thus, we could say that there are series of expressions that are similar in several languages. For example, *țap ispășitor / козел отпущения - escape goat; a-și pierde capul / потерять голову - to lose one's head; a vorbi pe ocolite / говорить вокруг да около - to beat around the bush...*

Linguists consider that, due to the fact that they reflect the attitude towards the world in general and the life of the community in particular, metaphors have a wide circulation in the active language and they may have an explicit Russian / Romanian or English character. And Camelia Frunza thinks that a culture may be thought of as providing, among other things, “*a pool of available metaphors*” for making sense of reality, and to live by a metaphor is to have your reality structured by that metaphor and to base your perceptions and actions upon that structuring of reality (Frunza 1975:163). Another Romanian scholar speaks about a national style “*with metaphors, expressions and play-upon-words that suit that specific nation only and that are totally inappropriate when translated as such*” (Vianu 1998 :175). He goes on saying that the historical experience of the Romanians, a nation of farmers, shepherds, fishermen, bee-keepers, handicraftsmen led to the creation of linguistic expressions that are characteristic to this

particular geographical region as well as the people inhabiting it.

It is worth mentioning that metaphor is culture-specific, due to the fact that different cultures conceptualize reality in different ways. If we examine some metaphorical expressions that mirror the way the Romanian peasants perceived reality in different professions we will see that they are made up with the help of some technical words whose meaning is not obvious to the common Romanian speaker, e.g. *bezmeti* / *рассеянный* ; *tînjălă* / *лень*; *melița* / *болтовня*. Ana-Maria Trantescu says that *these words used to be part of farmers', shepherds', beekeepers' or fishermen's active vocabulary and they belong to the class of dead metaphors*" ( Kintsch 2002 :142). Thus, *bezmetic* / *рассеянный* used in the expression *stup bezmetic / тревожный улей* had, in beekeepers terminology, the meaning of *stup fără matcă / улей без матки (a beehive without a queen)*. Hence, the meaning of brainless, giddy that the respective term has today in the expression *a umbla bezmetic / быть рассеянным* – in this case the metaphor involves understanding one domain of experience, human behaviour, in terms of a very different domain of experience, bee keeping. We cannot possibly translate it by *to fly about like bees without a queen* which is its literal meaning but we may choose between to feel confused which renders only the meaning or to wander about giddy-headed (Stern 2001: 245). Today, no one thinks of the danger that the act of *taking the bull by its horns* presupposes the fact that one has to deal with an unpleasant situation. The “*imaginary*”, “*illogical*” or “*fantastic*” metaphorical linguistic expressions are significantly expressive. J. Stern claims that the special connotation of these idioms is the product of a generic association between some terms and some individual connotation that by no means

expresses their actual meaning (Stern 2001: 330). For example, a *spune verzi și uscate* / *рассказывать небылицы* – “to talk through one’s hat”, meaning to speak without knowing the facts, make unsupported statements. E.g. “*He is a very shallow person so he enjoys the company of those that like talking through their hats.*”

It should be pointed out that some of these expressions are increasingly expressive and they are the result of an exaggeration: - *a-l prinde pe Dumnezeu de picior, a fi în al șaptelea cer* / *быть на седьмом небе от счастья* – *to be in the seventh heaven, to tread/walk upon air*. E.g. “*She was in the seventh heaven when he kissed her.*”

The following examples are old phrases that are made up of words from the basic stock that reflect the life of the community as a whole. They all refer to customs that are related only to the geographic area of the Romanian people. E.g – *a o lua la vale* / *усмехаться над кем-то* – *literally to take down the valley, meaning to mock at, to pull one’s leg*.

- *ai carte, ai parte* / *если есть образование, то будет и кусок хлеба* - *literally you have a book, you have a share*, initially meant ‘he who can prove to be right with papers wins the trial’; later on the meaning of the phrase evolved, owing to polysemy of the word ‘carte’, to ‘*if you have schooling, you will get by in life*’ or “*knowledge is treasure*”.

- *a-i tăia cuiva din nas* / *отрезать нос кому-то* - *literally to cut off somebody’s nose*, meaning “to put somebody down” the phrase originated in an old Turkish (and the Romanian medieval) custom of cutting off the nose of those claiming the throne or of prisoners of war.

To conclude, we can say that all these metaphors and idioms are culture-specific, as they bring old customs and traditions specific to the evolution and life of the Romanian or

English people. The difficulty of rendering a metaphor does not lie in the assumption that languages cannot provide equivalent expressions for their metaphors, but in the fact that they lack counterpart metaphors related to the same conceptual domain or area. Translators suffer twice when approaching some metaphors, which are culture-bound. Due to their figurative meaning, translators should be trained in coping with metaphor translation not only in foreign-language programmes, but also in their native language. Very often, even native speakers are not always able to comprehend the figurative meaning of messages in their own language.

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## TECHNIQUES FOR IMPROVING TEXT COMPREHENSION

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Second

**Summary:** Reading is an activity, which mainly is taught in schools, but has an important role in people’s life. The reading process becomes interesting and pleasant for students when they understand what they read, that is why being teachers of foreign languages we should educate proficient readers. When students have a hard time understanding what they read, instruction can help. By means of different comprehension techniques, teachers should guide students to understand the meaning of the text. Thus, using various techniques proposed in the article, students will improve their text comprehension skills and, as a result, they will become competent readers.

**Keywords:** reading, reading comprehension, strategy, task, activity, technique

Giordano Bruno, the Italian philosopher, pointed out “If the first button of a man's coat is wrongly buttoned, all the rest will be crooked [15, p.146]. To my mind, if speaking about communication in a foreign language, text comprehension is the first button in this garment. From my experience, I can say that lack of reading comprehension

results in poor development of linguistic competence as I noticed that those who fail in communicating in English have failed first in reading. Thus, improving text comprehension is an issue that is worth taking into consideration by foreign language teachers.

Speaking about reading, it should be mentioned that it is a complex cognitive process requiring visual, auditory and motor skills to enable a child to recognize words and symbols, to associate them with the appropriate sounds and to endow them with meaning derived from previous experience [7, p.36]. Actually, a teacher's main objective is not just teaching his/her students to have good pronunciation, to enlarge vocabulary or read fluently. These things are important indeed, but our goal, as teachers of foreign language, is to motivate our students in reading. In other words, students might enjoy the reading process if they comprehend what they read. Comprehension is the process by which readers create meaning for the texts they read, images they view, or language they speak. These meanings are built from the connections the reader makes between the new material and his or her prior background knowledge, the ways the reader structures meaning, and decisions the reader makes about what is important or relevant [10, p. 9].

As C. Snow states, reading comprehension entails three elements: (1) The reader who is doing the comprehension, (2) The text that is to be comprehended, (3) The activity in which comprehension is a part [13, p.11]. Reading skills also influence reading comprehension and, as Grabe William argues, there are at least six general component skills and knowledge areas that pinpoint the cognitive processes involved in reading as having an influence on comprehension [5, p.379]. The six suggested skills and areas are:

- a) automatic recognition skills;
- b) vocabulary and structural knowledge;
- c) formal discourse structure knowledge;
- d) content/world background knowledge;
- e) synthesis and evaluation skills/strategies;
- f) metacognitive knowledge and skills monitoring.

“*Automatic recognition skills*” stands for recognizing letters, characters and words. This component allows readers to identify letters and words without being consciously aware of the process [4]. *The knowledge of vocabulary* is important for comprehensive reading because it helps the reader to match written words with their mental representation and construct the meaning of the whole sentences [14, p24]. *Formal discourse structure knowledge* is readers’ knowledge of the genre, which helps to predict the general organization of the text. Thus, this is the knowledge of typical structures of texts [14, p.43]. *Background knowledge* plays a strong role in reading comprehension as well as content learning; when individuals have knowledge about a particular topic, they are better able to recall and elaborate on the topic. Research on the brain and learning has shown that when students know about a topic, learning new information is easier. On the other hand, when students are not familiar with the topic, do not have prerequisite information (historical context, for example), learning can be more challenging [8]. Next on the list, namely *synthesis and evaluation skills* help the reader put the component parts of the sentence into a logical and meaningful utterance and evaluate which constituents are redundant for the overall meaning of the sentence. *Metacognition* is commonly referred to as thinking about thinking. In reading, metacognition refers to control of cognitive strategies that help the reader process new information from text development [2].

Another important aspect of reading comprehension pointed out by Palincsar A. S. and Brown A. L. is that reading comprehension is the product of three main factors: (1) considerate texts, (2) the compatibility of the reader's knowledge and text content and (3) the active strategies the reader employs to enhance understanding and retention [12, p. 188]. First of all, students should understand how texts work. This means that "considerate texts" play an important role in facilitating comprehension. A text that is well-organized and coherent is called a "considerate text" while one that is poorly organized and difficult to follow is considered an "inconsiderate" text. The more inconsiderate the text, the more difficult the text is for the reader to comprehend. Also, Palincsar and Brown claim that the compatibility of the reader's knowledge and text content is an important dimension of reading comprehension instruction. While it is possible that the texts used in nominated lessons involved content that was familiar to students and therefore did not warrant instructional attention, the trend towards learning strategies to the exclusion of learning content during reading comprehension instruction is an area that is worthy of investigation.

Speaking about active strategies the reader employs to enhance understanding and retention, it should be mentioned that they are very important for text comprehension. As it is stated by C.R. Adler, "comprehension strategies are conscious plans — sets of steps that good readers use to make sense of text" [1]. Comprehension strategy instruction helps students become purposeful, active readers who are in control of their own reading comprehension. In addition, it is worth mentioning that H. Douglas claims that for most second language learners who are already literate in a previous language, reading comprehension is primarily a matter of

developing appropriate, efficient comprehension strategies. Some strategies are related to bottom-up techniques, and others enhances top down techniques. And he suggests ten strategies, each of which can be practically applied to our classroom techniques [3, p.306-310].

The strategies are the following:

1. To identify the purpose in reading;
2. To use graphemic rules and patterns to aid in bottom–up decoding, especially for beginning level learners;
3. To use efficient silent reading techniques for relative comprehension (for intermediate and advanced levels);
4. To skim the text for main ideas;
5. To scan the text for specific information;
6. To use semantic mapping or clustering;
7. To guess when you are not certain;
8. To analyze vocabulary;
9. To distinguish between literal and implied meanings;
10. To benefit from discourse markers to process relationships.

Thus, reading strategies hold an important role in improving text comprehension, which, as H. Douglas Brown mentioned are taught through interactive techniques [3, p. 217]. And here rise a question: What is a technique? A ‘technique’ is regarded as a tool that is used to obtain an immediate result. Besides, H. Douglas Brown states that technique is any of wide variety of exercises, activities or tasks used in classroom for realizing objectives or goal of learning [3, p. 16].

As there is a potential confusing arising from multiple terms, it is good to make some clarifying. And we must bear in mind that experts in the field may have slightly differing points of view about the definitions.

A **task** is a specialized form of technique or series of techniques closely allied with communicative curricula, and as such must minimally have communicative goals and it focuses on the authentic use of language for meaningful communicative purpose beyond the language classroom.

An **activity** is virtual thing that learners do in the classroom. It is a reasonably unified set of student behavior, limited in time, preceded by some direction from the teacher, with a particular objective. Activities include role plays, drills, games, peer-editing, small-group information-gap exercise, and much more. Also, should be known that an activity implies some sort of active performance on the part of learners, it is generally not used to refer to certain teacher behaviors like saying “good morning,” maintaining eye contact with students, explaining a grammar point, or writing a list of words on the chalkboard.

Language teaching literature generally accepted ‘**technique**’ as a superordinate term to refer to various activities that either teachers or learners perform in the classroom. In other words, ‘technique’ includes all tasks and activities. They almost always are planned and purposeful, done on intention rather than by accident. They are the products of choices made by the teacher. And they can comfortably refer to the pedagogical units or components of a classroom session. A lesson may consist of a number of techniques, some teacher-centered, some learner-centered, some production-centered, some comprehension-centered, some clustering together to form a task [3, p. 129].

A comprehensive taxonomy of common language-teaching techniques, adapted from Crookes and Chaudron, classifies technologies into three categories: *controlled techniques*, *semicontrolled techniques* and *free techniques* [5,

p. 52-54]. Generally speaking, the list of techniques is rather big, but I will name just those which may be used for improving text comprehension.

**Controlled techniques** include the following: *Dialogue / Narrative presentation* requires reading a passage presented for passive reception without student production implication or other identification of specific target forms or functions (students may be asked to “understand”); *Reading aloud* is reading directly from a given text Reading aloud, whether it is done by the students or the teacher, is one of the most helpful techniques for improving reading skills and engaging readers of all ages. Hearing the text while looking at it on the page helps many readers process the information more effectively and understand how it should be read. As students listen to the teacher’s emphases and pauses, they see how those relate to the punctuation and structure of the sentence. Reading aloud also develops students’ language sense as they hear the way words are used, pronounced and interpreted; *Question-answer display* is an activity which involves prompting students’ responses by means of display questions (i.e. teacher or questioner already knows the response or has a very limited set of expectations for the appropriate response). It is distinguished from referential questions by the likelihood of the questioner’s knowledge of the response and the speaker’s awareness of that fact; In *Chain drill* the teacher begins the chain by telling an important thing mentioned in the text. The first student repeats the sentence said by the teacher and adds another fact from the text. The chain continues till each student adds an important thing that was mentioned in the text. *Skimming* is reading quickly in order to find out what the text is about. Skimming can also take in features such as headings, subheadings and illustrations to obtain an overview of the subject

matter. Scanning helps to locate specific information, making use of key words. Detailed reading is reading carefully to aid understanding. When reading for information, detailed reading usually follows scanning. Some texts, such as instructions, need to be read in detail throughout.

Some of the **semicontrolled techniques** are: Brainstorming is a form of preparation for the reading of the text, like setting, which involves free, undirected contributions by the students and teacher on a given topic, to generate multiple associations without linking them; Question-answer, referential is an activity involving prompting of responses by means of referential questions, that is the questioner does not know beforehand the responses information; Information transfer: Application is based on one mode (e.g., visual) to another (e.g., writing), which involves some transformation of the information (e.g., student fills out diagram after reading a text). Distinguished from Identification in that the student is expected to transform and reinterpret the language or information. Information exchange: is a task involving two-way communication as in information-gap exercise, when one or both parties (or a larger group) must share information to achieve some goal. A T-Chart is an orderly, graphic representation of alternative features or points involved in a decision. In one form, it can be a list of positive and negative attributes surrounding a particular choice. Drawing up such a chart insures that both the positive and negative aspects of each direction or decision will be taken into account. The KWL (Ogle, 1986) framework allows students to think about what they Know (K), what they Want (W) to learn, and ultimately what they did Learn (L), which places the students as the keepers and seekers of their own knowledge; ABC Graffiti (Massy & Heafner, 2004) is a process that combines two

reading comprehension techniques, ABC Brainstorming (Jones, 2000) and Graffiti (Gunter et.al., 2003). Students brainstorm information from the reading, work collaboratively to synthesize this information in prose, and develop thesis statements about the reading to capture the key content concepts. This final step is a great start for individual student writing. Think-Pair-Share is a cooperative discussion technique developed by Frank Lyman and his colleagues in Maryland. It gets its name from the three stages of student action, with emphasis on what students are to be doing at each of those stages. First, the teacher provokes students' thinking with a question or prompt or observation. Second, using designated partners or a desk mate, students pair up to talk about the answer each came up with. They compare their answers and identify the answers they think are best or most convincing. Finally, after students talk in pairs for a few moments, the teacher calls for pairs to share their thinking with the rest of the class. [9]

**Free techniques** include some of the following: Role play is a relatively free acting out of specified roles and functions. Games are various kinds of language game activities.

The purpose in referring to such taxonomy is to raise teachers' awareness of the wide variety of available techniques. Also, the taxonomy is like an indicator of how techniques differ according to a continuum ranging from controlled to free. And, of course, it is a resource for our own personal brainstorming process as we consider types of techniques for our classroom. In fact, as Geetha Nagaraj states, it is important to remember that having a repertoire of techniques is by itself no guarantee of success, one must know when to use which technique; in other words, the judgment of a teacher should be

turned to the needs of his/her particular group of learners [11, p.98]. To know better what techniques should be used in order to improve reading comprehension, it is good to know principles for designing interactive reading techniques presented by H. Douglas Brown [3, p. 313-316].

1. Use techniques that are intrinsically motivating;
2. Balance authenticity and readability in choosing texts;
3. Encourage the development of reading strategies;
4. Include both bottom-up and top-down techniques;
5. Follow “SQ3R” sequence. The SG3R technique is a process consisting of the following steps: a) Survey: skim the text for an overview of main ideas. b) Question: the reader asks questions about what he or she wishes to get out of the text. c) Read: read the text while looking for answers to the previously formulated questions. d) Recite: repeat the most important points of the text through oral or written language. e) Review: assess the importance of what one has just read and incorporate it into long-term associations.
6. Subdivide your techniques into pre-reading, during reading, and after-reading phases. a) Before you read, introduce a topic, encourage skimming, scanning, predicting, and activate schemata. b) While you read, take notes. Give students a sense of purpose for reading. c) After reading, use comprehension questions, vocabulary study, identifying the author’s purpose.
7. Build in some evaluative aspect to your techniques.

Because reading skills are totally unobservable, it is important in reading to be able to accurately assess students' comprehension and development of skills.

Nowadays we can go nowhere if we are not competent readers. It is important for our students when they pass Baccalaureate exams, because an item from the test is based

specifically on reading comprehension. This means that teachers should pay particular attention to this aspect of language from the very beginning of teaching his/her students. Teachers should have efficient tools which might help to reach this goal, and the techniques mentioned above are of great importance in this sense. It is worth mentioning that, if a teacher uses a range of techniques to teach reading comprehension he/she is more likely to succeed in reaching this objective than the one who has a limited number of techniques at command.

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## **TEFL: THE LARGEST PROFESSION INVOLVED IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE STUDIES**

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**Summary:** As there is little doubt that teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) is a very large profession, the questions we address here relate to how it is involved in language studies and to its relationships with the other disciplines that study English, i.e. general or theoretical linguistics and applied linguistics. Unfortunately, due to the diffusion of the concerns of these disciplines, the points of convergence between theoretical linguistics, applied linguistics and language teaching are fraught with problems and difficult to document.

What these three disciplines have in common is, without any doubt, the study of language. From a historical perspective, language teaching has chronological primacy, with linguistics following it, having its origins in the practitioners' need to describe language, and the general demand for a regularized and standardized language. As late as 1979, Henry Widdowson stressed the need of linguistics to be interpreted from the perspective of its usefulness to the language teacher (1979: 215-217) and wondered how relevant models of language description could be devised, and what factors would determine their effectiveness. This article examines some of the past and present difficulties that characterise the relationships established between theoretical linguistics, applied linguistics and language teaching, seen through the eyes of several major contributors to the field of language studies.

**Keywords:** theoretical linguistics, applied linguistics, teaching English as a foreign language, hierarchy.

### **The need for Applied Linguistics**

Widdowson was not the only linguist aware of the difficult relationship between language teaching and linguistics. Both linguists and language teachers felt the need for an intermediary between the two, and applied linguistics was the outcome of this necessity. Considered an offspring of

linguistics, as its name suggests, applied linguistics was largely identified with language teaching from the 1940s to the 1980s. Therefore, applied linguistics is the youngest of the three disciplines. Its history is a little longer than 65 years, if we consider that it started when the term ‘applied linguistics’ was coined; however, many will argue that it is only about 35 years old, considering that most of the concerns it has today, actually surfaced in the 1980s.

In 1965, the founders of the British Association of for Applied Linguistics (BAAL) considered that ‘applied linguistics’ was the framework they needed for analyzing and conceptualizing the language problems in the real world. John Trim<sup>1</sup>, president of BAAL, recorded his view of the origin of the Association in an address which represents the view of the linguist looking at the real-world problems: “Members of Departments of Linguistics were present because of their wish to see the findings of their science brought to bear on the social problems of the day.” (*apud* Davies 2007: 12). Years later, Strevens (1988: 31) drew a similar picture of the event:

“The fundamental question [...] facing applied linguists in Britain in 1965 was whether they were sufficiently like linguists (i.e. theoretical linguists) to remain within the linguists’ organization, or whether they were sufficiently like teachers of foreign languages, including English, to remain within their organizations, or whether they were sufficiently different from both to merit an organization of their own.”

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<sup>1</sup> John Trim was also one of the key promoters of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

In the same year, Mackey (1965: 253) claimed that “Throughout the history of formal language teaching there has always been some sort of applied linguistics, as it is known today.” However, the use of the term ‘applied linguistics’ to refer to language teaching did not come without difficulty

In 1973, Pit Corder (1973: 10) spoke of the “application of linguistic knowledge to some object – or applied linguistics”. The ‘object’ he had in mind is, without doubt, language teaching. In the cover notes, he stated that:

“Of all the areas of applied linguistics, none has shown the effects of linguistic findings, principles and techniques more than foreign-language teaching – so much so that the term ‘applied linguistics’ is often taken as being synonymous with that task.”

Corder was definitely aware that in limiting the coverage of applied linguistics to language teaching he was open to criticism, and mentioned “all the areas of applied linguistics”. To some extent, his statement was the mirror image of the *Language Learning* change of the name. In 1948 appeared the first journal in applied linguistics, *Language Learning – A Quarterly Journal of Applied Linguistics*, edited by C. C. Fries. This first made use in writing of the term ‘Applied Linguistics’ in the subtitle. Later on, the journal changed its name to *Language Learning: A Journal of Research in Language Studies*. The reason for the use of the new subtitle seems to be that the input was too undefined to keep the label of ‘applied linguistics’. The area of concern of the journal was thus limited to one main object, that of language teaching.

Corder and Fries, both founders of applied linguistics saw linguistics as the source of applied linguistics and the origin of indispensable linguistic perspectives for TEFL,

placing it at the top of a three-tier transmission model. Therefore, at the beginning, the role of applied linguistics was relatively straightforward. It enabled theoretical and descriptive academic linguistics to have *effects* (Corder's word) on language teaching and learning.

Fries considered applied linguistics to be an offspring of linguistics but saw it as intrinsically connected to research in language learning, as the embodiment of a two-way relationship between the tangible practical experience of learners and teachers and the more abstract perspectives on language and learning. In his paper 'As we see it' written for the first issue of the *Language Learning* journal in 1948, Fries (*apud* Schmitt 2002) described a hierarchical model with theoretical linguistics at the top having the responsibility of producing the basic, scientific descriptions of the language; then applied linguistics, with the role to select and grade the structures taken from the original description to suit the relevant pedagogic purposes, and prepare a description of source and target language in order to pinpoint areas of potential difficulty and then offer solutions to practitioners. The solutions were often in the form of teaching materials that would illustrate the patterns of the language and provide special practice of difficult points. These materials were then passed on to the practitioner for use in class. The authority of the approach resided in the materials themselves.

### **A hierarchical model of knowledge transmission?**

The relationship between general linguistics, applied linguistics and the teaching of English has always been seen as problematic. To some extent, applied linguistics established itself as a response to Chomskyan generative linguistics, with its abstractness, the assumptions of a language acquisition

device (LAD), and that of a theory universally applicable to all languages. All this took linguistics away from real-world language uses and problems, while applied linguistics has managed to maintain its interest in the real-world language problems.

Definitions of applied linguistics usually take the form of short statements which often contain the phrase ‘real world’, although one may wonder whether language focused on for analysis or study is still language in the real world. For instance, Brumfit (1997: 93) defined it as [...] “the theoretical and empirical investigation of real-world problems in which language is a central issue.” Grabe’s definition (2000: 9) was not very different:

“... the focus of applied linguistics is on trying to resolve language-based problems that people encounter in the real world, whether they be learners, teachers, supervisors, academics, lawyers, service providers, those who need social services, test takers, policy developers, dictionary makers, translators, or a whole range of business clients.”

