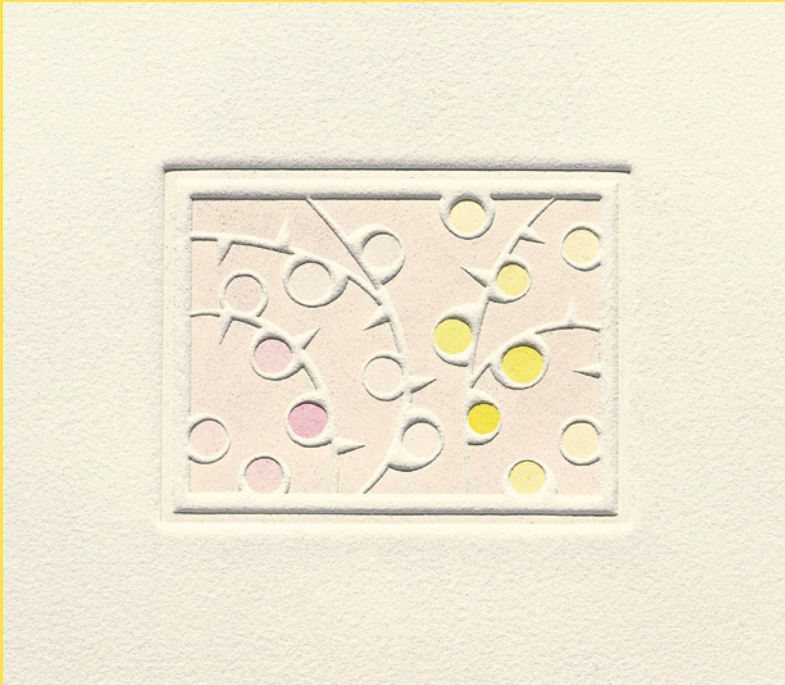**E**nglish
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Journeys in Language Education

Journeys in Language Education

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Part I

Introduction

Journeys in Language Education

This issue of ELOPE is dedicated to language education, which is gaining significance in today's world as many countries are reshaping their language policies by either introducing languages earlier in the curriculum or implementing additional languages into primary and secondary education. In this context many issues need to be reconsidered, among which teaching and teacher education are the most crucial ones.

The title of this volume is related to journeys. Language education involves many different types of them. The first journey is that of the discipline of language education itself. It has come a long way from its first beginnings, always evolving and always trying to find the magic formula for the most effective way of teaching. As a result, many teaching approaches and methods have been developed and tried out (some with more success, others with less) and a variety of contextual factors that best support language learning have been discussed along the way.

The second journey signifies the personal development of each teacher, starting from a novice teacher still trying to figure out how to find their way in the classroom (and staffroom) to a more confident and autonomous teacher, trusting themselves and their choices in teaching. Teachers spend many hours on this journey, exploring what works best for their learners, learning from mistakes and celebrating small victories. Many of them come to the conclusion that Durant's saying "we teach more by what we are than by what we teach" holds true in many teaching contexts.

The third journey is the journey of a language learner. They are the ones who are the most influenced by the changes in educational policies, the development of new methods and the choices that teachers make in their classrooms. If they are lucky, they live in a society that encourages language education and appreciates its teachers, investing in learning and teacher education.

Last but not least, journeys can be related to the teaching and teacher development that happen in countries that are part of this ELOPE issue. Among them one can find Croatia, Nigeria, Poland, Slovenia and Kosovo. Despite different contexts, the authors are all united in the wish to contribute to the quality of teaching in their respective countries.

The article "The Use of Speaking Strategies by Pre-Service EFL Teachers" written by Jelena Filipović, Alenka Mikulec and Ivana Cindrić begins the journey in the language teaching section. The authors claim that speaking is a skill that prevails within communicative competence, and that language teachers should have a high degree of speaking fluency and accuracy and be familiar with a variety of speaking strategies. They examine pre-service EFL teachers' perceived use of speaking strategies and their relation to their EFL and speaking proficiency.

The second article, "ESL Teachers and Diagnostic Assessment: Perceptions and Practices" by Folasade Esther Jimola and Graceful Onovughe Ofodu, discusses teachers' perceptions towards and the use of diagnostic assessment in language classrooms, noting that EFL teachers

that took part in the study had inaccurate perceptions of the purpose of diagnostic assessment and negative attitudes towards it. The authors suggest that the most important factors that influence assessment practices are schooling, professional coursework and teaching context, thus summarizing the decisive elements in language education.

Polona Lilić and Silva Bratož's paper "The Effectiveness of Using Games for Developing Young Learners' Grammar Competence" brings to light the teaching of grammar through the use of games. Games can be employed in teaching all language skills and features, particularly when it comes to teaching young learners. The results of an experimental study presented in the article prove that using games in teaching grammar is more efficient than adopting traditional ELT activities. The authors sum up the article by writing that games take into account learners' needs and preferences and are a natural way of learning for young learners.