Schmitt (2002: 1) also pointed out that: “‘Applied Linguistics’ is using what we know about (a) language, (b) how it is learned, and (c) how it is used, in order to achieve some purpose or solve some problem in the real world”.

In all these definitions the phrase ‘real world’ seems to be contrasted with the un-named linguist’s intuition or laboratory. And yet the real-world language is never directly accessible to research or teaching, as Labov (1966) pointed out. For instance, the students who are taught a foreign language in a classroom setting are said to be preparing for real-world communication, but are they experiencing it in the classroom? Are the language used by the teacher, the classroom activities

and the materials representative of the real, non-idealized, spontaneous language use? To what extent is classroom language similar to an authentic one? Are the classroom activities representative of spontaneous language use? In fact, once a language use is focused on for analysis or study it ceases to be in the real world, even if the distinction between real and non-real is often lax.

“Traditionally, the primary concerns of Applied Linguistics have been second language acquisition theory, second language pedagogy and the interface between the two [...]” (Schmitt 2002: 2). In other words, applied linguistics deals with language problems that reveal the role of language in people’s daily lives and concerns itself with whether intervention is either possible or desirable. It deals with both language and context and often draws on disciplines other than linguistics such as anthropology, education, psychology, and others. Very often, the language problems which applied linguistics concerns itself with involve institutions, such as the school, the work-place, the law-court, or the clinic. The involvement of other institutions and many people who are not necessarily linguists is the natural cost that applied linguistics has to pay to stay in the real world.

However, to complete the picture of this intricate scene, we need to mention that another tradition of applied linguistics is closer to linguistics, and is sometimes called ‘linguistics applied’ (Widdowson, 2000), although the term ‘applications of linguistics’ would be perhaps more appropriate. Linguistics applied has become more noticeable as theoretical linguistics started to show a more socially accountable role, giving up on its narrowly formalist approach. At the same time, applied linguistics has turned to more cognitive and descriptive approaches to language knowledge such as those found in

corpus linguistics, descriptive grammars (e.g., Biber *et al.* (1999), Huddleston and Pullum (2002), Carter and McCarthy (2006), Robinson and Ellis (2008)), and corpus-based dictionaries such as *COLLINS COBUILD*. All these resource books use language explanations driven by attested language users rather than the linguist's intuitions, and theories of language representation that have more direct applicability to real life language issues. Consequently, the two traditions, that of 'applied linguistics' and that of 'linguistics applied' seem to have come to resemble one another. Actually, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, linguistics and applied linguistics had parallel evolutions, with linguistics remaining a core source for applied linguistics.

Seen from this perspective, linguistics is essential for the majority of the areas of enquiry of applied linguistics. The latter admits that language knowledge of various types is crucial for a careful description and analysis of language, language uses and abuses, language learning, language assessment, and so forth. It draws on the knowledge bases of phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, and discourse analysis, even if certain areas of applied linguistics may not draw directly from all of these or any of them (e.g., foreign and L2 teacher training or language policy and planning). What has changed, nevertheless, is the recognition that linguistic foundations do not need to be narrowly prescribed; instead, they must be relevant to language description in specific contexts and provide resources that help address language-based problems and issues in real-world contexts.

**Theoretical linguistics – language teaching: a relationship fraught with suspicion**

Many general linguists worried themselves that the insights borrowed from theory were not enough to guarantee success in the language classroom; this concern was accompanied by a growing suspicion that uncritical transfer of insights from theoretical linguistics to applied domains could not always be justified.

Halliday, McIntosh and Strevens in a book that is considered a manifesto of applied linguistics, *The Linguistics Sciences and Language Teaching* (1964: 66), said that it can be *presumed* that linguistics can offer useful pedagogic insights to the teaching profession:

“He [the language teacher] is not teaching linguistics. But he is teaching something which is the object of study of linguistics, and is described by linguistic methods. It is obviously desirable that the underlying description should be as good as possible, and this means that it should be based on sound linguistic principles.”

This is to say that applied linguistics was viewed as essentially a ‘bridge’ or ‘link’ discipline, serving as an intermediary between linguists and all others working at the applied end of the chain, language teachers included.

Chomsky always denied any relevance of linguistics for language teaching or teacher education. In an address to language teachers in 1966, after making it clear that he was speaking as a linguist with no expertise in pedagogy, he seemed to imply that there is little point in taking linguistic perspectives on foreign language learning:

“I am, frankly, rather skeptical about the significance, for the teaching of languages, of such insights and understanding as have been attained in linguistics and psychology.” (Chomsky, 1966: 152-153)

Later, in the same address, he refined his opinion:

It is possible if not likely that principles of psychology and linguistics, and research in these disciplines, may supply insights useful to the language teacher. But this must be demonstrated, and cannot be presumed. It is the language teacher himself who must validate or refute any specific proposal. There is very little in psychology or linguistics that he can accept on faith.” (*idem*, 155)

In fact, Chomsky did not deny the relevance of linguistics to pedagogic practice; he just considered it *likely*. However, he disclaimed any authority to say what it is and relegated this to the language teacher.

According to Widdowson (1984: 22), the central question for theoretical linguistics was “how can relevant models of language description be devised, and what are the factors which will determine their effectiveness?”, where the words ‘relevant’ and ‘effectiveness’ may indicate a preoccupation with ‘real-world problems’. Widdowson seemed to doubt that the linguistic description or the linguistic principles could affect what is taught as a language subject. His argument was that language teaching problems need to be subjected to the enquiry of applied linguistics which does take into account other factors relevant to foreign language teaching.

Brumfit (1980: 161) stressed that applied linguistics cannot be only the application of linguistics:

“If applied linguistics were to be considered merely the application of linguistics to anything to which it could be applied, then it would be no more than a mirror for linguists to peer into – for the only issues which linguists can confront are linguistic issues, not applied ones.”

He (1995: 27) also wondered whether linguistics could actually offer insights relevant to problems related to language experience in the real world or the understanding and promotion of foreign language learning.

Towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Cook and Seidlhofer (1995: 10) suggested:

“Teachers like to have a sound theoretical underpinning for what they do: one which does justice to the complexity of language, language learners, language learning, and the social context in which these exist.”

However, the practitioners of language teaching have become suspicious of theory of late, claiming that it is remote from the immediate classroom reality, while the linguists still claim the authority to determine how foreign language pedagogy should be designed (Kumaravadivelu 1994, 2002, 2003, 2006).

### **Applied Linguistics in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Widdowson (2001: 15) saw applied linguistics as a mediating discipline between theory (linguistics) and practice (teaching), and added that mediation means adaptation, consisting in “the selection of insights from the whole range of theoretical and descriptive studies of language, stripping them of their formal integuments where these are cumbersome.”

Guy Cook (2003: 20) stated that “the task of applied linguistics is to mediate” between linguistics and language use. Applied linguistics is “the academic discipline concerned with the relation of knowledge about language to decision making in the real world [...]”. “The scope of applied linguistics remains rather vague” but tries to delimit its main areas of concern as consisting of language and education [...] (*idem*, 7-8).

What these remarks made by leading applied linguists reveal is that a certain consensus has emerged among scholars with regard to the importance and relevance of theoretical linguistics to those who work in applied linguistics. Of course, the important distinctions between general or theoretical linguistics and applied linguistics will remain. Davies (2007: 11) summarized them as: (a) the immediate and the distant as objects of study, with applied linguistics concerned with the former and theoretical linguistics with the latter; (b) the need of applied linguistics to expand to other disciplines because of the involvement of factors outside the scope of language. Applied linguistics is multi-factorial as in addition to linguistics, it draws on other disciplines. Ironically, theoretical linguistics (through its 'linguistics applied' approach), needs to do the same and cannot isolate itself from the daily uses of language.

Even if linguistics has never been completely denied the potential of a linguistic perspective on language pedagogy, its role is difficult to document. One way in which the influence of linguistics and applied linguistics on language pedagogy can be documented is an analysis of the study resources and materials. The different approaches to linguistic description they embrace provide insights into how clear and realistic language learning goals can be defined. These goals have to be integrated then within the process of teaching and learning. Linguistics can indeed offer insights for language pedagogy to ponder on about what is formally possible, communicatively appropriate and actually performed. Later, all these need to be seen from the pedagogic perspective of what is feasible and when (Hymes 1971).

## **Conclusion**

In brief, there is little place today for Pit Corder's (1973) view of the applied linguist as a consumer of linguistic theories. A clearer picture of the nature of applied linguistics and its relationship to linguistics could be obtained from Allan Davies's (2007) perspective, which suggests attention be paid to the target rather than to the source. Definitely, the target cannot be anything and everything to do with language. That is why, Corder's solution (1973) to focus on language teaching still makes some sense today, with many of the entries in the *Glossary of Applied Linguistics* (Davies 2005) having some connection with language teaching. Actually, many applied linguists are still involved at some level in language teaching, the largest profession involved in language studies.

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# **DIGITAL LITERACIES: WHAT ARE THEY AND WHY SHOULD WE CARE?**

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**Summary:** It is a wired world. In our increasingly connected society new skills are needed. So-called '21st century skills' are making an appearance in curricula the world over as governments and educators recognise the need to educate children (and in many cases adults) in how to effectively navigate an increasingly digital world. In most UK schools, new media literacy skills now supplement the more traditional three Rs (reading, writing and 'rithmetic). In Australia, schools teach 'digital literacy skills', and in the USA there is a growing awareness of the importance of 'new media literacies'. In Spain and Norway there is talk of 'digital competences' being a necessary part of the curriculum. In short, digital literacies are being recognised as fundamental skills for today and tomorrow's citizens.

**Keywords:** Technology, Digital Literacies, Education, Media

## **What are digital literacies?**

An umbrella term for the media literacy skills and digital competences that appear in national curricula, digital literacies refer to our ability to effectively make use of the technologies

at our disposal. We are not just talking about a checklist of technical skills, but also about the social practices that surround the use of new media. So not just knowing how to create a blog entry, but also knowing how to use this to connect with a wider community of readers and writers, and what sort of online persona one projects through one's post. Not just knowing how to upload photos to Flickr ( a photo sharing site), but knowing whether to publish them under a Creative Commons license and what this implies in terms of digital rights and usage.

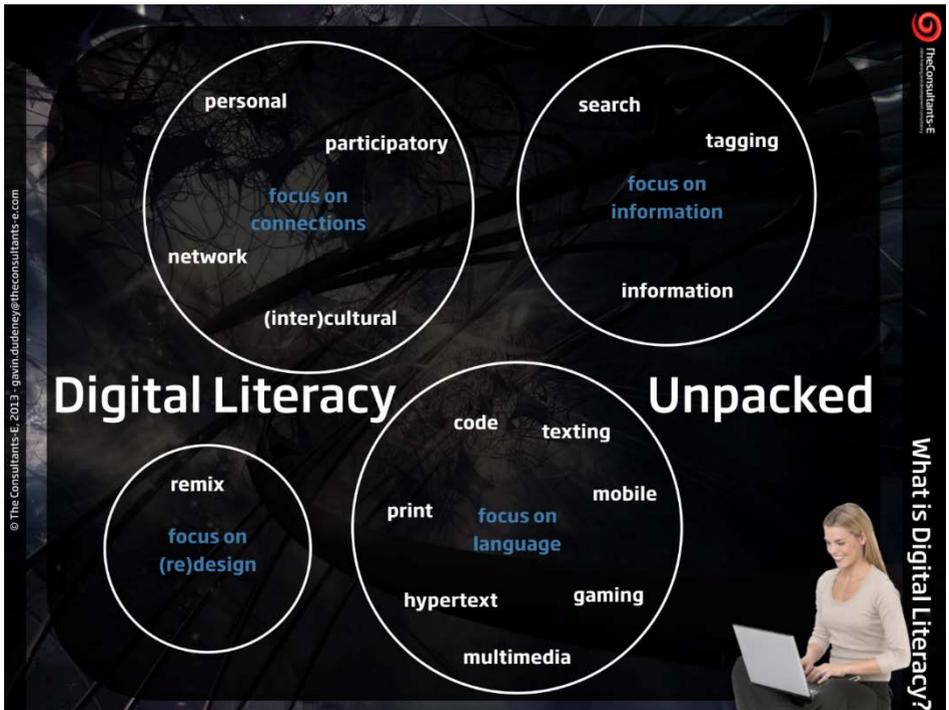
### **Why digital literacies in the language classroom?**

“What has this got to do with language teaching?” you may be asking yourself. Well, everything. Quite apart from the emphasis put on lifelong learning and the acquisition of ICT skills in all areas of education in many countries in Europe, we are teachers of the language of global communication. And that communication is increasingly digitally mediated. If our learners are to be fully functional citizens in the 21st century, they need digital skills. We can promote these skills in parallel with teaching English. Digital skills and English can help many of our adult learners get ahead in the workplace, or prepare our younger learners for better future job opportunities. Equally important, they can make our classes a lot more relevant and interesting in the here and now. According to Henry Jenkins (2009): *What students do in their online lives has nothing to do with what they are learning in school, and what they are learning in school has little or no value to contribute to who they are once the bell rings.* By integrating digital literacy work into our English classes, we can make them a little more relevant to who are learners are once they are outside the school environment.

## Digital literacies

So, what exactly is digital literacy? Are there a series of subskills or digital 'literacies' (note the plural) that we can define?

In our new book *Digital Literacies*, co-written with Gavin Dudeney and Mark Pegrum, we explore these new literacies in detail, offering a range of practical ideas of how they can be developed in the English language classroom. We can break digital literacies down into four main areas: those with a focus on **language**, on **connections**, on **information**, and on **(re)design**.



A detailed consideration of each literacy is beyond the scope of this article, but let us take a brief look at a few of them:

- **Focus on language: print and texting literacies**

Whilst print literacy is a familiar typology, texting literacy remains the domain of regular mobile phone users and is much maligned in educational circles for the supposedly negative effect it is having on literacy. In fact, as David Crystal points out, "typically less than 10 percent of the words in text messages are actually abbreviated in any way".

- **Focus on connections: personal, participatory and intercultural literacies**

These literacies come to the forefront in social networking spaces and other online media. They may include blogs and wikis, as well as social networks such as Facebook. In such spaces, users not only write about themselves and their lives, but also participate in wide social groupings that transcend geographical, religious and ethnic boundaries.

- **Focus on information: search and information literacies**

In many ways, these are two of the most important literacies for any learner to acquire - the ability not only to find information amongst the mass of sites and sources afforded by technologies, but also to evaluate that information.

- **Focus on (re)design: remix literacy**

This form of literacy refers to the trend of 'remixing' pictures, videos and other media, to create something

new, often to striking effect. This may refer, for example, to the trend for making 'literal versions' of music videos (<http://goo.gl/dTrvO>), or the doctoring of digital images to create memes such as lolcats (<http://goo.gl/Uln8p>). Understanding 'remix' is crucial to an understanding of media.

Clearly, then, this is a complicated mix of skills to master, and teachers can play a part in helping learners acquire some of the necessary skills by integrating them into their classroom practice alongside the regular 'content' they deal with. In this way, we can make a difference in our learners' comfort level, helping them beyond the 'tech comfy' to the 'tech savvy' which will contribute to their life beyond the classroom, in the professional workplace and in our (increasingly) knowledge-based economies.

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## INTEGRATING EXTENSIVE READING WITH WRITING TASKS IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

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**Summary:** Extensive reading is a topic that has been widely discussed over last decades and its benefits have been generally approved by many researches. Extensive reading activities contribute to student motivation and make student reading a resource for language practice and use in reading, vocabulary learning, listening, speaking and writing. Taking into consideration the fact that reading and writing are interdependent processes that are mutually beneficial, it is necessary to integrate them in the EFL classroom. Writing is a powerful means of communication by which students learn better to express themselves. Teaching and learning to write in any language is an essential area that influences students' performance and language learning. Thus, EFL teachers need to explore more innovative ideas and practices for reading-writing instruction, because integrating extensive reading activities into writing instruction, is effective for enhancing students' performance and provides a positive learning experience.

**Keywords:** Extensive reading, writing, EFL learners, EFL teachers, reading-writing instruction, students' performance

Most teachers agree that effective reading is vital in acquiring a foreign language. Reading instruction is an essential component of every foreign language curriculum. Understanding some important facts about reading, literacy,

and teaching methods is essential for providing effective instruction in reading [10].

Carolyn Walker states that students who read widely stand a much better chance of passing or increasing their grade, simply because reading improves both their knowledge of language and their language skills [11].

Extensive reading (ER) has been defined in various ways by educators, researchers, and reading specialists. The first person to apply the term 'extensive reading' in foreign language (FL) or second language (L2) pedagogy was H. Palmer one of the most prominent applied linguists in British twentieth-century language teaching, who defines the extensive reading as rapidly reading book after book where the reader's attention should be on the meaning, not the language of the text. He chose the term 'extensive reading' to distinguish it from intensive reading (IE) which often refers to a) the careful reading (or translation) of shorter, more difficult foreign language texts with the goal of complete and detailed understanding, and b) the teaching of reading in terms of language skills by studying reading texts intensively in order to practise reading skills such as distinguishing the main idea of a text from the detail, finding pronoun referents, or guessing the meaning of unknown words. M. West, who designed the methodology of extensive reading, calls it 'supplementary reading'. W. B. Elley calls it 'book flood', while B. S. Mikulecky calls it 'pleasure reading' and S. D. Krashen (1993) terms it 'free voluntary reading'. Although different terms are made, they have the same basis in theory as the first term used [12].

J. Bamford and R.R. Day also assert that extensive reading is reading large amounts of material to get an overall understanding while focusing on the meaning of the text than the meaning of individual words or sentences. In other words, the immediate focus is on the content being read, rather than on language skills.

Extensive reading is a form of reading instruction. Its definition and purpose are expressed as follows: ‘‘Extensive reading means reading in quantity and in order to gain a general understanding of what is read. It is intended to develop good reading habits, to build up knowledge of vocabulary and structure, and to encourage a liking for reading [14].

Research into extensive reading bears out teachers’ intuitions: there are many valuable language benefits and other benefits to be gained from extensive reading:

✓ Reading a lot of material at the right level will give learners valuable exposure to language (‘comprehensible input’), reinforcing language learnt in class and helping in the language acquisition process. For example, S. D. Krashen claims that writing is largely learnt through reading and that substantial vocabulary is acquired through reading. Moreover, he also argues that spelling is mainly learnt through reading, instruction being minimally effective. Other writers have claimed that extensive reading: ● helps learners to acquire grammar ● helps learners to acquire vocabulary ● improves writing ability ● improves reading skills including automatic letter and word recognition, reading comprehension, reading strategies ● improves other language skills (eg speaking) and overall language proficiency.

✓

On the affective level, reading books at the right level of difficulty will encourage 'the reading habit'. Students will feel positive towards material they can understand without great difficulty, and will therefore gain in confidence so that they will read more and more. In this way, they will have lots of practice in reading in English and so their comprehension skills will improve. As it is often said, 'You learn to read by reading'. Moreover, if students feel confident in reading in a foreign language, they will have access to a valuable learning resource which is not dependent on other people such as teachers or native speakers. It is also possible that students will learn to enjoy reading in the foreign language and so they will have a means for 'useful relaxation'.

- ✓ Through reading books in a foreign language, students will improve their understanding of its culture. Access to the cultural information contained in novels and stories will enhance and build the background knowledge which is such an important factor in reading comprehension [11].

Extensive reading is a topic that has been widely discussed over last decades and its benefits have been generally approved by many researches. J. Bamford states that students who read more will not only become better and more confident readers, but they will also improve their reading, writing, listening and speaking abilities and their vocabulary will get richer. There are many reasons why Extensive Reading is good for language development: 1. Extensive Reading: allows students to meet the language in its natural context and see how it works in extended discourse beyond the language met in textbooks 2. builds vocabulary. When students read a lot, they meet thousands of words and lexical (word) patterns time and time again which helps them master them and predict what

vocabulary and grammar may come next. 3. helps students to build reading speed and reading fluency which allows them to process the language more automatically leaving space in memory for other things 4. builds confidence, motivation, enjoyment and a love of reading which makes students more effective language users. It also helps lower any anxieties about language learning the students may have. 5. allows students to read or listen to a lot of English at or about their own ability level so they can develop good reading and listening habits 6. helps students get a sense of how grammatical patterns work in context. Textbooks and other study materials introduce language patterns but typically they don't appear often enough in a variety of contexts to facilitate a deep understanding of how the patterns work [15].

R. Waring states that in Extensive Reading: ■ the learner reads huge amounts of very simple text so that he/she can read smoothly, confidently and pleasurably. By reading a lot of text the learner will be practicing the vocabulary and grammar taught in other classes ■ most of the reading is done out-of-class ■ the learner reads well-within his/her current reading ability, so he/she can build reading speed, reading confidence and fluency ■ each learner reads different books from other learners ■ the learner chooses the book, not the teacher ■ the focus is on general comprehension and on developing reading fluency, and not directly on learning new language ■ the learner reads a wide variety of things that interest him/her, such as mystery novels, poems, thrillers, detective stories, factual pieces on interesting topics, and simplified classics of English Literature like Robinson Crusoe, and Death of an Englishman ■ because the learner is reading a lot of text, the learner revisits the most important vocabulary and grammar time and time

again, which will help to deepen his/her knowledge of it ■ usually the reading is not formally assessed, such as by language tests, but some level of comprehension must be checked [13].

According to S.D. Krashen effective reading skills are especially vital in the EFL context because exposure to spoken English is scanty, and reading is very often the only source of comprehensible and meaningful linguistic input that helps unconscious acquisition of the language [4]. A. Burns mentions that in addition to decoding sounds, words, and sentences, reading requires upper-level thinking skills and social awareness [1]. M. F. Graves, C. Juel, and B.B. Graves state that as readers confront new ideas, they use their background knowledge and experiences to construct meaning and form opinions about problems that derive from the text. For those who want to be creators and independent thinkers, literacy goes well beyond simply knowing how to read and write. In both the native and foreign language, critical literacy requires more than passively absorbing what is on the printed page; “it requires attaining a deep understanding of what is read, remembering important information, linking newly learned information to existing schemata, knowing when and where to use that information, using it appropriately in varied contexts in and out of school, and communicating effectively with others” (Graves, Juel, and Graves 2000, 24) [3]. Over the years, numerous studies have reported that extensive reading benefits language learners in a variety of ways, including in the area of critical literacy. These studies claim that prolific readers noticeably improve their reading proficiency, reading habits, reading fluency, and vocabulary retention, as well as writing and spelling (Nation 1997) [9].

In addition to gains in a range of language skills, students experience delight in language learning and positive feelings as extensive reading motivates them for further study and reading. R. W. Gee argues that the more we read, the more competent language learners we become, and the more we enjoy reading; the more we enjoy it, the more we read, and the more competent language learners we become. This cycle consolidates language learning in other important ways as well: we gain more competence in the target culture and acquire broader background knowledge for more complex reading [2]. When students read in a foreign language, there is often a tendency to focus more on new words or structures than on content or opinions (Freebody and Luke 1990). This happens not because the readers are incapable of reading for content due to their limited knowledge of the target language, but because they very often do not know how to make reading more meaningful. For example, language learners should know that numerous strategies are available to obtain information from the text as well as to get aesthetic pleasure out of reading [9].

It will be useful to familiarize the learners with the basic principles of extensive reading approach as they are presented by J. Bamford and R. R. Day. 1. The reading material is easy. Learners read material that contains few or no unfamiliar items of vocabulary and grammar. (There should be no more than one or two unknown vocabulary items per page for beginners and no more than four or five for intermediate learners). Students would not succeed in reading extensively if they have to struggle with difficult material. 2. A variety of material on a wide range of topics is available. There should be a variety of materials available in the library for students to choose what

they really like. This contains graded readers, magazines written for language learners at different ability levels and children's literature. For high-intermediate learners young adult literature can offer a bridge to ungraded reading materials. Advanced learners are supposed to read books, magazines and newspapers written for native speakers of English. The variety encourages a flexible approach towards reading as the learners are reading for different purposes (for information or pleasure). 3. Learners choose what they want to read. Self-selection puts students in a different role from that in a traditional classroom, where the teacher chooses or the textbook supplies reading material. This is what students really enjoy about extensive reading. They are also encouraged to stop reading anything that is not interesting or that they find too difficult. 4. Learners read as much as possible. The language learning benefits of extensive reading come from quantity of reading. For the benefits of extensive reading to take effect, a book a week is an appropriate goal. This is a realistic target as books written for beginning language learners are very short. 5. Reading speed is usually faster rather than slower. Because of the fact that material is easily understandable for students their reading is fluent. Students are discouraged from using dictionaries as this interrupts reading and makes fluency impossible. Instead, learners are encouraged to ignore or guess the meaning of a few unknown items they may encounter from context. 6. The purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information and general understanding. In spite of intensive reading which requires detailed understanding, extensive reading encourages reading for pleasure and information. The aim of reading is not a hundred percent comprehension; to meet the purpose of reading sufficient understanding is satisfactory. 7. Reading is

individual and silent. Learners read at their own pace. Sometimes silent reading periods may be reserved from class time when students read their self-selected books in the classroom. However, most of the reading is homework. Students read out of the classroom, in their own time, when and where they choose. 8. Reading is its own reward. Extensive reading is not usually followed by comprehension questions. The goal of reading is reader's own experience and joy of reading. However teachers may ask students to complete follow-up activities after reading. These are designed to reflect student's experience of reading rather than comprehension. 9. The teacher orients and guides the students. Before starting an extensive reading programme students have to be familiarized what it is, why they are doing it, what benefits it will bring them and how are they going to proceed. The teacher keeps track of what and how much students read, he/she is interested in their reactions to what was read in order to guide them in getting the most out of their reading [8]. These principles of extensive reading have been identified as key factors in successful extensive reading programs.

A growing amount of research shows that extensive reading over a continued period of time can have a direct influence on other language skills such as writing, particularly when it is supported by motivating while-reading and post-reading activities. Not only do learners produce better written work, but they are also more willing to experiment with language. It is difficult to measure the exact influence extensive reading has on writing. However, a clear link has been established between the amount students read and their ability to write clear, coherent English [16].

*Here are some activities:*

### **Pre-reading activities**

**The purpose of these activities is to prepare for linguistic, cultural and conceptual difficulties and to activate prior knowledge [6].**

Before students even get a chance to open the book it is important to spark interest in the story and in the whole process of reading. Let students know that you have chosen a book for them to read which you like yourself and you believe they will enjoy too.

- *Guess the story from the cover* – Show the cover to the class and elicit as much vocabulary as you can. Students then guess the story and write short summaries of the imaginary plot. These could be kept until you have read the book to see which one was closest to the real story.
- Find out about the author – Ask students what they know about the author. Ask students to write some questions about the author that they would like to know the answers to. Then use the internet to search for the answers to the questions. If you don't have access to the internet for the students, try to print off some information yourself and have it stuck around the room for the students to skim read and try to find the answers. Try typing the name of the author and the title of the book into a search engine and select the most suitable site for the age group or level. You could also try the site [www.biography.com](http://www.biography.com) which has over 250,000 concise and clear biographies. [16]

### **During reading**

**The purpose of these activities is to model good reading strategies. Good readers are actively involved in the text; they constantly interrogate and interact with it, and they predict what is coming [6].**

These activities should be selected at appropriate stages throughout the book. Some may be suitable after reading the first few chapters and others for the halfway mark. It is important to read enough of the book in the first 'go' so as to get students hooked on the story line.

- *Video parallels* – If the reader you are using in class has a film version use this to spot the differences in the plot between the book and the film. Always start with the book so that students can create their own visual images of the characters. They can compare their imagined characters with those in the film.
- *Horoscopes* – At an appropriate stage in the plot development, students write horoscopes for the characters predicting their future. From what they know so far about their personalities, which star sign do they think they are? At a later stage these can be used to compare against the real events of the book. Did the horoscope prediction come true?
- *Character interviews* – Students role-play an interview with one of the characters. Take a couple of the main characters 'out' of the book and bring them into the classroom. Assign students the roles of the characters and the rest of the class prepare questions they would like to ask them. The students playing the roles of the characters must try to put themselves in the characters' shoes and give suitable answers. Time and support must be given by the teacher to both the interviewees and the interviewers in order to make this successful. Depending on the book you could imagine

that the interviews are taking place in a police station, on a TV chat show or wherever seems appropriate. With a little imagination it can be a lot of fun [16].

### **Post-reading activities**

Well-designed after-reading activities usually require students to keep returning to the text and rereading it to check on specific information or language use [6].

When you have finished reading the book some of these activities could be tried:

- *Book reviews* – Students write reviews of the book giving it a star rating from one to five. Before doing this it would help to look at the style and language of book reviews.
- *Change the ending* – In groups students re-write the ending of the book. If it was a happy ending, make it sad and vice versa [16].
- *Story Innovation*

Story innovation can be a teacher-led or small-group activity. Using the original story as a basis, key words are changed to make a new story, while retaining the underlying structure. For example, students could change the characters in the folktale *The Elephant and the Mouse* to a whale and a little fish. While the central meaning of the tale should remain the same (the weak helps the strong and they become friends), key words and events are changed to fit in with the new characters. As the changes are made, the story is written up on a large sheet of paper.

- *Wanted posters* – Ask students to design a wanted poster for a character in a story incorporating as much of the information in the text as possible (who they are, their

description, what events are associated with them and so on.) [6]

In conclusion, we must mention that reading can be a favourite activity in the EFL classroom. The key is to follow the principles of extensive reading: students select books that interest them, they read at their own level and pace, and they do not let unfamiliar vocabulary or expressions derail the pleasure of reading. Extensive reading allows students to find pleasure in reading as they gain a general understanding of literary ideas, learn reading strategies, acquire new vocabulary, and increase their English proficiency. Since students read a large amount of material both inside and outside of the classroom, it is important for the teacher to make the objectives clear and properly monitor the students' progress. This includes knowing how to make reading interesting for students and also what assignments and assessment procedures contribute to a successful reading process. Also, it is important to mention that when extensive reading is combined with writing tasks (motivating **pre-reading**, while-reading and post-reading activities) it will make students arrive at a deeper understanding of reading strategies, literary elements, and the English language.

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# ADDRESSING ACADEMIC PLAGIARISM IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

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**Summary:** As Moldova continues to strengthen its academic and education systems, it is important that plagiarism be acknowledged and addressed. Plagiarism can be avoided by writers through the use of proper references and citation of sources. Referencing sources gives original authors credit for their work, allows readers to further understand the topic, and ensures that authors cannot misconstrue or make up information in their academic work. In the present article, the American Psychological Association (APA) format for referencing is discussed, along with further resources that can be helpful for better understanding referencing techniques.

**Keywords:** Plagiarism, referencing sources, bibliography, academic works, authors

## Introduction

Plagiarism is defined as “an act of fraud...involves both stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward” (Plagiarism.org, no date). According to Plagiarism.org, the following can constitute as plagiarism:

- turning in someone else's work as your own
- copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- failing to put a quotation in quotation marks

- giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
- copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not

Plagiarism is not only an issue among grade-level students, but has been spotted among works of prominent academics and leaders. In 2014, CNN presenter and host of his own show, Fareed Zakaria, was accused of plagiarism (Grove, 2014). Recently, it was also even found that many high-ranked politicians and officials in Russia, including President Vladimir Putin himself, have plagiarized their university and doctorate theses (Strauss, 2014; Danchenko & Gaddy, 2006; Khvostunova, 2013). As such, plagiarism is not only an issue in Moldova, but must also be addressed on a global-scale. One crucial step for being able to achieve this, however, is to teach students principles of academic integrity during the early stages of when they begin to write.

### **Why Does Plagiarism Matter?**

As countries of the former Soviet Union begin to revitalize their economies and social systems, it is crucial that education and science be held at a higher standard as well. Plagiarism can severely hurt a country's academic reputation, meaning that any quality research that is conducted will be less likely to be taken seriously and acknowledged (Strauss, 2014). It is crucial that young people in Moldova are able to graduate and seek

employment with confidence in the reputation of their academic institution; in turn, perhaps what is even more important for these young Moldovans is that employers value diplomas from Moldovan educational institutions.

Avoiding plagiarism and providing references means that writers remain respectful of the original authors' works and ideas. As a well-known idiom goes, academic integrity means to "give credit where credit is due", thereby promoting the idea of valuing people's contributions to society (Dattner, 2012). Especially among younger students, academic integrity is aligned with an important life skill of working to build a fair and balanced society.

Not only do citations/referencing give authors credit for their work, but references can also be very useful for readers to better understand specific topics. According to Harvard Guide to Using Sources (2016), "Academic writing is essentially an ongoing conversation among scholars". Referencing (or "citing") sources properly means that authors provide readers a "roadmap" so that they can trace the authors' knowledge and thinking a paper, that paper's references allow the readers to dig deeper into the topic, thereby also allowing the readers to find more material that is related to their research topic (Harvard Guide to Using Sources, 2016).

Referencing also ensures that authors have a limited ability to make up information – they are held accountable for their conclusions. Through a reference, the reader can compare the original source's conclusions with the present paper's conclusions, thus deciding for themselves if they agree or disagree. In journalism, for example, readers can look back at the references of a newspaper or journal and often learn that the journal's broad explanations or conclusions are not actually valid. For example, articles in the United States that claim that

vaccines are linked to autism (Huff, 2014) often lack citations, or rather cite a research article that was found to be ‘an elaborate fraud’ (Cohen & Falco, 2011). By following the “roadmap” of the authors’ citations and references, readers are able to make more accurate conclusions for themselves.

Based on the author’s personal conversations with teachers in Moldova, it is clear that the aforementioned reasons of avoiding plagiarism may not be enough to motivate students in Moldova to take academic integrity seriously. However, teachers can also allow their students to understand that many high caliber educational institutions outside of Moldova do take academic integrity very seriously, and students must be prepared for these expectations if they are to pursue an education abroad. Harvard University, for example, states that “Students who, for whatever reason, submit work either not their own or without clear attribution to its sources will be subject to disciplinary action, and ordinarily required to withdraw from the College” (The Crimson Staff, 2011). If Moldovan students become desensitized to plagiarism and are caught plagiarizing while pursuing an education abroad, these students become at-risk of losing their scholarships and being dismissed from these academic institutions entirely.

### **How to Reference Sources and Avoid Plagiarism**

Properly referencing sources is not an easy skill, and must be continuously developed and practiced. Many authors may end up plagiarizing on accident as a result of not understanding the rules and academic expectations. For teachers, it is important that, from the very beginning of the semester, they outline their clear expectations in regards to plagiarism. An entire class day

can be dedicated to learning how to reference sources and avoid plagiarism.

There are numerous styles and formats for referencing, but one that is often used and recommended in academic writing is the **APA Format (American Psychological Association)**. The **Purdue Online Writing Lab** (2016) explains the proper use of the APA format, where different types of sources (for example, books versus websites) are to be referenced/cited in a slightly different manner. The following information and citations are based on these guidelines.

When referencing sources, the reference would be listed in the **bibliography** section. The references are organized in the bibliography in an alphabetical manner. For books, the basic reference format is as follows:

Author, A. A. (Year of publication). Title of work:

Capital letter also for subtitle.

Location: Publisher.

For example:

Calfee, R. C., & Valencia, R. R. (1991). APA guide to preparing manuscripts for journal publication. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

In the actual body of the piece of writing, referencing is often displayed through either parenthetical or footnote form – this is known as **“in-text citations”**. In the APA format, in-text citations are done in a parenthetical form, which includes the author’s last name and the year. When the writer is using the

precise wording of the author, then the writer must use quotations (“”) to indicate this. For example:

According to Jones (1998), "Students often had difficulty using APA style, especially when it was their first time" (p. 199).

Or

Jones (1998) found "students often had difficulty using APA style" (p. 199); what implications does this have for teachers?

When summarizing or paraphrasing the original author's words, quotations are not required and the following format can be used:

According to Jones (1998), APA style is a difficult citation format for first-time learners.

To learn more about proper referencing techniques of different sources, other helpful ways to continue to learn about proper citation techniques can be to read the works of other published academics and authors, such as through Google Scholar ([scholar.google.com](http://scholar.google.com)) or JSTOR ([jstor.org](http://jstor.org)).

## **Conclusion**

For many Moldovan academics and individuals who wish to produce quality work or seek education abroad, understanding how to avoid plagiarism and reference the work of others is crucial. Although the rules of references and citations can often be confusing, online resources such as the Purdue OWL are useful. Moldovans who continue to advocate for quality

academic work within their country will also promote the Republic of Moldova on an international level.

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## **ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF TECHNOLOGY ENHANCED LANGUAGE LEARNING IN HIGHER TECHNICAL EDUCATION**

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**Summary:** The role of technology-enhanced language learning in higher technical education is discussed in the paper. The use of computers as a technological innovation to display multimedia as a means of complementing a language teaching method is considered. Advantages and disadvantages of technology enhanced language learning techniques used for educating future engineers in higher educational institutions are identified with the aim to determine the best methods to create a student centred environment in foreign language classes. The paper also attempts to classify main types of media according to the way they can be used in the frame of technology enhanced language learning.

**Key words:** technology enhanced language learning, higher education, computer assisted instruction, multimedia classroom.

Today the specialist with master's degree must be remarkably literate, understand the methodology of scientific research, be good at the latest information technology, and master the methods of producing, processing and recording scientific information. This requires the ability to work with a personal computer and use all its capabilities to obtain and process information.

Expansion of international contacts and strengthening of Ukraine's integration processes into the global community create the need for the specialists whose professionalism

directly depends on the level and quality of their foreign language competence, who are intellectual, acquainted with the developments in the domestic and foreign science, ready to engage in professional and business communication with other cultures. The introduction of modern computer technologies in the learning process is of great importance for the training of experts able to meet competition.

The need for the use of new information technologies in high school education results from the continuous enlargement in scientific and technical information and the rising number of students. This requires the search and implementation of new methods and means of improving the quality of pedagogical practice and teaching foreign languages.

The main objective of foreign language teaching is the formation and development of the communicative culture of students and training the practical skills of using a foreign language.

The task of the teacher is to create conditions for the practical mastery of the language for each student and to select those teaching methods that would allow each student to show their commitment, their creativity. The teacher also needs to activate the cognitive activity of students in learning foreign languages. Modern techniques such as cooperative learning, project methodology using new information technologies and Internet resources help to implement the student-centred approach to learning, provide for personalization and differentiation of education, taking into account students' abilities, their level of training, aptitudes, and interests. Any teacher must use all these techniques in their teaching activities.

The use of computer information technologies in pedagogical activities of a foreign language teacher is a priority, as it helps to turn the teaching of foreign languages into the creative process and many of the students, even the weakest, begin to open themselves, abandon their complexes and show great interest in a foreign language. Thus, the computer is the most suitable assistant for those foreign language teachers whose aim is to teach interactive communication. The use of computer-based training in pedagogical activities of a foreign language teacher possesses a huge motivational potential, because colourful and exciting software is very interesting for students. The computer is an important helper for the teacher in the development of English classes. With the help of the computer and new programs, we can do those kinds of tasks, which, in our opinion, are the most difficult.

Computer software market offers a huge variety of programs aimed at learning foreign languages. Among the most interesting programs are those which include audio and video support for texts, and are able to record speech and control knowledge acquisition. One of the most important programs that high school teachers in Ukraine are beginning to use in teaching a foreign language is a “Moodle”. This system allows a new level of organizing independent work of students. In addition, an important component of this educational environment is the communicative one, and the main means of communication are as follows: forums, emails, file attachments, chats and exchange of personal messages [2]. Transition of the foreign language learning system to the use of Internet resources and other information and communication technologies is inevitable, as it is here possible to use a foreign language in a real context, which contributes to the effective

formation of a foreign language competence of the university students.

The need for the use of new information technologies in the process of foreign language competence formation is based on completely new opportunities for creativity, learning and fixing a variety of skills that allow you to implement new forms and methods of teaching using Internet resources, computer training programs, multimedia, etc. It is well known that the learning based on multimedia application helps to better organize and structure the material in comparison with traditional forms, so that the information provided increases the effectiveness of training. Education based on the use of multimedia is interactive and leads to enhanced learning standards [1].

The process of learning a foreign language in high school is time-consuming and demanding, here the primary goal is not just to acquire the knowledge about the subject, but also to develop ability to use a foreign language as a means of communication in a professional environment. So the use of multimedia in teaching has a number of advantages:

- students can simultaneously see, hear and speak;
- communicative skills are developed (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in one task;
- access to information allowing instant switch from one type of educational information to another;
- unlimited tasks (use any reference information, write a test, look up grammar, vocabulary, correct pronunciation, etc.).

The use of Internet resources in teaching foreign languages is especially effective. Internet has brought into the information

technology such items as e-mail, newsgroups, chat rooms, web sites. Means of multimedia, hypertext, and telecommunication technologies allow you to use the computer to work on all kinds of speech activities – on the development of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills for real written and oral communication with native speakers of the target language.

Communicating in real language environment provided by the worldwide web students find themselves in real-life situations. Involved in a wide range of meaningful, realistic, and achievable targets, students are trained to spontaneously and adequately respond to them, which encourages the creation of original utterances rather than just manipulation of speech models.

Priority is given to understanding and expressing the meaning that motivates the study of the structure and vocabulary of a foreign language. Thus, the students' attention is focused on the use of speech models, rather than the models themselves, and learning grammar is indirect, in the process of communication, without grinding at grammar rules. As an information system, the Internet offers its users a variety of information and resources.

Talking about specific ways to use the Internet in English language learning, we should single out the following ways as the most effective ones:

1. E-mail correspondence with their peers who are native speakers or learners of English as a foreign language in other countries (modern, living language, flexibility, the opportunity to explore another culture, gain knowledge straight from the source).

2. Participation in text and voice chats.
3. Participation in international telecommunication projects (improving language skills, developing a general outlook, gaining specific knowledge needed for to carry out a special project).
4. Participation in online contests, olympiads, tests (opportunity to obtain an objective assessment of your knowledge, to assert themselves, to prepare for exams, to receive international certificates, absence of negative psychological moments or fear).
5. Possibility of quick and free publication of creative and research works of students (an increase in motivation).
6. Getting self-education courses free or paid in the frame of distance learning, including training in leading British educational institutions.
7. For teachers there is an enormous variety of linguistic and regional geographic material, lesson plans, developed by leading methodologists of the world, a detailed description of the latest educational techniques, recommendations prepared by the authors of authentic educational systems, the opportunity to continuously improve their own language skills, exchange experience with foreign colleagues (virtual methodical associations), to communicate in the English language and encourage their students [1].

The popularity of World Wide Web leads to significant changes in professional activities, enhances the creativity of students, has positive effect on the personal self-development. Experience has shown that the effective use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) contributes to continuous self-development throughout the whole professional life, the

person realizes the need for professional self-realization in the information society.

Problems of implementation of ICT in the educational process are attracting a lot of attention of psychologists, didactics and trainers and are studied in many different aspects, which is proved by the large number of publications.

Cognitive activity in learning, awareness and independence is an important step in the development of teaching methods using computer technologies. Students usually receive a certain amount of knowledge, and with the help of the Internet they demonstrate complex cognitive activities aimed at the perception of the material, its understanding and memorization.

The development of the global computer network opens up new prospects for improving the educational system. Students have access to global information resources, they can quickly transmit the necessary information of any size and of any kind at any distance, store information in a computer memory; process, edit, print.

Getting additional information from the Internet, students organize and produce new knowledge and use them for further improvement and development. Information is a unique resource, created by the society, and the acquisition of information and knowledge is becoming a major challenge in the learning process. Skills to analyze, process, perform lexical and grammatical exercises, to extract the necessary information and to answer questions are formed in the training of each student.

A valuable thing that appears in using new information technologies is that students acquire the skills of analysing and evaluating any information from the perspective of its importance, as well as the skills of memorization and self-control.

Currently, the role of computer is crucial and computer technology continues to develop rapidly. The use of new information technologies creates and develops the following traits of a creative personality: system scientific thinking, good memory, developed imagination, variability of thinking, ability to understand, to apply knowledge in practice.

A modern person must not only have a certain amount of knowledge, but also be able to work independently with information, to search and find the information they need in order to solve certain problems, to use that information to solve those problems.

As many researchers have noted, vigorous intellectual activities are important here, where a person activates their information processes related to the collection and transmission of information, where a teacher is to help them learn how to learn, and to form a willingness of a continuous self-development and self-education. It takes place in higher education, where all conditions are created for the development of creative thinking for the formation of the communicative competence and professional self-development.

The effectiveness of the use of ICT in teaching students of technical universities will depend on how the teacher will form the students' ability of intercultural communication. An

important role in this case is played by practical language learning in the form of abundant speech practice and the use of speaking exercises.

In the course of practical training using ICT the following skills are gained by the majority of students:

- accumulation of vocabulary;
- consolidation of knowledge;
- adaptation of students to the language environment;
- improvement of language skills;
- development of reading and listening skills;
- development of skills of independent execution of various grammar tasks;
- development of speaking skills.

The students show a huge desire to find certain information on their profession on their own. The task of the teacher is to select and limit the material, the most relevant and important topics, and to stimulate its educational interest.

Traditional educational process in our technical universities is a transmission of information from a teacher to a student, as a result, students learn to speak properly and express their thoughts correctly. Education through ICT allows students to come into contact with real native speakers and learn a foreign language being in real-life situations of communication, forms the ability of cross-cultural communications. At this stage, the students enhance their knowledge, skills acquired during basic training, gain the skills of using information and communication technologies in educational process.

We also attempted to distinguish main types of media used in technology enhanced language learning: sound (audio): radio broadcasts, recorded playback of speeches, recorded storytelling; films (video + audio): short films, interviews, full-length full feature movies; images/graphics: charts, paintings, photos; text: essays, journals, articles, email, chatting, books.

Nevertheless, extensive use of computers and technology in teaching foreign languages may present a number of disadvantages which modern teachers are to overcome: cost of technology, cost of training, cost of media, teacher or instructor must be comfortable with using technology, technology is never 100% fault proof, access issues outside the classroom, problem of too much work done by the computer. The language student must not rely entirely on the help system of language software to guide them through exercises but must make conscious effort to attempt exercises for a better learning experience.

All in all, the results of our research showed that using ICT in the foreign language classroom activates cognitive activities of students, promotes lasting and deep remembering, develops language skills, and forms the trainees' ability for intercultural interaction.

The results of the experimental work and the findings confirmed the effectiveness of the use of modern ICT in the foreign language classroom in a technical college in terms of achieving the goals of modern higher professional education.

Further development of the study, we see in the search of new modern teaching methods and techniques using ICT, hence the

training of engineers requires constant updating and revising the content of learning methods due to the rapid development of science and technology.

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## ADDING COLOR TO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

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**Summary:** 'Variety is the spice of life' and adding variety to lessons is what helps us English language teachers to avoid monotony and to keep things interesting in the English language classroom. Cuisenaire rods have time and again proved a welcome addition to carrying out a lesson. The celebrated figure associated with these colorful blocks of wood/plastic is Caleb Gattegno, a Belgian educator who used them as part of his 'Silent Way' approach. He believed that language learning was a...“process that is self-initiated and self-directed...hence the teacher's role is that of a technician or

facilitator” (Thornbury 2006, 205). Originally designed for teaching certain areas in mathematics, Cuisenaire Rods later proved useful for a wide range of activities in the English language classroom. In my own classroom they have proved to be a wonderful and versatile classroom tool and one’s imagination is all that is needed when using them with one’s learners. Featured are some activities and possible approaches in using them to help beginner up to advanced English learners in your language classrooms.