In "A Comparative Study of CLIL Trajectories in the Polish Education System" Piotr Romanowski presents different CLIL models used by Polish teachers. The article discusses CLIL provision or, as it is labelled in Poland, bilingual education. The research shows its use is most common in bigger cities and, not surprisingly, English is the most popular language used as a medium of instruction. The content subjects which are taught in a foreign language are Maths, Physics and Geography in lower secondary schools, and besides Maths and Physics, Chemistry is the third most common content subject used for CLIL instruction in upper-secondary schools. The author concludes that CLIL provision in Poland still needs thorough improvements, among them unification of the curricula and the amount of exposure to a foreign language.

The final article in the ELT section, "Teachers' Perceptions of Developing Writing Skills in the EFL Classroom" by Lisjeta Thaqi Jashari and Mateja Dagarin Fojkar, addresses the issue of developing learners' writing skills, which is still perceived as the most difficult task for many learners. The surveyed teachers stated that writing is an essential language skill, although they did not practise it as much as the other skills. The authors suggest different actions to remedy the situation, among which differentiated instruction and the introduction of a variety of teaching strategies to teachers might improve not only learners' writing skills but also their language competence in general.

In the language section, Sanja Škifić and Anita Pavić Pintarić in their contribution titled "Tracing the Space Between Euphemisms and Dysphemisms: The Case of Obesity in English and German", focus on how obesity is represented in English and German. By using a corpus of expressions from different lexicographic sources, the authors analysed their descriptions in dictionaries. Furthermore, they conducted a survey among native speakers of German and English examining to what extent lexicographic descriptions match the native speakers' perceptions of euphemisms.

The literature section concludes this volume with Nejc Rožman Ivančič's paper on "The Image of a Woman of Colour and Native American Woman in Two Kerouac's Novels: A Double Otherness". The author examines the portrayal of a Native American woman and a woman of colour in two of Kerouac's novels, and discusses Kerouac's attitude towards women

and non-white ethnicities. He sums up his analysis by stating that the male protagonist in the novels uses female characters only as objects for his own self-discovery, revealing his racial prejudice.

The focus of this volume of ELOPE has been on language learning and teaching. Hopefully, this issue will open the door to more journeys within language education. Further research in this area should lead to better teaching practices and well-educated teachers who will contribute to the quality of education and progress of pupils and, as they grow up, confident users of languages. Let me finish with the words of an inspiring American writer:

> I have come to believe that a great teacher is a great artist and that there are as few as there are any other great artists. Teaching might even be the greatest of the arts since the medium is the human mind and spirit. (John Steinbeck)

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Guest Editor of ELOPE Vol. 16, No. 2 (2019)

Part II

English Language and Literature Teaching

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The Use of Speaking Strategies by Pre-Service EFL Teachers

ABSTRACT

Speaking is a language skill that dominates the notion of communicative language competence. Language teachers, especially early starters' pre-service teachers, should undergo very intensive programmes of pronunciation practice as they will in many cases present the only models for their learners to imitate (Vilke 1993). To develop such fluency in speaking and propositional accuracy, students and prospective teachers should not only use but also be aware of a range of speaking strategies. This study examines pre-service EFL teachers' perceived use of speaking strategies, as defined in the Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (Nakatani 2006). Since previous studies have identified various factors associated with learners' strategy use, we focused on determining whether the participants' perceived strategy use is related to their EFL and speaking proficiency and their preference for engaging in speaking activities in their EFL classes. The results confirmed rather high strategy use, but the relation between the tested variables was only partially confirmed.

Keywords: OCSI; pre-service EFL teachers; speaking; speaking strategies

Raba govornih komunikacijskih strategij študentov angleščine kot tujega jezika

POVZETEK

Govor je jezikovna zmožnost, ki prevladuje v opredelitvi komunikacijske govorne kompetence. Učitelji jezikov, še posebej v zgodnji dobi učenja, bi morali tekom študija intenzivno razvijati izgovorjavo, saj bodo pogosto edini jezikovni model, ki ga bodo njihovi učenci posnemali (Vilke 1993). Za uspešen razvoj govorne tekočnosti in pravilnosti, morajo študenti in bodoči učitelji tako poznati kot pravilno uporabljati govorne komunikacijske strategije. Raziskava preučuje katere govorne komunikacijske strategije uporabljajo študenti angleščine glede na Seznam govornih komunikacijskih strategij (Nakatani 2006). V preteklosti so nekatere študije že raziskovale različne dejavnike, povezane z rabo strategij, zato smo v naši raziskavi preučevali ali je raba zaznanih strategij povezana z nivojem govornega znanja in z željo po vključitvi v govorne dejavnosti pri pouku angleščine kot tujega jezika. Rezultati so potrdili pogosto rabo strategij, toda povezave med spremenljivkami so bile le delno potrjene.