**Keywords:** Cuisenaire Rods, classroom tool, activities, learning styles

### **Color Naming**

Perhaps the easiest means of teaching colors in a pre-intermediate class would be to display a rod of a certain color, say, a white-colored rod, and then asking the class what color it is. Once going through the spectrum of colors, the teacher could then ask the class a question such as ‘what two colors form purple?’ while holding up a purple piece of paper to ensure understanding of what the color purple looks like. Once the class has answered the question correctly (e.g. blue and red), the teacher could then have the class get into pairs or group in order to do the same task involving forming colors to produce additional secondary and even tertiary colors, ensuring before class that each table has a set of rods (or alternatively pre-cut colored pieces of paper).

### **Focusing on grammar**

In forming simple sentences, we may use the orange rod in the set to represent the *subject*, the black rod to represent the *verb*,



they tell us you simply add ‘more’ in front of it, we may then use the dark green rod to indicate ‘more’. To show the superlative form, we may use the brown rod to indicate ‘the most’ (or even use *tworods* to indicate both words ‘the’ and ‘most’).

### **Clarifying Structure**

Let us say that we would like our learners to work on word order. Suppose we use the following sentence to illustrate: “She eats always pizza.” We can formulate the sentence in the following way:

The orange rod = subject (**She**)

The black rod = verb (**eats**)

The yellow rod = frequency adverb (**always**)

The green rod = direct object (**pizza**)

This would be a great opportunity to ask learners which position the frequency adverb ‘always’ may fit in the given sentence. Keeping the rods in the order shown above, we may simply ask the learners where to move the frequency adverb ‘always’ in the sentence to form a correct sentence. In this example, it could actually go either in the 2<sup>nd</sup> position of the sentence or possibly even in the last position.

As a natural extension to the previous task, the teacher could then ask learners to get into pairs and to intentionally produce ungrammatical sentences with their Cuisenaire rods. Afterward, their partners could then attempt to correct each other’s sentences as a way to clarify the structure of sentences. For example, we could...“assign a word or phrase to each of, say, five rods and the students then have to put them in the right order (e.g. *I usually get up at six o’clock*)...by moving the *usually* rod around and showing where it can and cannot occur in the sentence, the students get a clear visual display of

something they are attempting to fix in their minds” (Harmer, 2007, 181). By doing this, learners have an effective visual means of learning the language and as such can more easily internalize the language.

### **Word Stress**

It is not uncommon for learners to struggle with the pronunciation of certain words. Rods are effective in showing where exactly the stress lies in a given word. Let’s say our learners often mispronounce the word ‘terrific’. Given that learners have their own sets of Cuisenaire rods, they might be asked to use two rods of equal length (e.g. two white rods) and then use one that is a bit larger (e.g. one red rod). We can then ask our learners to position the rods in a way that shows where the stress lies in the word. In this case, the pattern would look like this:

white-**red**-white  
ter-**RI**-fic.

To reflect the stress in the word ‘wonderful’, the rods would be positioned like this:

**red**-white-white  
won-der-ful

### **Being precise about meaning**

Let’s consider another exercise involving word stress and the effect of changing the stress in one of the words in a given sentence. Take for example the following sentence: ‘She told him to paint the fence’. Using seven rods (six white and one red), we can ask students what it means when we emphasize the word ‘SHE’ in the sentence (and not, say, ‘he’) by using the red rod for the emphasized word. We could then position the red rod to indicate the word ‘HIM’ (and not ‘her sister’) or the

word 'PAINT' (instead of 'stain') or even the word 'FENCE' (rather than 'picture') as the examples below illustrate:

- 1) 'She told him to paint the fence'  
**Red**-white-white-white-white-white-white
  
- 2) 'She told **him** to paint the fence'  
White-white-**red**-white-white-white-white
  
- 3) 'She told him to **paint** the fence'  
White-white-white-white-**red**-white-white
  
- 4) 'She told him to paint the **fence**'  
White-white-white-white-white-white-**red**

An interesting discussion involving the relationship between emphasis and meaning could very well ensue!

### **Prepositions**

The teacher may use Cuisenaire rods with pre-intermediate learners to model sentences such as "The yellow one is: on the left/right of, on top of, below, beside, in front of, behind (etc.) the blue one and then have students do the same in pairs while she circulates, monitors and generally helps out.

### **Relative Positions**

Another idea to help learners with prepositions could be to ask them to pair up and to use a book to serve as a wall to block their partner's view of how they are positioning their rods on the table. After a minute or two of positioning their rods in certain ways, their partner then has to describe the way they have positioned her rods for her partner to do the same with her own rods. After she successfully does so, they switch roles.

## **Contextualizing/Storytelling**

This is one of the most entertaining activities involving Cuisenaire rods as it requires some degree of critical thinking and at the same time of thinking creatively. You could have students look up an Aesop Fable for homework and to come in to class the very next day to tell the story to their partner while using the Cuisenaire rods as a visual to accompany the telling of the story. This is effective in language learning as...“the rods can move quickly become other things it is possible to create remarkably absorbing little story situations, almost cinematic in scope and detail, despite the fact that the only actors are small blocks of wood (helped a bit by your own gestures and facial expressions)” (Scrivener, 2005, 316).

## **Conclusion**

Is this an exhaustive list of all rod activities that a teacher could use in her classroom? Definitely not. There are a number of fun and instructive activities and tasks that a teacher could employ in her classroom. Of course, using rods does require some practice on the part of the teacher though. Given that you believe your learners would benefit from this type of practice, it is important for you the teacher to feel comfortable using the rods. If possible, try out activities with your colleagues, friends or family before doing so with your learners. Once you develop a well-defined system in using your rods, try to be *consistent!* Otherwise, there is potential for confusion. For example, if you choose to use the white rod to represent the auxiliary verb ‘do’, continue using it for that very element of grammar when allowing learners to practice forming sentences for a given task or activity.

What if it is difficult to get your hands on some Cuisenaire rods? Do not despair! You can always get colored paper and cut out rectangular pieces of varying lengths to hand out to learners. If you model activities and tasks for your learners, you could always use tape or get some tack to place these makeshift 'rods' on the whiteboard or on the wall for all to see when modeling some activity.

Again, it just takes some time and imagination to invent some interesting and engaging lessons incorporating Cuisenaire rods. Those learners with strong visual or kinesthetic learning styles will appreciate using Cuisenaire Rods in your classroom. Indeed, even those learners with other-dominant learning styles will likely enjoy these simple yet effective little tools for learning certain aspects of the English language. Add some color to your English language classroom.

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**Summary:** The aim of this paper is to provide a short overview of the difficulties learners of English as a foreign language face. These difficulties are caused by either internal or external factors. In the first case, they are related to the grammatical structure of English and include the notions of countability, definiteness and specificity. In the second case, they are explained by the interference of the mother tongue and the ways articles are taught. One of the main things that teachers should keep in mind when teaching articles is the fact that the context plays a crucial role in article analysis. Thus, we should regard the article as an integral part of the text and consequently teach articles in discourse.

**Keywords:** Article usage, grammatical structures, context, target and second languages

It is common knowledge that the use of articles is a great challenge for learners of English. This refers to both, learners whose native language has articles, like Romanian, and those whose native language does not have articles, like Russian. Though Romanian has a widely developed article system, Romanian-speaking students also have to overcome numerous difficulties when learning how to use English articles. This is due to the great differences between the article systems in the two languages. In English, the articles are invariable, while in Romanian, they are modified by the grammatical categories of gender, number and case. Moreover, the English article is always a separate word preceding the

noun it refers to. In Romanian, the indefinite article is a separate word and comes before the noun but the definite article is attached to the noun forming one single unit. The problem is even more challenging for learners of English whose native language does not have articles. Thus, Russian-speaking students very often do not feel the necessity to use an article. All this and other peculiarities of article usage in English make the acquisition of the article system in English fairly difficult for our students. Consequently, it is imperative that the teachers reveal the main difficulties students have to overcome while learning how to use English articles.

Since wrong use of articles generally does not ruin communication, some learners think that the efforts required to be involved are not worth being made. This is an erroneous opinion, particularly when we deal with academic writing where, as we know, a much higher level of accuracy is required. Students should know that correct article usage is not only good proof of mastery of the language but also of greater precision in expression. According to Master (1997, p.216), “imperfect control [over article usage] may ...suggest imperfect knowledge”.

Among internal factors that cause difficulties in teaching/learning articles is the notion of **countability** (Butler, 2002, p.475). As both in Romanian and Russian nouns are divided into countable and uncountable, our students do not have major problems in identifying countability. There are, however, some instances that may create certain difficulties. One of them refers to nouns like *money* that are singularia tantum in English and pluralia tantum in Romanian and Russian. This becomes a serious difficulty taking into account the tendency to pluralize some uncountable nouns, such as *knowledge* and *behaviour* in English. Another difficulty is

related to the use of some English nouns, such as *experience* either as countable or uncountable. One more difficulty is that some nouns, such as *information*, usually singular in English, may be pluralized in Romanian. There are other similar nouns that do make it difficult for students to decide whether a certain noun is or is not countable. That is why it is important to make sure that students can deal with what is meant by countability. The next step is for learners to decide what article is to be used. In other words, he/she should deal with another important factor that refers to **definiteness**. Here it is necessary to decide whether the definite or the indefinite article should be used. As far as the definite article is concerned, teachers should help students understand that it usually shows that what is denoted by the noun is known to the hearer (Bickerton, 1981, p. 147). Contrary to this, the indefinite article means something/somebody that is not known to the hearer. Due to the fact that indefinite articles are limited in use to countable singular nouns, they are not so problematic. Students should know that these articles are used with nouns mentioned for the first time and also with generic ones.

Another factor that plays a great role in the choice of articles is **specificity**. In particular statements, the choice of the article depends on whether the noun is either specific or nonspecific. Thus we teach the students that specific nouns are used with definite articles. This happens because such nouns refer to objects that are known to both the speaker and the hearer. For example:

Take *the* new dictionary.

The implied meaning of this sentence makes it absolutely clear that there is only one new dictionary. On the contrary, if there are more new dictionaries next to the old ones, we would use the indefinite article before the noun:

*Take a new dictionary.*

Thus nouns that are nonspecific are used with indefinite articles.

In English, they talk about a third article that is the zero article believed to be more indefinite than the indefinite article. In fact, it is called the most indefinite article in the English article system (Master, 1997, p. 222) because it “removes the boundaries that make nouns discrete” (ibid). This might be illustrated by the following examples:

*She cooked a chicken.*

*She cooked chicken for supper.*

In the first sentence, the word *chicken* is used as a countable noun, whereas in the second sentence it is an uncountable one. The *zero* article here is essential in making the noun uncountable. It is generally used before uncountable nouns and nouns in the plural. Peter Master enumerates six instances in which a noun is used with a *zero* article (ibid). They are clearly defined and successfully illustrated and we think teachers should use them when discussing the article. They are as follows:

1. first mention (*Men are fools*);
2. general characteristics (*Snails have shells*);
3. existential *there* (*There are holes in your socks*);
4. defining postmodification (*Cars from Japan are reliable*);
5. partitive of-phrases (*We drank gallons of coffee*);
6. intentional vagueness (*Capitals of nations are rich*).

Chesterman talks about two forms of the zero article which he calls *zero* and *null* (1991, p.182). Most often, the *zero* article is used with uncountable nouns, like *water*, *butter* and with countable nouns in the plural (*apples*, *carrots*). The *null*

article appears before proper nouns and some singular countable nouns:

*Rome is the capital of Italy.*

*We will go there after classes.*

According to Chesterman (ibid) the articles may be described in the form of a continuum:

most	indefinite
most definite	
zero (O1)	- a - the -
null (O2)	

In this article scheme, the *zero* and the *null* articles, as we can see, are maximally contrasted to each other.

The separation of the *zero* and *null* articles may be difficult for intermediate students and it would, probably, be better to use the term *zero* article for both. However advanced students may be taught both the *zero* and the *null* articles. Of great help here would be the use of Master’s tables of noun types with the *zero* and with the *null* articles (ibid) that offers a good way of visualizing the noun types and the examples.

### Noun Types with the *zero* article (O1)

<u>Noun type</u>	<u>Example</u>
Mass (vs Count)	The boys ate <u>chicken</u> .
Abstract (vs Concrete)	<u>Prison</u> dehumanizes people.
	My brother is in <u>bed</u> .
	Herbert traveled by <u>car</u> .
	They communicated by <u>radio</u> .

Intentional vagueness  
caves are often blind and

“Adjective”(vs Noun)  
manly) enough to accept his fate.

Animals in underground  
colorless.

He was man (i.e.

The *zero* article in the above examples occurs in front of each underlined noun.

### **Noun Types with the Null Article (O2)**

<u>Noun type</u>	<u>Example</u>
Proper nouns	<u>Italy</u> is a fascinating country.
Rank, Position or Post	Mr Jones was appointed <u>chairman</u> .
	She was hired as <u>special assistant to the president</u> .
Familiar [Known] (vs Unfamiliar [Unknown])	
Time	After <u>dinner</u> , we'll see a movie.
	It usually snows in <u>winter</u> .
Place	I'll call you <u>next week</u> .
And coordinated NP	I left it at <u>home</u> .
	<u>Brother and sister</u> were inseparable.

The null article in the above examples occurs in front of each underlined noun.

Besides internal factors that prevent learners from using articles correctly, there are some external ones too. Among them are **interference of mother tongue** and **the way articles are taught**.

We will focus in this paper on the second external factor, that is, on how we think articles should be taught. It is common knowledge that very often articles are presented as an invariable closed system. The training is done based on separate sentences that do not make a whole text. This limits students to phrases and sentences only and leaves them helpless because only a text may offer the possibility to identify the essence and the role of articles as separate units and as part of a whole. This is particularly important as the article is considered one of the means that contribute to making a text cohesive. Thus what students should be taught is how to use articles in discourse. They undoubtedly should learn the rules related to the use of articles that have been mentioned above. The next step, however, will be to draw the students' attention to the role of context in choosing the right article. They will learn that the definite and indefinite articles help to identify new and old information (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1983, p.172). This is because the new information is usually indefinite, while the old one is definite. The teacher will also teach the students that the choice of the right article greatly depends on the type of the text. That is why indefinite articles that have an identifying character are used in descriptive texts that characterize things or persons. Below comes a short extract from *Modern English in Action* (Christ & Carlin, 1982, p.117) to illustrate this.

*Along the hall I glance into other rooms. A picture of a gentleman with a high forehead, probably Shakespeare, is the sign of an English class. A long bench with a gray stone top,*

*adorned with electrical and plumbing attachments, tells me of a science class...*

The whole situation is created in the text with the help of nouns used with the indefinite article.

The nouns that are repeated are used with definite articles. Here comes an extract from a text used in *Grammar Dimensions*, part III by Stephen Thewless (1993, p.326).

*A dog is man's best friend. I once had a dog named Poppy. She was a very faithful friend. Every afternoon when I came home, the dog would greet me with kisses and a wagging tail. I liked the wagging tail, but I didn't enjoy the kisses very much...There was a time in my life when I was feeling very lonely, and at those times she would be extra friendly. One time she even gave me a gift: an old bone. She must have thought the bone would cheer me up.*

Students should know, however, that there are certain instances in which we do not replace an indefinite article with a definite article when the noun is repeated:

*I once had a dog named Poppy. She was a good dog. Let's go to the forest. It's good to have a forest so close to your place.*

Analysing such examples the students will learn that this happens because of the difference in the semantics of the noun. It is also recommended that students should learn that the indefinite article usually develops a situation providing additional information, while the definite article helps to identify the major components of a given situation. It is the definite article that introduces the constant elements essential for the description. On the other hand, the indefinite article comes before nouns used to enumerate the details that are optional thus describing a certain situation. That is why it is often used to create the background of a narrative text, e.g.:

*That evening there came into the palace a young lady. The lady was so beautiful that all looked at her in astonishment.*

The background having been created, the definite article is used to narrate the events. Thus being nonspecific in the sentence that describes the background, in subsequent sentences the same nouns become specific and are used with the definite article as the speaker/writer and the hearer/reader know which nouns are being referred to:

The young lady looked at Gareth.

Though the present paper has provided only a few examples of major grammatical and pedagogical problems with nouns and articles, it becomes clear that article usage can be more effectively taught only at the text level.

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## **HOW ACTIVATE GAMES MAKE A LEARNER- CENTERED CLASS**

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**Summary:** Thousands of English learners around the world play *Activate* games. Others are using these as models for creating their own learner-driven and learner-center games. This is perhaps the most persuasive reason for bringing games into the classroom: they put the students in the center of the learning process, and let teachers--or even *insist* that teachers--take a step back.

**Keywords:** Student-centeredness, open-ended activities, critical thinking

*Activate* is suite of four games. The games are Board Games, Guess What cards, Picture This cards, and Word Bricks. All of these are available in free downloadable form at [www.americanenglish.state.gov](http://www.americanenglish.state.gov).

*Activate* is different from other language-learning games. First, all the games are open-ended. That is, there are always multiple correct answers. Students are expected to express their own opinions rather than repeat a fact or choose one correct answer.

One board game, for instance, is called "Which One is Different Why?" On each landing space a player is presented with four words, and the player must determine which does not fit the set. This is a common critical thinking task, sometimes called Odd One Out. There is usually one answer, but in *Activate* all four of the answers are possible. Here's an example: wood, metal, plastic, stone. An argument can be made that each of these is the item that doesn't fit. The important thing is for students to say *why*. When they do so, they get more speaking and critical thinking practice.

Another way that *Activate* is unusual is that it is designed as a stepping stone towards hands-on expansion by teachers and

students. Teachers are reminded, and instructed, how to make more games, how to make them suit the particular needs and or level of their students, and even how to involve their students in the game-making process. *Activate* is intended to empower teachers as materials designers.

## ON MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES AND LEARNING STYLES

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**Summary:** Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences theory and learning styles models offer relatively simple and accessible methods to understand and explain people's preferred ways to learn and develop. Even though both address students' preference for learning and offer accessible methods to understand and explain students' favored ways to learn and develop, there exist distinctive features between the two. The article provides scholars' opinions which help clarify the distinctiveness of 'learning style' and 'multiple intelligences'. It mainly relies on Gardner's concern that too many people mistakenly credit him with the term 'learning style' and approach 'multiple intelligences' not as an educational framework, but as one of the learning style theories.

**Key words:** multiple intelligences, learning style, education, learning modality

*“A dwarf standing on the shoulders of a giant may see farther than the giant himself”.*

(Didacus Stella, circa AD60)

Every EFL teacher strives to help their students to achieve a better mastery of English and a variety of methods and techniques are widely used in various classrooms to reach the scope. Many teachers and educators find value and benefit by using Learning Styles theory as well as Howard Gardner’s theory of Multiple Intelligences in one way or another. It is true that both address students’ preference for learning and offer accessible methods to understand and explain students’ preferred ways to learn and develop. However, learning styles should not be mistaken for Gardner’s multiple intelligences. Learning styles provide a different perspective for understanding and explaining a person’s preferred or dominant thinking and learning style, while Gardner’s multiple intelligences are distinct ‘potentials’; in other words, a set of skills allowing individuals to find and resolve genuine problems they face.

Howard Gardner, the author of the theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI) employs aspects of cognitive and developmental psychology, anthropology, and sociology to explain the human intellect. The theory was introduced in 1983 in his book *Frames of Mind*. Gardner’s research consisted of brain research and interviews with stroke victims, prodigies, and individuals with autism. Based on his findings, Gardner

established eight criteria for identifying the seven separate intelligences. He added an eighth (the naturalist intelligence) and is considering a ninth (the existential intelligence) in the book *Intelligence Reframed*, published in 1999. According to H. Gardner (2011), he had not anticipated “the extensive interest in the theory on the part of educators - initially in the United States, ultimately in many parts of the world” and is impressed by the variety of “ways in which they have used multiple intelligences ideas for various age groups (from preschool to university), in various educational settings”.

Alongside with the growing popularity of the theory of multiple intelligences among educators all over the world, there have appeared some misconceptions too. In an article for the *Washington Post* dated October 16, 2013, Howard Gardner writes about “one unanticipated consequence” which drove him to “distraction” and “that’s the tendency of many people, including persons whom I cherish, to credit me with the notion of ‘learning styles’ or to collapse *multiple intelligences* with *learning styles*” (Gardner 2013). In the article, Howard Gardner claims that the term ‘learning styles’ was circulating among educators much before he came up with his theory of multiple intelligences.

Trying to establish the roots of both concepts a curious fact was revealed: both concepts seem to have been inspired from French psychologist Alfred Binet, who, back in 1904, developed the first intelligence test. He created an intelligence test that could identify schoolchildren that were at risk of falling behind their peers in an academic environment. Then, during World War I, the US Army had a need to determine quickly the intelligence of a new recruit and what level of advanced training he would receive. This was the beginning of standardized tests to measure a person’s intelligence. It is

commonly believed that this first IQ test spurred an interest in learning styles.

The concept of 'learning styles' is commonly used throughout various educational fields. According to Curry (1991), "there is a bewildering confusion of definitions surrounding learning style conceptualizations and there is a wide variation in the scale and scope of learning, school development, and other behavior predicted by the various learning style concepts". Curry employs a metaphorical onion with multiple layers as a useful way of looking at 'learning style'. The first layer of the onion consists of instructional and environmental preferences and constitutes the most observable traits. The second layer of the onion refers to the information processing preferences of the learner. This relates to the processes by which information is obtained, sorted, stored, and used. The next layer is the personality dimension and is described as a 'relatively permanent dimension [...] apparent only when an individual's behavior is observed across many different learning situations" (Curry 1991, p.249).

A prominent figure at the time, James Keefe defines 'learning styles' as "cognitive, affective and physiological traits that are relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with and respond to the learning environment" and which "reflect genetic coding, personality development, and environmental adaptation" (Keefe 1982, p.44). As Keefe (1987) first clarified for us, learning styles are still considered to exist in three domains: cognitive, affective, and physiological. Cognitive styles are information processing habits representing the learner's typical mode of perceiving, thinking, problem solving, and remembering. The affective domain of learning style includes personality traits that have to do with attention, emotion, and valuing - with the processes of

motivation. Motivation is the end-project of attention, activity and interest. Affective learning styles are these same motivational processes viewed as the learner's typical mode of arousing, directing, and sustaining behavior. Physiological styles are biologically based modes of response that are founded on sex-related differences, personal nutrition and health, and reaction to the physical environment. Physiological factors are among the most obvious influences on pre-college learning.

Summarizing definitions on 'learning styles', Kinsella (1995) defines 'learning styles' as "natural, habitual and preferred ways of absorbing, processing and retaining new information and skills which persist regardless of teaching methods of content areas"(Kinsella, 1995, in Reid, 1995, p.171).

Howard Gardner defined intelligence as "a bio-psychological potential to process information in certain kinds of ways, in order to solve problems or create products that are valued in one or more cultural settings" (Gardner 1999, p. 34). This definition provides a distinct word for 'intelligence', that is 'potential' which is rather different from 'ways' or 'traits'. According to Gardner, "a style is a **hypothesis** of how an individual approaches the range of materials. If an individual has a 'reflective style,' he is hypothesized to be reflective about the full range of materials" (Gardner 2013). In addition, Gardner highlights two problems related to the concept of 'learning style' One problem is that the notion of 'learning styles' is not coherent. "Those who use this term do not define the criteria for a style, nor where styles come from, how they are recognized/assessed/exploited" Gardner claims. Further on, the author explains that..."both spatial information and reading occur with the eyes, but they make use of entirely different

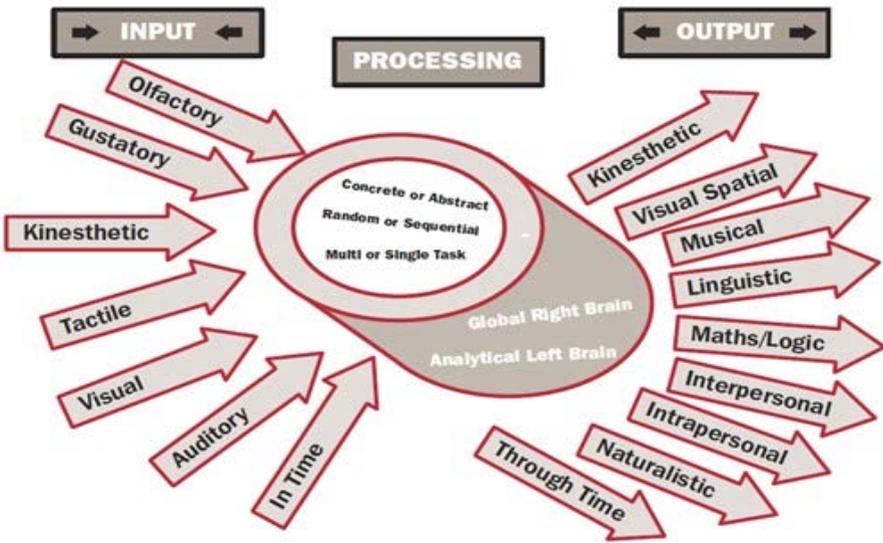
cognitive faculties. Similarly, both music and speaking activate the ears, but again these are entirely different cognitive faculties”. Recognizing this fact, the concept of intelligences does not focus on how linguistic or spatial information reaches the brain—via eyes, ears, hands, etc. What matters is the power of the mental computer, the intelligence, which acts upon that sensory information, once picked up. A second problem, as identified by Gardner, is that “there is not persuasive evidence that the learning style analysis produces more effective outcomes than a “one-size-fits-all approach”.

As author of MI theory, Gardner affirms that we all have between seven to ten intelligences. Nevertheless, we single out, as a strong intelligence, an area where the person has considerable computational power. For example, one’s ability to win regularly at a game involving spatial thinking signals strong spatial intelligence. One’s ability to speak a foreign language well after a few months of learning signals strong linguistic intelligence. Gardner emphasizes that there is strong evidence that human beings have a range of intelligences and that strength or weakness in one intelligence does not predict strength or weakness in any other intelligences. All of us display uneven profiles of intelligences.

Barbara Prashnig (2005) believes that the differences between Learning Styles and MI are very pronounced: “we must accept that there is a profound distinction between these ever more popular concepts”. According to B. Prashnig, ‘learning styles’ can be defined as “the way human beings prefer to concentrate on, store and remember new and/or difficult information” while MI is “a theoretical frame work for defining/ understanding/assessing/developing people’s different intelligence factors”.

The author points out that the Learning Style Analysis (LSA) gives a diagnosis about someone's learning/information intake preferences and provides guidelines / recommendations for improving academic achievement and school performance. In addition, she points out that learning style elements can be divided into biological (inborn) and conditioned elements (which can change over time). This is an important feature that the MI framework does not have. Further on, the author states that MI does not give information about the specific learning needs a student has during the information intake process. For example, it does not say how the classroom environment needs to be set up for making learning successful or which time of day is best for concentrating, which physical needs will increase or diminish the learning success. In addition, MI does not provide an in-depth understanding of students' learning attitudes and how they respond to authority, which is very important for successful learning processes; MI helps define, understand and develop students' intelligence factors.

In her article, B. Prashnig underlines that MI should be understood as the 'output' function of information intake, knowledge, skills and 'talent' – mathematical, musical, linguistic etc., whereas learning styles should be viewed as explaining information 'input' capabilities of human beings



Barbara Prashnig concludes that all these differences show that ‘learning styles’ and MI are not the same. Students with similar intelligence factors in the MI framework can have different learning styles, based on their personal biological makeup and their individual training. It is important that teachers should know about both concepts; they should assess their students’ learning styles as soon as possible to help them develop their different intelligence factors.

Reflecting on the differences between ‘learning styles’ and ‘intelligences’, Howard Gardner advised educators to individualize their teaching as much as possible and to learn as much as possible about each student. Also, the author suggested teaching important materials in several ways, not just one. Stories, works of art, pictures, diagrams, role-playing are just a few of the alternatives. In this way, teachers can reach students who learn in different ways.

A strong recommendation given by Gardner is to “Drop the term ‘styles’ ” given that it is confusing. Similarly, Gardner’s key point is the assertion that people possess a set of

intelligences, thus, intelligence is not a single scalable aspect of a person's style and capability.

Linda Nilson, Director Office of Teaching Effectiveness and Innovation at Clemson University, encourages us to move away from talking about 'learning styles' and towards talking about teaching 'modalities'. As key-note speaker to the 30th annual Lilly Conference on College Teaching at Miami University in Ohio in November, 2010 she made three important points about modalities. First, she emphasized the value of visual thinking tools, pointing out that "visual teaching modalities lead to deeper, more conceptual learning since visuals can provide the 'big picture' as to how concepts are related. Visuals also promote longer retention and easier retrieval of information" (Nilson 2010). Next, Nilson advises to use the best modality or modalities for the content, as there is stronger evidence that matching one's teaching style to one's content is rational. Finally, according to Nilson, people learn new material best when they encounter it multiple times and through multiple modalities. Since different modalities activate different parts of the brain, when students encounter new material in many different ways, they are in a better position to make more sense of the material.

Drawing a conclusion, it may be stated that the distinctions between learning styles and multiple intelligences are significant. Educators may recognize the existence of learning styles and rely on them while planning their teaching. Yet, following Gardner's recommendations, educators should admit that labeling learners may be unhelpful. It is entirely our own decision, as teachers, as to how best to make use of the information. Obviously, we should use these models and theories thoughtfully and moderately, in ways that suit our purposes.

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## REFLECTING ON REFLECTION

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**Summary:** Reflective teaching, reflective practice, the reflective practitioner... all of these terms have become catchphrases in the field of education and they constitute one of the strongest frameworks upon which the education of future teachers rests. However, what do people mean by being *reflective*? Is *reflection* just another skill to be taught in the teacher education curriculum? Is it a predisposition that all candidates should possess? How can *reflective practice* actually enhance student learning? These and many other questions are the ones that guided the elaboration of the present article. Our aim is to present our understanding of reflective practice in the context of pre-service and in-service teacher education and illustrate how this practice has been implemented in our courses. We believe that reflective teaching is a habit of mind that allows the teacher to achieve

higher levels of self-awareness, which has the potential to result in improved teaching directed to enhancing students' learning. However, we should warn from the very beginning that reflection is not a one-shot action that can be mechanized. On the contrary, we perceive reflection as a career-long endeavor that constitutes one of the main venues for professional development. Hence, we conceive of reflection as a process of continual questioning that leads not merely to a better understanding of who we are as professionals, but which is aimed at empowering our praxis by resulting in effective changes to the way we teach and learn about teaching.

**Keywords:** Reflective practice, teacher education, learning, curriculum development

## **The professional literature on Reflection**

In *How We Think* Dewey presented a definition of reflective thinking, and explained why the practice is a valuable habit of mind of effective teachers:

*Reflective thinking as a distinction from other operations to which we apply the name of thought involves (1) a state of doubt, hesitation, perplexity, mental difficulty, in which thinking originates, and (2) an act of searching, hunting, inquiring, to find material that will resolve the doubt, settle and dispose of the perplexity.* (Dewey, 1933, p. 12)

He listed five phases that teachers go through in the process of reflection: *suggestion, problem, hypothesis, reasoning, and testing (ibid)*. By participating in this process with an open mind, teachers are able to analyze their

classrooms and reach “*genuine understanding*” (Loughran, 1996, p. 4). Dewey’s beliefs were fundamentally situated at the beginning of the nineteenth century, a time of rapid change and progression in nearly every field. His beliefs were rooted in science: a field of dynamic growth. As Fendler, in discussing Dewey put it “*Reflective thinking represented a triumph of reason and science over instinct and impulse*” (Fendler, 2003, p. 4). Or, as Dewey himself explained “*Only when things about us have meaning for us, only when they signify consequences that can be reached by using them in certain ways, is any such thing as intentional, deliberate control of them possible*” (Dewey, 1933, p.18).

In 1983, Donald Schön looked at reflection through the lens of both intuition and science. He described two types of reflection: *reflection-in-action* and *reflection-on-action*. The first occurs in the classroom; the teacher makes decisions in response to classroom incidents.

One of our teachers-in-training recognized the first one as “*the ability to think on his feet and ‘react.’*” The second type of reflection occurs both before and after a lesson. Schön posits that teachers should rely less on science and more on their intuition in order to avoid being “too theoretical” or “disengaged” (Zeichner & Liston, 1996, p. 21) from the realities of the classroom. The tension between Dewey and Schön is clear: Dewey’s theories on reflection lie in science; Schön’s in the art of teaching. Fendler describes today’s reflective practice discourse, thus:

*Today’s discourse of reflection incorporates an array of meanings: a demonstration of self consciousness, a*

*scientific approach to planning for the future, a tacit and intuitive understanding of practice, a discipline to become more professional, a way to tap into one's authentic inner voice, a means to become a more effective teacher, and a strategy to redress injustices in society.* (Fendler 2003: 6)

Fendler also states that the overarching goal of reflection is the development of effective teaching. Richards & Lockhart observe that the process “*involves conscious recall and examination of the experience as a basis for evaluation and decision-making, and as a source for planning and action*” (Richards & Lockhart, 1994: 2).

Reflective practice is the core of many teacher education courses and it has been valued as a mediational tool of professional thinking and professional action. For example, van Manen (1977, p. 206) states that reflection allows for “*the awareness of alternative theories and their underlying assumptions, premises, principles, and methods will help them to prevent educators from adopting a narrow doctrinaire perspective.*” He concludes that reflection is simply thinking about teaching which means making decisions. This would seem to follow “*the Cartesian assumption that self-awareness will provide knowledge and understanding about teaching*” (Fendler, 2003, p. 17). Zeichner and Liston are critical of this because “*the implication is that teachers' actions are necessarily better just because they are more deliberate or intentional*” (Zeichner & Liston, 1996: 167). It assumes that teachers have the confidence, open-mindedness, and lack of ego to obscure rational and objective thinking about teaching. This is possibly not always the case. As another one of our teachers-in-training said, “*because of my natural stubbornness, I did my assignments, as ever, but I was less inclined than I*

*should have been to be as thoughtful as I could and should have been.”*

However, reflection can also become *literalized* (Diaz Maggioli, 2013, p. 134) and thus lose its potential for the advancement of individuals and the profession. Among the critics who warn about the abuses of reflection, Avis, Fisher & Thompson (2010) question teachers’ abilities to reflect and ask whether institutions support reflective practice. They pose the question whether reflection can become simply another “*task that a teacher has to do*”(Avis et al., 2010, p. 197). In this sense the act of reflection becomes routinized or “*technicized*” (ibid). Along the same lines, Boud and Walker advice that teacher education should be cautious of developing a “*reflection on demand mentality because it does not reference theoretical constructs*” (Boud and Walker, 1998: 191). Finally, Zeichner and Liston warn that reflective practice is a “*bandwagon*” that educators have jumped on. These objections notwithstanding, most of the literature on teacher education remains overwhelmingly supportive of reflective practice.

In response to the objections of reflection as routine action, Boud and Walker argue that the only way to avoid routinized reflection is for supervisors to create an environment of trust. If this bond of trust does not develop then the personal disclosure required, will not occur. Chamberlain (2000) closely examined the relationship between trust and self-disclosure and concludes that “*as an antecedent to self-disclosure, trust plays a critical role in supervision that encourages reflection and awareness of personal beliefs and values.*” (Chamberlain, 2000: 653).

The questions that remain are many. Prominent among them is how teacher educators can help teachers-in-training develop a reflective habit of mind that moves beyond fulfilling course requirements and focuses on allowing them to notice those areas of their teaching that impact on their students' learning in both a positive and a negative way. This awareness raising process, which is necessarily future-oriented, should yield answers that cannot be found in the literature, neither in spurious educational experiences. Once aware of their own professional actions, student teachers should be able to effect the necessary changes to their teaching so that it results in productive learning for all learners alike.

### **Developing a discipline of reflective practice**

Diaz Maggioli and Painter-Farrell (2016) posit that reflective practice is a career-long endeavor that needs to be nurtured and guided by teacher educators. It is not something they should merely assign to their students, neither is it something that student teachers can do on their own.

Once student teachers leave the teacher education institution and are embedded in their own professional communities, they should be able to use the tools afforded by reflection to promote their own and their peers' professional learning and development. Because of this, we conceive of reflection not as an end in itself but as a means to the end of enhanced teacher competence.

Laying out the path from awareness raising towards true reflection requires the application of various tools. In keeping with a Vygotskyan perspective to development, we

envision reflection as a tool that allows for the internalization of those meanings about teaching and learning which lie at the center of what can be considered an effective teacher. The tool of reflection allows the novice teacher to gain a progressively higher control of their own conceptualization of teaching, departing from socially agreed norms of what constitutes “good teaching.” Thus, reflection becomes the instrument with which teachers-in-training can decenter from their emphasis on their teaching, and can look at how learners’ learning actually develops.

The habit of mind we call reflection has been depicted in many ways. In our view, a reflective practitioner embodies the following characteristics:

- is involved in a continual process of self-reflection (both *in* and *on* action).
- relies on theory to inform practice.
- uses a reflective cycle to test observations, beliefs and perception.
- is willing to see perspectives other than their own.
- is willing to experience surprise.
- is open to new information about practice.
- do not see themselves as experts but as lifelong learners.

In order to foster the evolution of these traits various tools can be used both during initial teacher education, as well as throughout a teacher’s career. One tool we have found very useful is the so-called “Reflective Cycle.” This has been characterized in many different ways by various authors. Our version has teachers go through the following stages:

- 1) Definition and identification of a “problem” (or critical incident) within a lesson.
- 2) Hypothesizing about the nature and origin of the problem, as well as to its meaning.
- 3) Reasoning around additional factors that may impact on the problem and its solution.
- 4) Testing and evaluating proposed solutions.
- 5) Implementing the best solution and systematically adopting it as part of one’s own teaching repertoire.

Bearing in mind Zeichner and Liston’s warning that “*Not all thinking about teaching constitutes reflective teaching*” (Zeichner and Liston, 1996, p. 167) we choose to engage student teachers and teachers in reflection that is based on concrete evidences. These evidences lay the ground for the elaboration of private theories about teaching and learning, which are connected to the public theories stemming from research as well as from the professional literature in general. Anchoring reflection on concrete evidences allows for the adoption of multiple perspectives. What has been collected as evidence serves the purpose of sensitizing the teacher as to the impact of their actions of students’ learning. While at the beginning this will remain mostly at the level of speculation, as teachers move through the reflective cycle, they are able to hone their perception and finely tune those details that form the core of the problem under examination.

We propose various ways of collecting evidence for reflection. These are all grounded on the belief that, for evidence to be useful, it should be easy to collect, readily

available and respectful of the processes of both teachers and learners.

One readily available piece of evidence is the record of our work we can get by looking at the board at the end of a lesson. This allows us to see how the lesson evolved but, more importantly, what the learners took away with them at the end.

Along the same lines, we can look at students' notebooks. These show us what students have actually focused on during a lesson and it can give us an idea of the different rhythms and activities we have promoted. Reflecting on what students seem to have understood from our teaching is a useful starting point for the detection of potential problems with our teaching.

Of course, we can also talk to students. This "talking" could be real—as when we have one-to-one conferences where we ask students their opinion about our teaching—or virtual. For example, student teachers in our classes pose three questions to students during the closure of the lesson in the form of an "exit ticket." Students answer the questions briefly in writing and we use their answers to reflect. Questions posed include: "What have you learned today that you did not know before?" or "What did the teacher do that helped you learn?"

Next, and if the technology is available, we recommend filming or audio-recording lessons. A transcript of the recorded segment generally sheds important light into issues such as power imbalances in the classroom, a teacher's preference for a certain kind of activity, the nature of the questions asked, and the level of participation of students.

Finally, we engage student teachers in rewriting their lesson plans so that the new version incorporates those solutions made evident through reflection.

It should be noted at this stage that all forms of data gathering for the purposes of engaging student teachers in reflective practice have, at their core, the intention to open up their practice to scrutiny so that these can be improved. Once again, taking a Vygotskian perspective, the products of reflection are not kept on the individual's mind, but are socialized with others in the community so that they can all profit from every individual's efforts. In this sense, all community members are involved in helping one another reflect. They share views on an individual teacher's problem, they visit each other's classes and they actively help co-construct new understandings and potential solutions to the problems identified.

## **Conclusion**

Reflective practice can be seen as both a panacea and a pipedream. If developed in the midst of a community of practice where all members see themselves as learners of teaching, regardless of their seniority in the profession, it bears the potential to open up avenues for individual and collective professional development. What is needed for this powerful tool to actually effect the wanted changes in our profession is a committed group of colleagues who are willing to open up their practice to scrutiny and exploration. As Kemmis (1995, p. 139) aptly put it

We are inclined to think of reflection as something quiet and personal. My argument here is that reflection

is action-oriented, social and political. Its ‘product’ is praxis (informed, committed action), the most eloquent and socially significant form of human action.

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## **GRIT: ITS ROLE IN STUDENT SUCCESS IN ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES**

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**Summary:** Second language acquisition requires a significant investment of time in order to attain a level required for academic study. It takes between three to seven years to reach a level of language competency for post-secondary studies (Collier, 1989, Cummins, 1981, Mitchell, Destino & Karam, 1997). Sustained effort is needed to attain a level of language required for post-secondary studies. Grit - perseverance and passion for long-term goals – can facilitate students’ success in English for Academic Purposes. Research suggests that IQ is not necessarily a predictor of success in academics, however grit is (Duckworth, 2016, Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews & Kelly, 2007). Grit is best developed through a growth mindset (Dweck, 2009). I have implemented and developed this non-

cognitive trait in language programs for international students in post-secondary programs in Canada with good results.

**Keywords:** Student success, student motivation, English language learning, English for Academic Purposes

Attaining the level of English required for post-secondary studies requires language learners to invest a significant amount of time and effort over a lengthy period. Second language acquisition (SLA) theories describe how people learn language and the factors that help or hinder one's language learning. Research in the area of SLA suggests that it takes between three to seven years to reach a level of language competency in order to study at a post-secondary level (Collier, 1987). In Canada, students can enroll in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) to develop their language skills for post-secondary studies. EAP is a term that broadly describes courses that teach students academically-related language and subject matter (Brown, 2007). Despite the length of time required for EAP learners to develop their academic language proficiency, entering post-secondary study is possible. A non-cognitive trait known as "grit" can contribute to student motivation and lead to attaining language learning goals, achievement and success. In the field of positive psychology, GRIT is defined as "perseverance and passion for long term goals" (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007, p. 1087). Having grit means "working strenuously toward challenges, maintaining effort and interest over years despite failure, adversity, and plateaus in progress" (Duckworth, et al, p. 1087). Research in the area of grit suggests that IQ is not necessarily a predictor of academic success however grit is (Duckworth, et al, 2007). Duckworth and colleagues argue that "there is observed

association between grit and education as evidence that sticking with long-range goals over time makes possible completion of high levels of education” (p. 1092). Grit is an essential non-cognitive trait that can be developed in second language learners and promoted by language instructors to assist students in achieving their goals of attaining language level proficiency needed in higher education.

Research in the area of SLA indicates that some second language learners may require many years of study. Research conducted by Hakuta, Butler, and Witt (2000) reports estimates of up to 10 years before students are fully proficient in English. If language learners are to be successful in attaining the level of English required for post-secondary studies, they may have to sustain their efforts over a significant number of years, through an EAP program and beyond. Grit can help students to set goals and persevere, as it is a daunting task for non-native English students to acquire oral and academic English (Hakuta et al., 2000). Furthermore, unless motivation is maintained during the lengthy process of second language learning, the tendency is often for learners to lose sight of their goal, which could result in a decrease in their initial motivation (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Snow, 2014). Factors that can contribute to student success such as motivation and beliefs in one’s ability are important and should not be underestimated in SLA.

Given the length of time needed to acquire academic language skills, how do language learners in EAP programs persevere during extended periods of learning? Having grit is key. Gritty students “deliberately set for themselves extremely long-term objectives and do not swerve from them...” (Duckworth, et al, p. 1087). Students with grit are highly motivated which is the driving force that enables learners to expend continuous sustained effort (Moskovsky, Alrabai,

Paolini, & Ratcheva, 2012). Researchers suggest that language instructors can play a significant role in providing an environment that sustains students' motivation (Moskovsky et al.). Research conducted by Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008) defines two categories of motivational strategies in second language acquisition: instructional interventions applied by the teacher and self-regulating strategies used by learners to manage their own motivation. Grit, as a trait, is neither of these but by learning self-regulating strategies, students may be able to build their abilities to hold on to motivation, in effect becoming grittier.

### **How to Develop Grit**

The research on how to best to develop grit is still ongoing but the most promising evidence supports adopting a growth mindset. For the past twenty years, Dweck and colleagues at Stanford University have been conducting research in the area of student success related to their beliefs regarding intelligence. Their research explores how these beliefs can strongly influence learning success (Mangels, Butterfield, Lamb, Good, & Dweck, 2006). Dweck's research demonstrates how instructors can introduce and encourage learners to develop a growth mindset so that they view their failures as opportunities to learn rather than a reflection of their lack of ability (Duckworth & Eskreis-Winkler, 2013). In the language acquisition domain, Mercer & Ryan (2009) suggest, "the belief that certain individuals are naturally gifted language learners, or are simply good at languages, is one regularly encountered among language learners, teachers, and researchers" (p. 436). The positive news for both language instructors and second language learners is that Dweck's malleable theory of intelligence (implicit theory or mindsets)

suggests that because the brain develops like a muscle, it can be developed (Renaud-Dubé, Guay, Talbot, Taylor, & Koestner, 2015). This means student success is based on effort rather than talent or aptitude for language learning. Language learners who do this may be in a better position to preserve and sustain their interest despite setbacks; they may have more grit. Although research in implicit theories has not specifically investigated SLA, the concept of developing a growth mindset can be adapted by language instructors and language learners.

The importance of language instructors in learner achievement is a crucial factor. Students' ability to persevere could be affected depending on their mindset so language instructors should explicitly teach the theory of growth mindset. In a study conducted by Moskovsy, Alrabai, Paolini, Ratcheva (2013) on the effects of teachers' motivational strategies, participants ranked ten strategies: vary learning tasks; demonstrate care about students' progress and their well-being; recognize students' effort and achievement; respond to students' academic needs; increase the amount of English used; add humour; remind students' of the importance of learning English; relate the content to their everyday experiences, and consistently encourage them by believing in their effort to learn and succeed. The two strategies that are consistent with a growth mindset are recognizing students' efforts and achievements and consistently encouraging them by believing in their effort to learn and succeed. Dweck (2007) claims that "a growth mindset creates motivation and resilience" and that "the growth mindset message appeared to unleash students' motivation" (p. 3).

After studying Dweck's work, and having observed a lack of grit in some of my students, I decided to introduce the theory of growth mindset. Although the examples are

anecdotal, these language learners were able to express how the attitude of the instructor, including the belief in their abilities and praise of their effort and hard work, encouraged them to persevere and work hard to improve their language skills. One student told me, “I have a positive attitude to learning. I love to gain new experiences and knowledge and a growth mindset” (personal communication, December 2014). The student went on to say “I learnt through this that, although do many attempts, but never give up as tiredness at the final end stage” (personal communication, November 28, 2014). Another reported, “It’s been always your words which motivates me to work hard. I will try to work hard and continue to put more effort to improve my writing skills” (personal communication, December 4, 2014). Finally, a third said, “the biggest thing I realized on each step is efforts = result. I am thankful to you for motivating and encouraging me” (personal communication, March 16, 2015). There are numerous examples from other students related to the importance of instructor motivation, growth mindset, and their continued passion for long-term goals. The feedback from these language learners has resulted in reflecting as a teacher and understanding the crucial role that all language instructors can play in helping learners persevere to achieve their long-term academic goals of post-secondary study.

Research on grit and growth mindset does not only have an impact on language learners, but also on language instructors. Because of these findings, and my positive experience in introducing a growth mindset to language learners, I would like to engage in action research. This will help me to further my understanding to assist language learners to pursue and sustain their passion for their long-term academic goals. Given the number of years needed for language learners

to develop the required language skills for post-secondary studies, it is likely important for language instructors to implement strategies to develop learners' grit and growth mindset. Applying positive psychology to second language acquisition is an exciting possibility that requires further inquiry.

Dweck recently spoke at an educational conference where she explained that "Growth mindsets are not a magic trick that will solve every challenge in the classroom" (Ebad, 2016). Furthermore, Dweck talked about the importance of sitting with students to figure out what they are thinking, and tie this process with their learning. Dweck suggests that teachers find ways to sit with students to understand their long-term goals to help them grow their brains for a larger goal. For my EAP students, improving their language skills was not just about learning to write a better essay but for a more meaningful purpose which is to work in Canada. Learning about students' larger goals helps teachers to connect meaningfully, and provide important feedback, support, and motivation.

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# TEACHING EFL IN HETEROGENEOUS CLASSES AT TERTIARY LEVEL FROM A COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING PERSPECTIVE

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**Summary:** Teaching EFL to university students who have been learning it ever since primary school might look like an easy task meant to simply “polish“ the extensive knowledge they have already gained and improve their communicative competence. In fact, it turns into a real challenge for students and teachers alike. Students from the same academic group display highly heterogeneous levels of proficiency, ranging from beginner to upper-intermediate. Given the circumstances, teaching different ability students within the same class is extremely demanding, requiring a variety of strategies to suit all the participants and reach teaching/learning objectives.

**Keywords:** heterogeneous classes, differentiation, language proficiency, strategies, variation.

*Motto: Learning to differentiate instruction takes time and practice, and teachers should not be discouraged when good intent does not, at first, meet desired outcomes*

The main objective of EFL is to develop the learners’ communicative competence; that is to help them develop high quality skills to use appropriately in a variety of communicational contexts. For teachers of languages at tertiary

level, particularly those who teach future teachers the responsibility for their students achievements is even higher as their students will later go to school and perpetuate those teaching standards. That is why we believe it is of much importance to consider some aspects that this category of teachers face, and namely having to deal with mixed ability students and how to best take advantage of these differences in order to get the best instructional outcomes.

At university level, after the students have studied English for about a decade, teachers' expectations about their language proficiency are usually high. In fact, quite often, the very first encounter with a group of newly admitted students reveals quite a disappointing situation. The students display a variety of proficiency levels, ranging from elementary to upper-intermediate. The teacher, who has been hoping to have an easy job, just guiding them through their endeavor to increase their competences and to improve those communicative competence components that require more attention (intercultural or strategic competences), may feel rather disappointed. Having students with different levels of competence in reading, writing, speaking or listening means that the teachers are expected to shape their teaching strategies so that they cater for the needs of all their learners. To some, it may appear like a nightmare, whereas others consider it a positive experience happening in almost every class around the world. In fact, it is believed that every group of learners is heterogeneous as the learners come to class with different worldviews, interests, learning styles and cognitive abilities [6, p.302]. It is simply crucial that teachers discover these and do everything it takes to cater for all their learners' linguistic needs. Coping with highly heterogeneous classes means

working hard to identify the best teaching strategies for each of them by choosing, adapting and implementing approaches, strategies, contents and materials.

Heterogeneous classes are nothing to complain about. As Perry Ur [6, p.305] notes, “mixed ability classes provide a rich pool of human resources,” they are a great challenge that gives the teacher many possibilities for professional development that occurs naturally.

In this article, we are going to explore how dealing with heterogeneous classes can turn into a positive, rewarding experience for both teachers and learners and what strategies can be used to make even the lowest achiever participate in the lesson and learn the language. As it has already been stated, having to deal with heterogeneous classes should not be taken as a negative situation. Bremner [1, p. 4] concedes that the “biggest stumbling block to effective mixed ability teaching would seem to be teacher attitude. Teachers lack the knowledge of strategies to use in the classroom for a wide range of ability.” A solution to it is contained in Šimanová’s note who points that “those teachers who are familiar with the different abilities and needs of their learners and use mixed ability teaching strategies effectively are much better equipped to meet the diverse learning needs of their learners” [5, p.27]

Teachers’ expectations, and disappointment, about students’ competences in a foreign language at tertiary level are somehow justified. At least in theory, the differences should not be significant as they all are admitted to institutions of higher education after their Baccalaureate exams, which means they have been studying the language for a number of years

and should master the basics of it. Sometimes it happens so that in one and the same group the variations are considerable, including students who are highly proficient alongside with students who can barely introduce themselves. The reasons behind this are many and various. The many variations should be accepted and approached appropriately. They are inevitable and just like the differences between people: no two are alike! Student diversity should be taken for granted and never “expect them to fit into a mold or all behave the same way. All of these students must be served by our education system, and we must create a system that gives them everything they need” [8].

Adopting a positive attitude will pay a lot more benefits for all the parts involved than complaining all the time how this or that class does not meet our expectations. It is the wisest thing not to disregard the many advantages, opportunities and challenges a teacher may explore and use to her own and her students’ benefit thanks to the manifold differences existing among students. Our students come to classes with their own worldviews, interests, culture, learning objectives, motivation and expectations. Teachers can, and should exploit these assets to shape their teaching. Dealing with mixed ability classes means having the chance to apply a considerable variety of teaching strategies and the freedom to create, adapt or experiment with different approaches in order to reach objectives. It should be viewed as a motivation and urge for us to be inventive, creative when figuring out how to best present an idea so that it reaches all of our students. Teachers’ job becomes a lot more demanding as they have to figure out how to reach all those different students and to satisfy their linguistic needs. There are students who are very bright and even if their competence in a foreign language upon admission

to university is reduced, they can easily catch up if they are persistent and make sustained efforts. There are also those who have difficulty to understand even elementary things at the other extreme, and another category including those falling somewhere in between [4, p.7].

Given this context, teachers are the ones who, with the price of burnout and enormous amounts of time spent, have to provide all their learners with a large diversity of teaching/assessment/learning strategies to ensure high quality academic standards. With larger amounts of materials to cover and a number of hours that is never enough, they have to know their students' learning styles and interests before engaging in teaching them. For this purpose, a diagnostic assessment is required whenever a teacher enters a class for the first time and its results will serve as a departing point for him/her when deciding upon the approaches to use for the best outcomes. It will help teachers to better understand what will work best in a given context and to shape their teaching accordingly. At tertiary level, teachers' responsibility for providing enough opportunities to all learners to improve is even bigger, especially if communicative competence in EFL is directly connected to the students' future career and professional development.

Dealing with students whose competences in English range from elementary to upper-intermediate is challenging in many ways first of all, because in real teaching contexts, very little attention is paid to this situation. Students at pedagogical universities do not receive exhaustive training about how to approach efficiently the significant number of differences their learners will display and how to exploit these to get the best

teaching/learning outcomes. They are mainly trained about how to approach the average learner. Textbook writers have the average learner in mind as well offering teachers insufficient options about approaching differences. When face to face with a highly heterogeneous class, a novice teacher might fail to realize that her teaching does not reach all the learners and in this way, she contributes to widening the gap between good and low achievers.

Having in one and the same class several categories of learners may be very demanding on the teacher who is expected to involve them all in activities aiming at improving their language proficiency and developing effective communication skills. The teacher is in charge of what her learners will be able to do with the language skills they have developed in class and for this purpose, she will have to shape her teaching strategies so that they include those who are thought of as good students as well as those deemed weak ones. The fast achievers will have already finished a task whereas the slow ones will not have started it yet. They sometimes can display disruptive behavior as they are getting bored. The teacher then, has to come up with a number of ideas about how to keep the good ones busy and how not to frustrate and discourage the weaker ones.

In this context, it is important to specify that the distinction between strong and weak learner is not clear at all. What exactly is meant by a 'weak student'? Is it the student who cannot speak English? But s/he may be very skillful at writing in English, at decoding a written text or some other language-oriented tasks. The sensible teacher will consider the manifold benefits she can get from a heterogeneous class and through

judicious, regular planning to develop exactly those features that will reveal the best of her students in terms of language learning outcomes.

In the following paragraphs, we will describe several tips that have been used effectively in heterogeneous classes and that proved efficient if well adapted to the needs of particular categories of learners. The strategies described have been used for years with different age range classes displaying a variety of English proficiency levels. The first category of strategies are mainly used for the sake of creating a pleasant, student friendly, anxiety free environment. The specialized literature emphasizes the role of a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the class and good relationships between the teacher and her class as well as amongst the students.

Students come from different backgrounds and they experience many frustrations when they have to speak in front of people they do not know very well or when they are insecure because of limited communicative competence in a foreign language. They can become introvert and making them speak can turn into a real trial. That is why setting a supportive, pleasant environment in the language class is of paramount importance. If learners are expected to open up, they should first feel at ease and safe with their teacher and mates. They should not be afraid of saying something stupid or wrong, but feel confident that it is by making mistakes that they are really learning. They should be eager to participate in class discussions without being criticized or compared to the better ones. In her extensive study on heterogeneous classes, Marie Perera noted the following “A learner who has high motivation and high self confidence and low anxiety and not concerned about the

possibility of being a failure on the language class, will have a low filter which will allow plenty of input thus enabling good language acquisition. But a learner with low motivation, lacking in self confidence and anxious and on the defensive as he considers his/ her class to be a place where his/her weaknesses will be revealed will receive little input [3, p.16].

A wise teacher will first focus on creating a welcoming atmosphere for all the learners, regardless of their proficiency level, and treat the ones who are insecure about their aptitudes even with more consideration and openness and never miss a chance to encourage them. Karl Menninger stated that what the teacher is, is more important than what he teaches. If a teacher does not show enough enthusiasm about what she is teaching, is dull and cold, the students will develop similar features and find it very hard to open up and release what they have best.

Never, never criticize or underestimate your class, no matter how disappointing or disheartening the situation may seem. There definitely are hidden values and as a teacher, you have the task to discover, polish, and make them shine.

At the beginning of every academic year, when meeting a class for the first time and trying to determine what their proficiency level in English is through discussions on topics familiar to them, I do whatever it takes to show that I care and that not having strong communicative competences is not a problem as long as there is a wish and strong motivation to learn. A wise strategy enabling them to participate more actively in class is boost students' self-confidence, make them believe they are intelligent and it is not the end of the world if they cannot speak as fluently as their peers do. A student's said the

following: “My teacher used to tell me I was more intelligent than I thought I was, and I was” I got inspired from these words and decided to use this strategy with my students with the incredible result of having many striving to prove me right. It is Pygmalion effect and a powerful tool working wonders with the majority of learners, only if applied at the right moment.

If we start with preconception that weak students have little to say, if ever, make innumerable mistakes and are no resource to explore in an English class, that is exactly what we will get. Empowering them, making them feel appreciated and worthy will prove that even these very weak students are capable of achieving great results.

At pedagogical universities in Moldova, the student population consists mainly of young women. It is well known that there is always more tension and a tendency to mock at one another in same gender classes. In order to prevent students from failing to their participating actively in class because when they fear of being made the others’ laughing stock, I spend sufficient amount of time at the beginning of the course setting rules of behavior, emphasizing primarily upon the word RESPECT, which is written on the board in uppercase and stays there for a whole fortnight. Whenever necessary I simply point to it, and during the year, I rewrite it occasionally on the board to remind them of its value in building sound, collaborative relationships. It is a ‘no bullying’ policy which contributes to decreasing the stress and anxiety level of those who do not have very good knowledge of the language and of those who are extremely shy by nature.

By the end of the first month, the problem of having the better students mocking at the weaker ones disappears from class and the latter feel they are supported in their efforts to learn English. It is more about discipline but it is essential to establish certain rules of behavior which will create a positive learning environment.

The greatest number of teachers, at least that is what I hope is true, apply a variety of strategies to alleviate the challenges that arise from heterogeneous classes, but some studies reveal that the majority do not: they adopt an “I do not care” attitude.

There are many strategies and tips to use with mixed ability classes and each of them can be adapted in keeping with parameters like class size, proficiency level, learning style etc. The teacher’s task is to choose the ones that apply best to her teaching context and be consistent with them.

Penny Ur believes that paying attention to each individual in your class, personalizing tasks and adapting materials to suit their level of competency in English are some strategies that are rather efficient with heterogeneous classes.

**Differentiated education:** All students receive information in different ways: just think of Gardner’s multiple intelligences. Foreign language classes offer many opportunities for students to make use of their best skills and learn in the way that best suits their character. An inspired, committed teacher will not allow room for boredom and routine: she will apply an enormous variety of activities, tasks and formats in keeping with her students’ individual needs. Lightbown and Spada contend that: “Varying the activities, tasks, and materials can

help to avoid this [boredom] and increase students' interest levels" [p. 57] Multimodal texts are extensively used and thanks to modern technology, various learning contexts are designed to stimulate and encourage participation in a large number of communicative situations. The strong students have a tendency to dominate the class, answering before the weaker ones have managed to process the questions.

The teacher will then have to vary tasks, giving some extensions to the good ones. An example could be to ask them to list three more causes/solutions to a problem described in a text and to illustrate their answer with specific examples (ex. Problem: divorce-jealousy, unemployment, migration), whereas the weak ones will be just asked to use the information provided in the text (ex. Problem described in text: divorce-cause: domestic violence). Tiered assignments are particularly efficient with heterogeneous students as even the weak ones have something they can do without causing them the frustration resulting from their reduced language proficiency.

Different degrees of complexity texts on the same topic can be used, afterwards engaging the different level students in comparing specific pieces of information. If these are unavailable, the teacher can adapt them or simply give them different number of paragraphs to cover in a limited amount of time. Setting time limits, will give them a sense of competition keeping them all involved in the task. In terms of post reading tasks the weaker group can be asked mainly low order questions whereas high order ones will be posed to the better team.

Engaging them in competitions like “running dictations” is especially enjoyable for the students as an activity that produces very positive effect on them, regardless of their level of competence in a foreign language. Weaker students require more attention on the part of the teacher to motivate them, whereas the stronger ones may feel neglected and try to fill the gap with distracting activities. Giving them extra tasks according to their proficiency level to complete (e.g. writing an essay on a social issue or a movie review) will keep them away from killing time and being disruptive. Technology nowadays allows for differentiating tasks in a way that is not excessively time consuming for the teacher.

**Time and comprehensible input:** Weaker students are typically reluctant to speak and at times it takes effort and patience on the teacher’s part to involve them in speaking activities. Prior to that a wise teacher will first discover their strengths and focus on them, asking the students to do what they know they can do well at first and gradually moving on to upper levels. Apart from this, weaker students will need more time to get ready with what to say and how to do it. Teachers should not rush them or show their impatience literally pulling answers from them. Showing understanding, providing assistance and constructive feedback are key elements in encouraging them to participate in the future.

Krashen in his theory on language acquisition advanced the *comprehensible input hypothesis*, stating that we acquire languages only when we understand messages. It is not important how people say things to us, but what they tell us. For students to be able to understand things in a foreign language, they need time and a good teacher will give them this

time until they feel they are ready to produce their own messages. Individual variation and cognitive abilities account for a great deal and different students will need different amounts of time to pick comprehensible input until they feel confident enough to say something.

**Forms of activity:** In the context of modern education which stresses the importance of discovering every student's strong and weak points and shaping teaching approaches in keeping with these so as to develop the positive features and eradicate the negative ones, it stands to reason that in smaller size classes teachers can do it to more effect, in larger size classes it appears unattainable in many cases. Students can work independently and afterwards share with the whole class or a partner. Pair work and teamwork are widely used for the sake of differentiation, though psychologists state that learning in itself is an individual process. Students can be grouped according to similarities or differences. Sometimes streaming, also called tracking, is preferred for teamwork giving the stronger team a more demanding activity like writing an opinion essay based on their reading material while the weaker team is involved in comprehension check. Some other times mixed ability grouping is to be applied, specifying beforehand the role of each team member in the completion of the task.

**Flexibility:** Another strategy to apply is to be flexible when setting tasks: weaker students should be allowed to start with those tasks that seem easier for them and they can complete right away, leaving aside the ones they deem too complex. The stronger ones, on the contrary, should be asked to just complete the most difficult ones, ignoring those that are too simple. In such a way, they will not have the chance to finish much before

the rest of the class to get bored and to disrupt the others by monopolizing the discussions.

**Collaborative learning:** The teacher could take advantage of the presence of proficient students and use them as assistants in class asking them to help the weaker ones when they have trouble with understanding things or asking them to act as a teacher presenting small chunks of the information they have been asked to prepare in advance, like teaching some grammar topic, or pre-teaching vocabulary they will need to understand a written text. Correcting the weaker students' errors in a piece of written work after the teacher has provided them a corrected variant could also be a solution to use. Entrusting students with such responsibilities will boost their self-esteem, make them feel useful and give them a sense of accomplishment. Maria Perera, [3] who conducted an extensive study on heterogeneous classes, concluded, "what students really need in mixed ability classes is collaborative learning and the chance to make a real shift from teacher-centered to student-centered pedagogy in the classroom. Then the learning environment is cooperative rather than competitive. Students eagerly help each other if they have the qualified teacher who can guide them and applies the appropriate strategies.

## **Conclusion**

As EFL teachers, we have a powerful responsibility to teach our students in such a way that they be able to take advantage of their communicative competences in an extensive number real life speaking contexts. This responsibility is even greater if we are training future teachers or specialists who will need English for professional growth. As all students are very

different, having various proficiency levels, cognitive aptitudes and motivation, teaching them should be done in many different ways. Teaching approaches to heterogeneous groups should accommodate for each learner's needs, providing them all enough opportunities to participate in communicative tasks. Differentiated teaching, though time and energy consuming for the teacher, should lie at the heart of our efforts to get the low achievers reach proficiency and the high achieving ones stay motivated and continue to improve their skills. Coping with heterogeneous classes is a source of inspiration and creativity for teachers thus contributing to professional development in a natural way. Dynamic, interesting and useful classes involving variation of techniques and approaches, a welcoming atmosphere are essential in developing students' foreign language competence and hence a sense of accomplishment for learners and teachers alike.

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## **Negotiation an Interactive Skill in English for Business Administration**

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**Summary:** Negotiation is one of the most important skills that students of Business Administration should possess. That is why the term 'negotiation' has become challenging in the classroom environment. This article focuses on some ideas on the subject as a new standard that stimulates students to start discussions. It also outlines some strategies and techniques that help students develop negotiation. This paper also demonstrates that the training of business students in this fine art should include laying the foundation of skill sets of negotiation models taken from practical real-life situations that encourage students to be more creative and help enrich their business experience.

**Key words:** negotiation, negotiation models, real-life situations, training of students

Nowadays, there is a growing demand for English in Business Administration. EBA learners have become clearer about the reasons that they want to use English. Besides the skills to read, write, listen and speak English fluently, they also would like to be able to communicate with their counterparts. In the last twenty-five years, negotiation has become widely recognized both as a topic of serious research and as an essential, frequently used set of communication skills.

The ability to negotiate is one of the most important skills anyone can hold in daily life, because negotiation is a

basic human activity. Examples of negotiation include negotiating *where to go at the weekend, where to build a new children playground in the neighbourhood, when to connect the blocks of flats to heating system, where to build a bridge, how much the subventions in agriculture should be, when to start working for a young mother after having given birth to a child, how much the salary of teachers and other budget groups should grow*. As Bazerman (1998) stated “negotiation skills are essential in all areas of life”.

Negotiation is unavoidable. Most of us negotiate with one another frequently. Some may argue that negotiation is an art, that it is intuitive and we all know how to negotiate. Nevertheless, it has been attested that a lot of negotiators are not naturally gifted. Most people simply do not know how to negotiate. According to Raiffa, H. (1982), there are a lot of established ways for settling disputes: traditions, regulations, courts, market and negotiations. Raiffa defines negotiation as the art of systematic analysis for problem solving. Much more, it is the ability to convince and be convinced, the ability to employ a basket full of bargaining ploys and the wisdom to know when and how to use them.

Generally, negotiation is a resolution of conflict. Negotiations are used in order to start or continue a relationship and resolve an issue. For example, for a person it begins with the negotiation of an allowance with a parent. For another it involves negotiating an internet schedule with a roommate. Some people are naturally stronger negotiators, and are capable of getting their needs met more easily than others. Therefore, those people who lack the ability to negotiate break off relationships, quit jobs, or deliberately avoid conflict and uncomfortable situations.

There was a time when there existed a widespread myth that anybody could become a businessperson. It occurred not to be so. A lot has changed. To be a successful businessperson means to possess a lot of skills and negotiation is one of the most important skills that involves the ability to discuss and reach a mutually satisfactory agreement. Negotiation is the essence of business transactions, especially sales. Gagnon, R. (2007) insists that negotiation is viewed as a professional problem-solving situation. As Neu (2005) attests, negotiating being a vital skill is not taught at school.

According to Gagnon (2007), in the world of business, negotiating skills are used for a variety of reasons, such as *to negotiate a salary or a promotion, to secure a sale, or to form a new partnership*. For instance, a manager and a clerk can negotiate a promotion, an employer and a potential employee will negotiate job benefits, business partners make decisions about investments, companies negotiate a merger, a customer and a client make a sale. Therefore, negotiation skills are essential in all positions and at all levels of modern organizations.

Certainly, in every organization, employees use negotiating skills on a daily basis. Whether negotiating deadlines and workloads or trying to obtain more favourable prices for supplies, negotiations cover all aspects of business communication. The fact is, if an organization has employees who possess effective negotiating capabilities, that organization can gain a competitive advantage, reduce its costs, increase its profits and improve relationships. Masters, Albright & Irr, (2003) say that in business everything is negotiable.

In today's increasingly complex and competitive marketplace, effective negotiating is the key to personal and

organizational success. For this, such techniques and skills like aiming high, visualizing the end results, addressing one's opponent with respect and honesty, preparing ahead of time, showing confidence, will help people in the negotiating process. There is no such thing as a "born negotiator". Some people may possess a natural ability for negotiating, but the process, methodology, strategies, and tactics of effective negotiations should be taught. As Neu (2005) attests, negotiating being a vital skill is still not taught at school.

The training of undergraduate students in the fine art of negotiation should include laying a foundation of skill sets of negotiation models taken from practical real-life situations that encourage students to be more creative and help enrich their business experience from a wide range of supporting knowledge such as *intercultural communication, rhetoric, etiquette, protocol and logics*. Emerson (2009) states that the challenge is to get students familiar with these elements and to teach how to use them in formal negotiation settings, so that learners can develop more effective negotiating skills, by using practical, real-life simulated negotiation situations.

Teaching negotiation develops gradually. First, students learn business terms, that is, vocabulary and structures required in interaction with their group mates. Then, they need to be introduced to the complexity of everyday business communication involving negotiation and understand how vital negotiation is to be handled at all levels and in all areas of their future professional daily lives. In class, students need to watch short videos where business leaders talk about their problems, negotiate and find solutions and how these problems might have stifled their success. Then, they see that a lot of people should be involved in a negotiation to take place and a decision to be taken (Mocsáriné et al., 2010).

Wiwczaroski (2011) asserts that often there is a lack in understanding of how negotiation training can assist students in their careers. Over 30 years ago Mintzberg (1973) classified the role of the “negotiator” as one of the essential decisional roles that must be mastered and used effectively by managers perform to accomplish organizational objectives. This view has been strengthened over the decades. Such theoreticians as Raiffa H. (1982), Fischer & Ury (1991), Watkins (2002) support that nowadays managers utilize negotiation skills regularly in a wide variety of employee-related and strategic-developmental areas, by explaining to mid-level managers the importance of actively supporting a new employee performance or recruiting a promising new job applicant. Lax & Sebenius (1986) wrote that almost all management activities require excellent negotiation skills in order to succeed.

Therefore, students should be involved in a number of such practical class activities that will help share negotiation experiences and stimulate them to start discussions about strategies and tactics of individual negotiators and create the ground for development of listening and speaking skills. These discussions prove the evidence of gradual vocabulary and structure acquisition that is related to negotiation. Students discuss their own and their counterparts behaviour. They repeat and recycle the vocabulary and structures. As a result, the students’ active vocabulary is enriched by means of a number of business terms (Wiwczaroski, 2011). In other words, students acquire the terminology through the process of using negotiation models that come from different areas of business such as marketing, sales, logistics, finance and accounting and legal terminology as well.

For instance, Emerson (2009) insists that students should know the terminology from the relevant area of *marketing* and

should become familiar with the applicable marketing mix in order to learn how to be able to promote a product and sell it. Mascull, B. (2010) believes that students should additionally learn the appropriate vocabulary from the areas of *finance and accounting* to be able to negotiate payment terms. Moreover, if the product in the case is to be delivered, *logistics* can play an important role when negotiating the time, place and method of delivery. Negotiation usually leads to signing a contract. It can be a sales contract or an agreement. Then, nondisclosure agreements are necessary today and penalties for not fulfilling contract conditions have to be defined. Therefore, the basics of *legal* terminology also have to be included.

While studying the process of business administration, one might come across another difficulty, such as misunderstanding what negotiation means and who may have handled it. So, the teacher's task is to explain that it is a process that involves two parties that have one or more of three purposes: to reach new agreements or renew expiring ones, to resolve disagreements and prevent conflict or to change their attitude. Raiffa (1982) and Gensing-Pophal, (2001) argue that lacking these skills, negotiations can lead to very costly problems such as breach-of-contract suits, lost business opportunities, the need to re-do work, and dissatisfied customers and/or employees. Gagnon (2007, compare also Masters, Albright & Irr, 2003) explains that more often than not, the parties in the negotiation process will interact on an ongoing basis and what is more important, the negotiations might generate into a situation that has a negative impact on the parts relationship. That is why students have to understand how learning negotiating skills can result in better relationships, improved communication and reduced conflict in the workplace.

Wiwczarowski (2011) states that, an essential characteristic of an effective negotiator is the ability to listen to the other party. Good relationships are built on trust and understanding and these abilities are developed through listening. Teaching students that asking questions and listening carefully to the responses helps them better understand how to gain needed information about the other party, and it leads to more progress than simply pushing one's own agenda (Fischer & Ury, 1991).

Sebenius (2001) affirms that in the negotiation process it is important to listen for the difference between one party's position and its interests. Students should understand that negotiation often reaches a stalemate when none of the parties will budge on its preconceived position. The ability to listen carefully to the other party's arguments can help the effective negotiator to determine their interests and provide a solution to satisfy both parties (Fischer & Ury, 1991).

It is also necessary to make students understand how to identify many other characteristics of effective negotiators like confidence in one's negotiating team, confidence in one's negotiation strategy, the ability to disagree when necessary, the ability to continue to press one's points when things are not working out as desired. At the same time, a negotiator has to be able to concede when such action does not render the negotiation aims. Possessing communication skills and persuasion, an empathetic ear, open-mindedness in listening and accepting other ideas, persistence, tolerance of fair, grounded criticism, tolerance and an understanding of an acceptable risk and the ability to be a team player will bring success to a negotiator.

Fisher and Ury (1991, pp. 179-186) argue that every negotiation can empower the speaker if it is conducted skilfully and collaboratively, by using *diplomatic language* in

negotiations, which is essential in conveying what could be a forceful message, by adding a polite tone to the conversation. The sources of the power of negotiation is in developing a good working relationship between the people negotiating, in understanding interests, in inventing an elegant option, in using external standards, in making a careful crafted commitment, in knowing negotiation principles and in using good business language.

Some examples of diplomatic language expressions include: *to be honest, this product seems to...; we were thinking of, say something around ...%; that won't be easy; however, we would be willing to...; probably we should....; here, it is an idea we could consider...; would it be better/easier to..?, if we ordered this product, what would...*

The process of negotiation involves careful use of language because the cost of a negotiating mistake can be very high. Taylor, Burns & Magnus (2008) have worked a list of skills that negotiators can be taught to become more proficient such as: *acknowledging the position of the other party by using active listening techniques, applying effective questioning techniques, conducting nonverbal communication, developing collaborative communication techniques, working out win-win conflict resolution strategies which might be improved through study and practice.*

The main principles of collaborative negotiating are to resolve previous conflicts ahead of time, to deal with issues, not personalities, to commit to listening more than speaking, to establish trust in one another, to develop a common goal. The motto of collaborative negotiating is 'the more you know about your counterpart, the more likely you will achieve your goals'.

While teaching negotiation skills to students of Business Administration they have to learn the way negotiation

develops. So, a negotiation passes through three phases: pre-negotiation, negotiation and post-settlement. Pre-negotiation consists of: *case preparation, clarifying preferences, issue rating, option ration, preference verification, and utility construction*. While conducting negotiation, *the offer construction, the message exchange, the offer analysis, the preference revision, the utility update, the negotiation history and negotiation dynamics* have to be discussed. During the post-settlement *the assess compromise, the efficiency analysis, the joint improvement and the negotiation review* are examined (*ibid.*).

To make these phases more productive, effective negotiators should follow some discourse phases when negotiating as well. Suggested phases are *greeting, exchanging information, questioning, analyzing, debating, generating options, bargaining, agreeing procedures, settling and concluding, and building cooperation*. All these phases comprise structural variables, such as *pause, interruption, clarification, reformulation etc., and content variables like recommendations, suggestions, promises, warnings, threats, acceptance, refusal etc.* (Coulthard, M. (1992).

Next, teaching negotiation may include the development of the language skills, skimming and scanning, speed reading, timed reading, understanding instructions. Then, listening and speaking may be developed through pair and group work activities, including face-to-face negotiations and summaries. The design of classroom activities depends on the teaching context.

Students should also learn that *communication* is also very important in the process of negotiation. Business communication is a complex process. It is mainly a social and human interaction performed within an economic environment.

Business communication is part of the human communication, comprehended as the information and energy exchange process between the human society and the members of the community. Communicative skills are essential in the business and administration environment for both organizations and individuals. First, employers need flexibility, creative employees and they themselves are particularly interested in the development of their own communication and problem-solving abilities. Second, modern-day employees have to be able to listen and speak well enough, to explain schedules and procedures, communicate with customers, work in teams, understand customer concerns, teach others, and solve problems.

Written *communication* in an academic context is also very important in the process of negotiation. Students should learn that the role of negotiation as a vital interactive skill as well as writing business correspondence usually used in making good business contacts enhances the ability to communicate effectively in the business world. The emphasis is put on the usage of authentic materials in the frame of Information and Communication Technology tools involved in teaching the practice of negotiation.

Hence, learners have to become familiar with business correspondence – different types of formal letters, orders, offers or complaints. They practice writing after discussing different models of business correspondence documents, which they later add to their portfolio. Business correspondence is usually taught prior to negotiation preparation, but may also be taught parallel to teaching negotiation skills.

Then, students write their own negotiating dialogues according to models, they are free to use short or long phrases, simple or complex sentences, sophisticated or ordinary

terminology. Models help them retrieve the negotiation record from their mind, follow it and produce an effective negotiation process as a preparatory exercise, where they drill in providing fluid, spontaneous responses. Emerson (2009) insists on using negotiation models when teaching Business English because they encourage students to be more creative, to imagine a real business situation and act accordingly. As a result, they upgrade and enrich their business English terminology.

Finally, students participate in role-play activities such as beginning or ending negotiations, chairing a meeting, which encourages them to use elements of the negotiation process during their performance. Gagnon (2007) confirms that by using practical, real-life simulated negotiating scenarios, learners can develop more effective negotiating skills. In order to ensure that students commit to the exercise of negotiation, it is important that they be evaluated for their quantity and quality participation, their creativity and individual contribution (Taylor, K.A. et al., 2008).

In conclusion, teaching negotiation improves students' negotiating confidence and perceptions of effectiveness, makes them feel more assertive and become more active, well-trained and better prepared for real life situations where they are able to act with more professionalism and more competently.

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## THE CONCEPT OF LANGUAGE WORLD PICTURE

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**Summary:** The article presents an attempt to throw light on the term language world picture, its origins, development and the present status. It will set forth the types of world picture and comment on the differences and similarities between them. The concept of language world picture is closely connected to the relationship between language and the process of thinking; it deals with the interpretation of the existing reality by the human being and varies from nation to nation.

**Keywords:** anthropocentric approach, theory of relativity, scientific world picture, language world picture, extralinguistic reality.

Given the anthropocentric approach, that dominates the linguistics of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century, the concept of *language world picture* has become a basic category in philosophy, culturology and linguistics. It is a fundamental concept that describes the human essence (Maslova 2008:60). Language world picture helps researchers identify the ways of conceptualizing the reality, of organizing and presenting knowledge about the extra linguistic world in language. This article seeks to explain the essence of this concept and to identify its main features.

The concept comes from exact sciences; it was first used by Heinrich Hertz in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By this term, the

scientist meant ‘the totality of knowledge about the laws of nature’. Another physician M. Planck developed this idea and made the distinction between the *practical world picture* and the *scientific world picture*, by practical world picture he meant ‘human representations about the reality, gradually created by people based on their experiences’ (Serebrennikov 1988:12). In philosophy, linguistics and psychology, world picture means perception of the reality and its reflection in the human consciousness. World picture mirrors the essential components of the human knowledge: the cognitive, moral and esthetic ones. This concept expresses the specificity of the human existence, the relationship between the man and the existing reality, as well as the basic conditions of human existence. Human experience participates in the creation of the world picture and at the same time, it has a certain impact on it.

The theoretical foundation of the concept of *world picture* dates back to W. von Humboldt, who developed the thesis of inner form. The philosopher believes that different languages does not mean different names for the same object, but rather different visions of that object. The scientist opposes the idea that words in various languages have the same meanings; he is convinced that every language arranges its own linguistic content in accordance with its own worldview [Humboldt 2008:85,126]. In his opinion, any language is characterized by two aspects: the universal and objective, which influences the reflection of objective reality in language, and the subjective, or national aspect, which depicts the speaker’s vision, or perception of the reality. The latter aspect enabled Humboldt to interpret language as a worldview, an intermediary world, placed between the subject that cognizes the reality that exists beyond the human being. Humboldt regards language as a worldview and the language reflects the

reality as it is seen and perceived by the speaker. Being such an intermediary world, the language offers the speaker a variety of results, which had been obtained from the previous experiences and which are presented in the conceptual systems of linguistic signs. The totality of these systems represent the worldview of a language speaker, a mental world of the linguistic community [Stepanov 1994:46].

Subsequently, Humboldt's ideas were revitalized in the studies of German neo-Humboldtians, headed by Jost Trier and Leo Weisgerber. They introduced the concept of language world picture into linguistics. Basically, the German linguists focused on the inner form of the language, in particular, Leo Weisgerber speaks of "each language as representing a world picture (*Weltbild*) characterized by an inner form. This inner form is semantic: to understand a language in its specificity, one must reconstruct not only its form, but the semantic fields, the word fields that make up its contents". L. Weisgerber does not regard language as a thinking tool, but rather an intermediary world (*Zwischenwelt*) between the existing reality and the thought, the result of the reciprocal connection between the material and the spiritual worlds. The nature of this intermediary world determines the type of thinking. Thus, the thinking of each people has a national character and its development is very dependent on the development of the national language. Weisgerber believes that language a primordial reality and the human being does not cognize the objective reality, but rather the language that he speaks. In his opinion, each nation has a specific world picture, which is determined by the language of this nation. Each language is a means of accessing the reality and each community has a vision on the world that is entrenched in its mother tongue [Panfilov 1975: 6].

Humboldt's ideas with regard to the role of the language in the perception of reality gained popularity on the American continent as well. Thus, F. Boas, E. Sapir and B. L. Whorf went into details studying the problem of language diversity and universality. E. Sapir comes to a very valuable conclusion that differences in languages are not only phonological, they lie in the grammatical and lexical classifications, in lexical patterns, in the relationships existing among the language concepts [Sapir 1921:12]. Although Sapir considers that language as a structure is the "matrix of thought", he does not deny the universal character of the thought, he claims that thought is only influenced by the language. On the other hand, Benjamin Lee Whorf gives a more radical aspect to this issue. In his opinion, the language of a community contains a series of lexical and grammatical categories that serve as a grid through which the man perceives the existing reality and which determines the way he categorizes and conceptualizes the phenomena of the existing reality. Whorf considers that language determines the nature and logics of thinking. The grammar of a language is not a mere instrument to reproduce thoughts, on the contrary, grammatical structures form the thought, through these structures the man analyzes and synthesizes the reality and his impressions about it. The way representatives of different nations formulate their thoughts differs similarly to the grammars of the languages they speak. Unlike Sapir, Whorf refuses to accept the universal character of the thought and the existence of universal logics. Although the hypotheses proposed by the American ethno-linguists have been greatly criticized, they were the first linguists, who attempted to offer a scientific explanation to the differences between languages, considering the linguistic discoveries of that time.

In Romanian linguistics, Sextil Pușcariu touches upon the concept of world picture, although he does not use this term directly, in his works he speaks of the national mentality. The linguist claims that the social role of the language contributes to the creation of the national mentality, while common mentality, in its turn, facilitates the comprehension of metaphoric expressions and their subsequent adaptation and use by the conational. As the time passes, these adapted peculiarities contribute to the formation of the inner form of the language [Pușcariu 1940:164]. The Romanian linguist considers that everything we think and do is fatally influenced by the way in which the world is reflected in our language.

However, in modern linguistics the concept of world picture is studied from various perspectives by Russian linguists. Such prominent linguists as Iu. Karaulov, G. Kolshanskii, V. Postovalova, G. Ramishvili, B. Serebrenikov, V. Telya investigated this concept in their works. Firstly, they distinguish between the scientific world picture (SWP) and the language world picture (LWP). Scientific world picture is understood as the totality of knowledge about the existing reality, reflected the consciousness of the human beings. Language world picture is more ambiguous, as linguists have different views on it. The opinions are again divided between Universalists and Relativists. Universalists firmly believe in the universal character of thinking, while relativists are convinced that thinking is determined by the language, e.g., N. Mechkovskaya, being a firm materialist, claims that the logic of the human thinking is universal, and the human beings reflect the existing reality objectively, without taking into account the language they speak. The language does not transform the reality; it only mirrors it in its forms. The living conditions and the material reality influence the human

consciousness and their behavior, which is reflected in the grammatical forms and lexis of the language [Mechkovskaya 1983: 188-119]. This idea is shared by G. Kolshanskii. He believes that the term *world picture* means “the totality of knowledge about the world that has been formed in the consciousness of a linguistic community”. The result of this reflection is fixed in entrenched in the language; it is stored in it and is transmitted from one generation to another through the language itself [Kolshanskii 1990:21].

O. Kornolov also distinguishes between the *scientific* and the *language world picture*. He gives a detailed characterization of the scientific world picture, mentioning that the SWP is in continuous change, this being conditioned by the ongoing development of sciences, the human knowledge about the reality is always revised, corrected and updated. These changes lead to the appearance of new concepts, which in their turn, contribute to the introduction of new terms into the language and into the SWP. The linguist also mentions that the SWP is smaller than the objective reality and it will never be possible to cognize the entire universe, as cognition is infinite. It is important to mention that SWP is universal for all the linguistic communities. With regard to SWP, the communities are not subjective, they reflect the reality as it is. Knowledge about the world does not depend on the language specificity, on the mentality of the nation or on the cultures and traditions of the people.

On the other hand, the language world picture refers to the knowledge about the existing reality, processed and fixed in the language structures; it is often characterized as a “common” or “naïve thought”. However, this definition does not explain or emphasize the diversity of human languages and cultures. A. Mikhalev suggests treating LWP as a specific

representation of meaning by means of a given language. This idea derives from the Humboldtian “language character” defined as means of association of thought with the sounds. Relativists strongly believe that LWP determines the language structures and grammar. Iu. Apresean takes an intermediate position with regard to this issue. He claims that every language mirrors a way of perceiving and organizing the reality. The meanings of the words in the language form a system of visions, a collective philosophy, which is imposed on all of the speakers of this language community. Conceptualization of the reality (worldview) is universal, but at the same time, it has a specific national character. Thus, the speakers of a language can see the reality through the lenses of its language. The linguist refers to the LWP as to a naïve one as it differs from the SWP. However, naïve does not mean a primitive one, as it reflects the human experience and moral and esthetic values [Apresean 1995:39].

A. Mikhalev speaks of the strata of language world picture; he believes that LWP should be examined from the following perspectives: structural, studying phonetic and morphological structures, sematic, concentrating on the lexical fields and their interrelation, grammatical structures and nomination, the way of symbolizing language meanings.

A separate stratum of LWP is represented by a phraseological level, rather a paremic one (phraseological units, sayings, proverbs). They seem to look like a code of laws of a given nation. In contrast to the two other strata, this one points out not to the process and result of semantic area formation but to social and ethic axiology; what is bad and what is good, what is necessary and what is not. It is not to be supposed that any native speaker follows subconsciously the rules, derived from this national fount of wisdom. It is rather a

museum of ways of life and mores (frequently patriarchal) of distant ancestors. This stratum demonstrates universal, for all or the majority of nations, settings and statements as, for example, ‘profiting from someone’s misfortune’, ‘to make use of someone in achieving one’s goals’, ‘to use the discord of counterparts in one’s interest’, ‘to achieve one’s goals with small losses’, ‘inner craftiness behind an outer benevolence’, ‘hiding real intentions by means of an evasive maneuver’, ‘the boomerang effect of an evil intention’, ‘meekness in front of might’, etc. The differences are mainly applied not to conceptual spheres but to socio-linguistic factors; geography, history, way of life, social and economic structure, division of labor, crafts, etc.

Phraseological units reflect the wealth of a language displaying cultural paradigms of the speakers of a particular language. They reflect cultural archetypes of an ethno-linguistic community and help to make explicit the peculiarities of its world perception. This can be seen in the phraseological unit “**to keep someone at an arm’s length**” is means to keep someone at a distance both socially and physically, to escape close relationships in order to avoid social or physical harm. Lakoff suggests the conceptual metaphor “friendly relationships = close distance”. It is known that the concept of ‘distance’ plays a crucial role in the mentality of the Englishmen. Thus, it can be claimed that the given expression is culturally motivated. In contrast to the English language, the same image of ‘outstretched arm’ is interpreted differently in Jewish idiomacy, it means “to be on intimate terms with someone”. Cultural motivation is based on the world model or world scenarios of the nation.

To throw dust into the eyes exists in Russian as well, пускать пыль в глаза. It might seem that they are absolute

equivalents, but that is not the case. пускать ПЫЛЬ в глаза = Создать ложное впечатление throw dust into somebody's eyes = Seek to mislead or deceive someone by misrepresentation or distraction. Longman 'to confuse someone or take his attention away from something that one does not want his to see or know about. = сбивать с толку, отвлекать внимание. The Russian variant means - С помощью эффектных поступков или речей пытаться представить кому либо себя или свое положение в лучше чем они есть в действительности.

Thus, we can conclude that language world picture is common for all the speakers of a language and it serves as a basis for conceptual metaphors and idiomatic phraseological units. At the same time, it may differ from one language to another and this fact explains the different referents used in the phraseological units to refer to the same object or phenomenon of extralinguistic world. Language world picture is not always on the surface; very often, it requires an etymological investigation. We consider that language world picture reveals the cultural attitudes and views of a nation.

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## COACHING IS ALWAYS A CULTURAL EXCHANGE

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**Summary:** An instructional coach from the United States of America lived in the Republic of Moldova during the 2015-2016 school year. He shared his institution's facilitative, teacher-led, coaching with teachers of English as a Foreign Language. In this model, coaches ask questions to help teachers reflect on their practice and meet their own goals. They do not express their own opinion or instruct teachers. He met with teachers to discuss how they wanted to grow as teachers. Then, he observed their class, making notes of what the teacher wanted him to look for. Finally, the coach and the teacher met to analyze the observation notes together and discuss what next steps the teacher would like to take. At first, it was difficult to explain this coaching model to teachers from a different culture who had never experienced something like it. He learned about how culturally sensitive pedagogy could make a better coaching exchange between teachers and coaches, in an international exchange or in a coach's home country.

**Keywords:** Coach, Teacher, Facilitator, Reflection, Culture, Protocol, Observation, Frame of Reference

“What is your opinion?”

It was the fourth time I had been asked this question in as many coaching relationships since I started working with teachers of English as a Foreign Language in the Republic of

Moldova. I am on a year's leave of absence from my job as a secondary Instructional Coach at Albemarle County Public Schools. While I'm living in this small, post-Soviet state in Eastern Europe, my coaching has been requested by an English language center and its teachers who are eager to grow in their teaching of English and curious about a method of professional growth which seems to them exotic. Although I had tried to explain to teachers and to the center's director about our coaching model--that I do not play the role of expert teacher, but rather the role of facilitator for teacher-led reflection, decision-making, and change--I still frequently heard the question which, as a coach, I don't want to directly answer: "What is your opinion?" When I observe teachers, I look for what they find important. When we discuss their teaching, I do not make value judgments. So, my opinion is not what makes coaching valuable. In fact, expressing my opinion can hinder coaching's effectiveness. In my work as a coach with teachers in a foreign culture, I learned that I can never assume the culture or understanding of my audience. To adequately explain the coaching model so that people can benefit from it, I must seek to understand the culture of my audience and explain coaching in terms that are meaningful, given their cultural frame of reference.

Initially, when my coaching was requested by the director of the language center, I met with him to explain that our type of coaching is by request only, is confidential, and relies on questioning and co-investigation rather than evaluation and prescription. I sent out an email to his staff, explaining what I do and inviting them to request me to work with them in an observation cycle. Based on the protocol popularized by the New Teacher Center (2009), the observation cycle starts with a pre-observation meeting, in

which the teacher and I discuss how they want to grow as a teacher, what the lesson will look like, and what I can look for and take objective notes on during the lesson. While observing the lesson, I keep the teacher's goals and ideas in mind and take notes that are relevant to their questions or interests. Then after the observed lesson, we meet again to look at the observation notes, discuss how they are meaningful to the teacher, and the teacher usually comes up with some next steps to take, based on our discussion.

After sending out my invitation email to the language center teachers, several responded that they would like to work with me. The first teacher I worked with declined to meet with me for a pre-observation discussion, so I was unable to provide her with observation notes focused on helping her in the way she wanted to grow. When we met after the lesson, she began by asking my opinion of her teaching. At that moment, I recognized that my explanation of coaching via email had not been fully understood, perhaps also explaining why she did not want to meet with me before the observation. Other teachers I observed reacted similarly. When asking what I should look for in an observation, some teachers would respond, "Just tell me what I'm doing wrong!" In those moments, I knew I had not fully communicated what I do. I try not to make value judgments about what teachers do because I believe that we all make decisions as teachers and that growth comes from reflection, not from being evaluated (Costa & Garmston, 2016). Another teacher, who had a bit more experience living and studying in the United States, told me that because of his experience, he understood coaching was collaborative and knew it was different from how teachers are mentored in Moldova. It took less time for our discussion to uncover his goals in teaching and the "look-fors" of the observation, but he

also asked me later what my opinion had been of the lesson. At first, I had assumed that all the teachers would understand my coaching after an e-mail describing the model. I then learned that different frames of reference affected their understanding of what I do, and therefore our assumptions hampered our work together. Furthermore, I learned that even someone with a greater exposure to American culture, which my coaching practice reflects, might not necessarily fully understand the facilitative-rather than evaluative-stance of coaching.

I then had the great opportunity to attend a language center staff meeting and present on our coaching model: what it is and is not, how it contrasts with Moldovan teachers' experiences, and how they can use some coaching tools, together with colleagues, to engage in impactful reflection. I hoped that this session would increase teachers' understanding of the model, lead to more requests, and lead to more effective coaching sessions. We had a great conversation, comparing and contrasting evaluative practices in Moldovan schools and the reflective coaching model. Through this meeting and others like it with other teachers, I learned that many teachers' previous experiences of observation and mentorship involved unwanted criticism and value judgments. Now, I could forecast some ways in which our coaching practice might be unclear or different from what they expected.

Coaching sessions that happened after this meeting were different. Teachers had more background knowledge of what to expect in coaching. So when I asked, "How do you want to grow as a teacher?", teachers knew that I wanted them to be honest and let me know what was most important to them--not to tell me what they thought I wanted to hear, as if I were playing the role of expert. A teacher even told me that he

was eager now to continue gathering some data of his own in order to reflect on each lesson--demonstrating the ultimate goal of coaching: deeper reflection, with or without a coach! These coaching relationships were also different, not just because I had grown in my background knowledge of Moldovan experiences and how they affect teachers, but also because I had developed increased sensitivity to the possibility of cultural differences that affect communication and understanding--both within coaching and in my every-day life living in Moldova. From this point on, I made sure to ask more questions about each individual's experiences with classroom observers, check their understanding of the goals of coaching, and reiterate any important points about coaching that remained unclear. One teacher still tried to solicit my opinion of her teaching, but now I was prepared to listen to why she asked for my opinion, and ask questions that uncovered what was important to her.

Coaching in a foreign culture taught me to listen more sensitively and explain coaching more thoroughly. I recognized that these lessons are not just useful for coaching internationally, but for my coaching practice in the United States, as well. Before moving to Moldova, while reading about "culturally responsive teaching," I had learned that groups have shared cultural values, norms, and ways of thinking, but also each individual has a unique cultural frame of reference which they use to understand and interact with the world (Gay, 2010). After coaching in Moldova, it became clearer to me that each teacher I work with in the United States has a unique cultural frame of reference, and in order to be responsive and effective with every teacher, I must not assume that my explanation of coaching is understood. I should seek to understand the teacher's frame of reference: What are his/her values in education? What are his/her beliefs about education?

about working with others? About discussing his/her personal practice with others? When I learn more about the teachers I work with, I validate their experiences, *and* I become better able to look through their frames of reference at coaching and see where it should be clarified. Then, the teacher and I understand each other better and can more effectively communicate about their teaching practice.

A fellow coach of mine offered another method in which I can lead a discussion with a teacher in a culturally responsive way. About the common request for my opinion, he wrote:

...Maybe I would just give my opinion in the form of a cultural contrast. Like, if they said, “Well, what did you think about ABC?” I imagine that I might say, “Well, it’s interesting to watch you teach this way, because in my experience, XYZ is the same/different...” If I avoid giving an opinion, then I might not be able to draw out any metacognition. However, if I point out a contrast with my own experience, that causes them to be a little analytical about their own methods...

In addition to understanding the teacher’s culture, my colleague points out that I too can share my experience (which reflects my cultural frame of reference)--not as a prescription for a teacher to do as I did, but as a cultural exchange which leads to further understanding, personal reflection, and growth (for the teacher and myself)!

When I met with the director of the language center after observing his class, we reflected together on his teaching but also on coaching, in general. We had a great discussion about his lesson, and he excitedly proposed some practical next steps he would try in class.

Then he asked, “Now that we had our post-observation discussion--can you tell me what you really thought of my lesson?”

I pressed him to explain a little more about why he wanted my opinion, even though he showed an understanding of our coaching model and had just shared how much he had benefited from it. He related to me an article he had read about how in modern culture, individuals are given so much choice that even some doctors will tell a patient two different treatment options they should choose from, sometimes paralyzing the patient with indecision (such as McAllister & McAllister, 2015). I think his point was that individual autonomy is good, but individuals should also be provided with an expert’s opinion to rely on. After checking my understanding of his point, I responded that in the medical case, the doctor is the expert, but in coaching, the teacher is the expert (Foltos, 2014). The teacher does not just *do* effective actions in the classroom, but *makes decisions* about what is most effective, so the teacher’s expertise and decision-making skills are of paramount importance. I think the idea struck him as novel. He didn’t disagree, but maybe my point itself was a cultural exchange for him that will take some time to leave an impression.

I am an expert teacher, but I am also trained as an expert coach, and that is the role I play when coaching teachers. Whether I have a personal opinion or not, it is my job to empower teachers through their increased reflection. Deeper, culturally sensitive listening to each individual will make me more able to make that work clear and relevant for teachers. When we understand each other, we had better understand ourselves; a cultural exchange is a powerfully reflective experience and is a useful framework for coaching\*.

*\*Excerpts from this article were posted on the Albemarle County School's Instructional Coaching blog.*

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## **PEDAGOGICAL STYLISTICS: PROBLEMS, PRACTICES, PROSPECTS**

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**Summary:** The presentation reflects upon teaching the course of English stylistics to the philology students learning English as a foreign language at Balti State University after Alecu Russo under the new terms and conditions of the Bologna educational process. It analyses the choice of stylistic problems offered for students' consideration during theoretical and practical classes and raises the question of their efficacy in the process of training English teachers and translators. The presentation reveals the basis of pedagogical stylistics with its stylistics-inspired approach to teaching English and stylistics-based educational policies and activities.

**Key words:** stylistics, pedagogy, cultural awareness, English as a foreign language.

At present, one must admit the existence of, at least, two stylistics: one is theoretical stylistics, treating challenging linguistic questions, the other is pedagogical stylistics, facing practical tasks in teaching languages.

Theoretically, according to Zyngier [13, p. 366], it is important to determine the following: Is stylistics an independent linguistic science? Is it part of culture? Is it only

an area of research or an interdisciplinary field? Is it a method for literary criticism? Is it a method for teaching and learning English? Is it objective or subjective in its interpretations? Is stylistics of pedagogical value? Is it possible to master English through pedagogical stylistics?

It is almost universally acknowledged that stylistics is the study of style. Verdonk points out: «stylistics as the study of style can be defined as the analysis of distinctive expression in language and the description of its purpose and effect” [12, p. 4].

Yet, how can we define style, distinctive expression, its purpose and its effect? Naturally, the choice and analysis of distinctive expression is subjective: what is distinctive to one person may not be distinctive to another. “If the problems begin at definitions of stylistics they continue through determining its scope and affiliation”, writes Zynger [13, p. 367].

Practically, there is a growing body of literature devoted to pedagogical stylistics and there are many great names who tried and try to establish this discipline. According to Paul Simpson [10, p. 2], stylistics “has also become a much-valued method in language teaching and in language learning, and stylistics in this pedagogical guise, with its close attention to the broad resources of the system of the language, enjoys particular pride of place in the linguistic armoury of learners of second languages. Moreover, stylistics forms a core component of many creative writing courses, an application not surprising of the discipline’s emphasis on techniques of creativity and invention in language.”

Many linguists and teachers agree that stylistics is of great practical value for those who study foreign languages as it enhances their language awareness and broadens the horizons

of language use, teaching the norms of different registers and accentuating current patterns of deviations from the norm.

In our opinion, pedagogical stylistics has the mission to select the theoretical material strictly necessary to support the practical mastery of the language, and to develop students' creativity along the traditional cultural norms in conformity with their specialization, their interests and their progress in learning English.

In the Soviet Union, English stylistics appeared in the sixties with the name of I. R. Galperin. His first book was written in Russian: *Очерки по стилистике английского языка* (1958) and it was followed by three editions of Stylistics in English in 1971, 1977, 1981. When the third edition of the textbook of Stylistics was published, in the opinion of Galperin [6, p. 10], "stylistics has acquired its own status with its own inventory of tools (stylistic devices and expressive means), with its own object of investigation and with its own methods of research."

Stylistics was introduced as an obligatory subject into the program of students studying foreign languages in the Soviet Union and teaching foreign languages, especially, analytical and home reading in senior courses was greatly influenced by stylistic approaches to texts. In fact, stylistics was pedagogical as foreign languages were mostly taught at pedagogical institutes at that time and stylistics was considered as a subject contributing to teacher training to a great degree.

I.R. Galperin insisted on stylistics' independence and, in his opinion, there should be general stylistics and particular stylistics. According to Galperin [6, p. 9], stylistics is a branch of general linguistics which studies expressive means, stylistic devices and functional styles, especially impressive is his differentiation of the English language into functional styles,

providing not only their distinctive features, but also their historical development.

Prof. Galperin did not write much about the style of everyday speech in his textbook for students, as he concentrated only on written functional styles among which he distinguished: the belles-lettres style: language of poetry, emotive prose, language of the drama; the publicist style: oratory and speeches, the essay, journalistic articles; the newspaper style: brief news items, advertisements and announcements, the headline, the editorial; the scientific prose style: the exact sciences and the humanities; the style of official documents: business documents, legal documents, diplomacy, military documents [6, p. 249-312].

The most popular area for exploring expressive means and stylistic devices is the belles-lettres style because the stylistic richness of the English language is on best possible display in it. The publicist style shares much in common with newspaper style, which seems to be represented by heterogeneous items with journalistic articles naturally belonging to the newspaper. The existence of scientific prose style causes little doubt, so does the style of official documents.

The given classification of styles may be subjected to criticism, but it is obvious that it embraces the most important areas of the English language. Leaving colloquial language out of consideration seems illogical today, but at the time of professor Galperin, it was little explored and there was little information to rely on. Even if one does not consider the classification perfect, it gives students a certain stylistic orientation and a chance to compare it with other more recent classifications.

To see the difference between the stylistics of the past and the present day stylistics, we compared the textbooks of

stylistics written by Galperin in 1981 and the one by Simpson in 2004.

The comparison shows that Stylistics has greatly advanced in its study of style. The key themes covered by prof. Galperin include stylistic classification of the English vocabulary, phonetic, lexical, syntactic expressive means and stylistic devices, functional styles. In Introduction, he discusses the definition of style and stylistics, expressive means and stylistic devices, functional styles and varieties, gives an outline of the development of the English language standard and meaning from a stylistic point of view. His readers are Russian students of English. He does not compare Russian and English styles but quotes many Russian stylisticians whose studies appeared in the twentieth century.

Simpson planned his textbook as a graded (from introductory to advanced) resource for students, English students. He introduces key concepts in stylistics (What is stylistics? Stylistics and levels of language, grammar and style, rhythm and meter, narrative stylistics, style as choice, style and point of view, representing speech and thought, dialogue and discourse, cognitive stylistics, metaphor and metonymy, stylistics and verbal humour) and then he traces their development: doing stylistics, their exploration: investigating style, their extension: readings in stylistics.

Obviously, Galperin's textbook is just an introduction to stylistics and it lacks the depth and the width of the stylistic problems under consideration. It is limited to the description of the stylistic potential of the main language levels in the English language. To complete the picture of stylistic levels we provide the description of expressive means on graphical, morphological, kinesic levels and to embrace all functional

styles we include colloquial style and its genres, electronic style and its varieties into our stylistic program.

The theory of language levels helps to explore their relations in a more concrete way, relying on their units and gives us an opportunity to observe how transition from one level to another explodes the area of familiar knowledge about the linguistic units and expands their semantic and expressive potential. From our point of view, pedagogical stylistics keeps the students' attention focused on the relation between what is already known and that what is new: the known leading to the new and the new leading to the possible or impossible. It has the mission not only to study emotional, expressive effects of stylistic patterns but also to rearrange the hierarchy of facts, skills and competences.

In the history of stylistics, there were many debates concerning its status and research but since that time, in spite of arguments, the attitude to stylistics has changed and research into stylistics went on, absorbing new linguistic terms: free indirect discourse, intertextuality, point of view or deixis in narrative, pragmatics of conversation, exploring new approaches to the treatment of old problems, especially in speech and thought representation and starting new directions in the study of language in use: cognitive stylistics or poetics, discourse stylistics, feminist stylistics [9, p. 7].

The present article reflects upon the problems of teaching stylistics to the English philology students of the third year at Balti State University alongside the general development of their communicative competence in English. The students of the department are already familiar with the introductory course into linguistics, basic English grammar and vocabulary and it is but natural to introduce them to expressive

means and stylistic devices of the English language and its functional styles.

Pedagogical stylistics starts with the choice of a textbook with appropriate stylistic themes, with a suitable level of presentation, with many typical and vivid examples and transparent commentary on their purpose and effect. A textbook should correspond to the linguistic level of the students and provide practical tasks and activities to support a teaching methodology.

In our understanding, pedagogical stylistics is a sort of adaptation of sophisticated theory to the needs and capacities of the students with the purpose of making progress in acquiring practical English and achieving proficiency in English.

Pedagogical stylistics aims at developing young minds linguistically, emotionally, intellectually, culturally. Therefore, much attention is afforded to the discussion of linguistic choices made by the masters of the English language in their literary works. Frequent stylistic tasks at lectures include: the use of cloze exercise in the examples for the stylistic devices, key statements and quotations, expressive reading of poetry, translation, teaching “noticing” distinctive features of style, transformation from one style into another; discussion and commentary on stylistic examples from classic English literature as well as from our immediate environment: stylistics in the classroom, teachers’ speech in the English classroom and in English textbooks, students’ communication with teachers and friends, politeness in the classroom, immediate needs and further goals of getting a job that requires the knowledge of English and activities with language as translation of documents; stylistics out of the classroom: ethics of telephone conversations and emails, remarks on Facebook, speech

behavior in public transport, stylistics of the city Balti: language in announcements, notices and advertizing, graffiti as art and as rubbish, small talk in shops, the new names given to people, places, shops. These are but a few issues under discussion in a stylistic classroom, which considers stylistics as part of communication culture and pedagogy.

***Practices:***

In R. Carter's view [3, p. 3], there are three main requirements for carrying out pedagogical stylistics in the classroom. It has to be "student-centered", "activity-based" and "process-oriented". Only following these principles, teachers might achieve success at the lessons and motivate learners to do better in this discipline. Such activities have to be communicative and interdependent to involve both the learner, viewed as a potential reader, and the text itself.

According to Fogal [5, p. 55], pedagogical stylistics "is an instrument for investigating the linguistic, socio-cultural and dialogic features inherent in literary and non literary texts" and it is "a tool for improving foreign language performance, building academic skills and language awareness". Pedagogical stylistics is a field that looks at employing stylistic analysis in teaching with the aim of enabling students to better understand literature, language and also improving their language acquisition; stylistics and pedagogy are effectively inseparable as they feed off each other. It is also concerned with the best practice in teaching stylistics and language. Stockwell [11, p. 50] says that literary stylistics has achieved success around the world largely because of its capacity for teaching the English language to foreign students in an engaging and motivated way. Prose fiction and drama provided countless registers and voices, and poetry offered a density of features in an appealing context.

From a functional perspective, the aims of pedagogical stylistics are multi-fold: to enhance learners' linguistic, literary and cultural awareness; to distinguish different functional styles and their typical characteristics; to master a metaphorical use of language; to inspire creative language use pertaining to various texts; to understand the levels of linguistic organization of a certain text; to improve reading skills and creative writing; to develop the communicative competence through different types of texts and genres; to assess the impact of using various types of texts on developing reading, writing and speaking skills of the third-year students.

This study uses the qualitative method of analysis as we are going to analyze how the practical tasks carried out in the classroom might provide learners with a methodology and pedagogy for learning English with a focus on functional styles and text types.

Having taught stylistics with a focus on pedagogical stylistics for a whole semester, we have managed to collect and work out a series of interesting exercises and activities that might be used during practical classes. These activities motivate learners to learn something new and engage their full attention to the given assignments. For example, one of the most challenging and useful activities we have dealt with are students' autobiographies. Students got the assignment to write their personal autobiography in several different functional styles resorting to four different types of texts: a formal full text autobiography that is usually required when applying for a job, a CV (Europass template), the story of their lives and a bio-poem. In such a way, learners have been exposed to various genres, forms of creative expression and language means. They have learned various stylistic registers and syntactical patterns and structures. They have been acquainted

with several different text-types. They have focused on the differences entailed by the restrictions imposed by these text structures and genres and they have explored the texture of these texts and made their own interpretations based on textual descriptions of the given models. However, the basic purpose of the four autobiographical texts has been to render an account of their personal life in four different ways following the requirements of current fictional and nonfictional literature.

Classroom examples and studies are indicative of the students' stylistic competence to cope with "real-world" [8, p. 143] materials, projects and tasks in English. Each individual text sample attempts to develop a set of competences, which contribute to enhancing learners' awareness of the English language and of the discourse features and pragmatic functions of these texts. Obviously, the choice of a functional style and of a stylistically marked register is thoroughly shaped by the linguistic needs of a certain culture, which have developed because of the economic, political and cultural evolution of the society [4, p. 73].

We would like to share our successful experience in working with the third-year students while teaching them pedagogical stylistics as a way of studying English. Thus, we have selected only some special activities to describe in more detail and provide more comments on their implementation in the classroom. For example, students have given positive evaluation to all the activities that involved their own lives, because these assignments were personal fun and had a long lasting effect on them.

We have been inspired to deal with students' CVs as this activity is directly related to the topic: the *Style of Official Documents*. We wanted to teach students something practical, useful and efficient for their future. Actually, the texts

connected with job application turned out to be a good choice. What students thought to be a boring task at first, was considered rather motivating afterwards. They would display curiosity over every little detail, asking many questions on how to express themselves better, how to write a more impressive and precise CV in English and what personal information to provide there. They have explained such an outburst of curiosity by the simple fact that it will be useful for them in the nearest future and they have developed relevant applicable competences in English. Besides, this activity aims at developing some additional competences, such as:

- providing concise information about oneself;
- writing the information in the required succession;
- using ellipsis;
- following typical syntactical structures used in CV;
- applying formal words and expressions used in a CV (formal register);
- presenting information in a graphically accepted manner;
- creating one's qualification profile in English.

Thus, a CV obviously includes all the elements of standardness that the student has to follow and it brings the author of this text closer to the potential working environment. As a result, we have managed to kill two birds with a stone: on the one hand, we taught students how to write a job-related application form (an official document) by analyzing the language and the syntactical structures involved and we focused on the formal requirements of this type of text. On the other hand, while re-writing their CVs for several times they became aware of the importance of writing accurately any official paper. In addition, by fulfilling this assignment students

learned a lot about the stylistically marked features of an autobiographical text.

Compared to a CV, an autobiography represents another text that narrates the history of a person's life told by that very person. We have chosen to teach the formal autobiography, which is sometimes requested by many employers together with other documents. The learners' attention has been drawn to the fact that though it seems to be a similar text to a CV, it also exhibits considerable differences. Our primary aim is to identify these differences and provide students with real-life language models that will develop the following competency framework:

- relating plain facts and data;
- omitting emotionally involved language;
- omitting third-person narration;
- utilizing a strict chronological order of the events described in the text;
- changing elliptical structures used in a CV into fully-fledged sentences;
- distinguishing the basic peculiarities of this type of text;
- writing a concise account or profile of one's autobiography.

These types of texts, though dry in expression, have given students some freedom of choice, that is, they could select the information they only wished to include in their autobiographies. Moreover, they found this task not as stressful as writing one's own CV.

However, there are other possibilities to use autobiographical texts in other genres to enhance learners' awareness of the range of stylistic variation found in modern English literature. One interesting and original way to present

one's autobiography in a different style and key is to write a bio poem.

From empirical observation, it is worth stating that students find such bio poems very challenging and motivating, and they get to look at their life story from a different functional perspective. Working with such poems at the lessons of pedagogical stylistics creates a positive classroom atmosphere, promotes active engagement and encourages students' creativity, originality and performance. At the same time, learning such poems aims at developing the following competences:

- building a mini autobiographical story;
- applying creative writing strategies;
- experimenting with freshness of expression and word-choice;
- conveying a sense of completeness to the poem;
- providing a logical progression of ideas.

Some students enjoyed doing this task so much that they wrote two autobiographical poems, which were somehow different in nature. The students' explanation was simple, namely, that their personalities were so complex that one poem was not enough to express what they felt and who they were. This activity can be extended to making literary characters profiles while analyzing and interpreting literary texts.

Last but not least, among students' favourite assignment was to present their autobiographies in the form of a professional essay, which we entitled *The Story of my Life*. It was not an easy task, because it was a bit more time consuming and sophisticated; in addition, it required originality, considerations on text organization and expression. Nevertheless, it taught students:

- to stick to an informal style;

- to enhance one's knowledge of coherence and cohesion;
- to develop one's own view in an essay;
- to explore language as a means of imaginative and artistic expression;
- to apply creative writing strategies;
- to identify the genre-features of a professional literary essay;
- to provide a discursive (serious, humorous, personal touch, etc.) tone.

It turned out that students' stories were varied and unique in their own ways. They displayed the students' awareness degree of stylistically marked features of these texts in English.

In the same vein, we have worked with advertisements, news items and announcements. Students enjoyed making news programs, interviews, surveys, talk shows, public speeches and advertising. They attempted at making the impossible possible. Undoubtedly, there were failures and frustration in the process of learning; however, it was entertaining and instructive as well.

### **Prospects**

We fully agree that the role of stylistics in language acquisition is currently underexplored and it is only through experimentation and research we can achieve what we have envisaged. We need case studies of learners and classrooms exposed to stylistics to prove its efficiency. We need more research of the classroom, on what happens in the heads of the students. How can we measure the efficacy in the production of wanted results of pedagogical stylistics? Stylistics bears influence on the student's style definitely and helps to

understand how language grammar and rhetoric function in a text, how language creates its effects and distributes linguistic means according to registers.

How can we prove the impact of stylistic knowledge on the future teacher and translator? What does the knowledge of stylistics result in? What are pedagogical results? How does knowledge of stylistics change our students for the better: linguistically, emotionally, cognitively, culturally and socially? How best to use stylistics in teaching and learning English? For what purposes? At what stage should we start introducing stylistics? What are gains and losses? How to assess methods of stylistic analysis? What are possible problems of using stylistics in education?

It is important to introduce a foreign student to the expressive potential of the English language and patterns of its creativity and its discourse varieties but what problems to raise, to what degree, in what form? It is vital to draw a comparison between stylistic phenomena in different languages and to write comparative stylistics for students, teachers and translators whose mother tongue is different from English. Should a textbook for stylistics for native speakers and foreigners be the same?

These are some of the problems to decide for pedagogical stylistics. Much depends on the teacher and the students, on their knowledge and the progress they make in English. Unfortunately, many questions remain unanswered and are not even asked.

The application of stylistics and, namely, of pedagogical stylistics as a teaching tool in learning English is undoubtedly remarkable. In such a way, students acquire some degree of proficiency in English and they learn how different stylistically marked texts are used in larger units, that is, in

discourse. As a result, they become better learners and achievers.

They learn the underlying organizational characteristics typical of different text-types and genres through description, explanation, interpretation and comparison. Learning is facilitated here by the availability of spoken and written samples of texts that might be considered as basic examples. These activities teach students to shift from one genre to another with a focus on their pragmatic function. However, working solely in such a way poses some minor danger in learning a foreign language and, notably, the existence of an array of supportive reading materials and models at their disposal may kill creativity and may bring learners to become fully dependent on following blindly ready-made texts.

The pedagogical aim of all discussions, activities and tasks is how to better the social world around us so that we can interact more successfully with it. The analysis of everyday stylistic practices of language and communication can open students' eyes and minds and so they can make a difference to the world they live in.

Is mastering English through pedagogical stylistics possible? It is possible if we try to meet or to match the needs of the students and the challenges and requirements of the teacher's profession. We should make stylistics not only pedagogical, but also approachable, student-friendly and attractive. On the one hand, pedagogical stylistics should teach how to respect the norms and follow the rules, on the other hand, it should teach creativity, how to break rules along traditional stylistic patterns. We hope that pedagogical stylistics may prove fruitful for the students of English and will live up to the teachers' expectations.

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