Ključne besede: seznam govornih komunikacijskih strategij; študenti angleščine; govor; govorne strategije

1   Introduction

Subject knowledge, which includes the knowledge of second language acquisition, pedagogical knowledge, curricular knowledge, cultural knowledge, language awareness and language proficiency (Richards et al. 2012), is the foundation of a teacher's professional experience. With respect to language proficiency, it goes without saying that EFL teachers need to possess knowledge about the grammar and vocabulary of the English language, as well as the reading, writing, listening and speaking skills necessary to use the language. "Having an excellent command of the target language is indeed one of the most important characteristics of outstanding foreign language teachers" (Shin 2008, 59), and for the non-native teacher "language proficiency will always represent the bedrock of their professional confidence" (Murdoch 1994, 254). According to Richards (2011), there is a threshold proficiency level the teacher needs to have reached in the target language in order to be able to teach effectively in this language. In this paper we will focus on speaking, which as a language skill contributes to the overall development of communicative language competence, and is also represented as the basis of that competence (Martínez-Flor, Usó-Juan, and Alcón Soler 2006).

Speaking enables people to send their intended message to others using speech sounds which they produce themselves, activating their speech organs. However, speaking is more than just the production of sounds which are put together into meaningful units, since "learning speaking, whether in a first or other language, involves developing subtle and detailed knowledge about why, how and when to communicate, and complex skills for producing and managing interaction, such as asking a question or obtaining a turn" (Burns and Seidlhofer 2010, 197). The development of speaking skills can be more effective if language learners employ speaking strategies.

According to Martínez-Flor, Usó-Juan and Alcón Soler (2006, 151), "speakers need to become competent in using strategies in order to overcome limitations due to a lack of competence in any of the other components" (e.g. discourse, linguistic, pragmatic, intercultural and strategic competence) "integrating the proposed communicative competence framework". Many factors, such as the type of speaking assignment, students' cultural background or their level of proficiency can influence the choice of speaking strategies used (Chamot 2005). The teacher's role is to make students aware of the strategies they are already using and those they could use, so they are less restrained while deciding upon an appropriate and effective strategy for their speaking task. In that way, the teacher directs students towards new possibilities and eventually makes them use new strategies which they have not previously used or even taken into account. In that respect, Chamot (2005, 123) proposes explicit strategy instruction which "includes the development of students' awareness of their strategies, teacher modeling of strategic thinking, identifying the strategies by name, providing opportunities for practice and self-evaluation". Teachers should make students aware of the many existing strategies and explain each strategy in terms of its role and function, i.e. instruct students on "how, when, and why to use the strategy" (Anderson 2005, 758). In this way, students will be able to discover for themselves which strategies they find most beneficial (Anderson 2005). On the other hand, research conducted by Eslinger (2000 as cited in Anderson 2005, 763) draws

attention to implicit strategy instruction, which could also be beneficial to students since "there may be a natural tendency to grow in strategy use without explicit instruction".

Another issue concerning the instruction of speaking strategies is whether using L1 in an EFL classroom to teach speaking strategies should be a common practice or whether it should be avoided. Chamot (2005) proposes the use of L1 if learners are not proficient enough to understand the teacher's explanation of a specific strategy in English. Usually, younger and/or beginner learners are the ones who do not understand English well enough and may thus benefit from the teacher's decision to explain these strategies in L1. Nevertheless, using L2 to explain speaking strategies should be introduced gradually in the process of language teaching.

It is important for pre-service EFL teachers to be familiar with a range of speaking strategies so that they can teach them in EFL classrooms. In this paper, we will take Nakatani's (2006) eight categories of strategies learners use for coping with speaking problems as the theoretical foundation. These eight categories are the following: 1) *social affective strategies,* where learners try to control their own anxiety and enjoy the process of oral communication, they are willing to encourage themselves to use English, to risk making mistakes, and attempt to give a good impression and avoid silence during interactions; 2) *fluency-oriented strategies,* used to speak as clearly as possible so that their interlocutors can understand them, paying attention to the cultural context in which their conversation takes place to avoid misunderstandings; 3) *negotiation for meaning while speaking strategies,* used when checking whether their interlocutors have understood them or not, repetition and providing examples in order to enhance the listener's understanding of their intended message; 4) *accuracy-oriented strategies,* employed to self-assess the grammatical structures used to determine whether these structures are correct or not, and the attempt to sound like a native speaker; 5) *message reduction and alteration strategies,* where learners try "to avoid a communication breakdown by reducing an original message, simplifying their utterances, or using similar expressions that they can use confidently" (Nakatani 2006, 155); 6) *nonverbal strategies while speaking,* used when the message is not communicated through speech only, but through gestures, eye-contact, and so on; 7) *message abandonment strategies,* used to bring the interaction to an end by giving up on communicating the intended message to the interlocutor (e.g. by asking someone for help, although in this case learners do not give up on conveying their message completely); 8) *attempt to think in English strategies,* when learners try to think in English while speaking in English.

2   Literature Review

Speaking is a complex skill that consists of many sub-skills including phonology and pronunciation. In order to be able to speak English well, speaking strategies for phonology and pronunciation should be employed. Moyer (2014 as cited in Oxford 2017) conducted research which confirmed that learners who were exceptionally good at phonology reported using learning strategies such as self-monitoring, imitation of native speakers, attention to difficult phonological terms and explicit concern for pronunciation accuracy.

Dadour and Robbins (1996) showed that students who were taught speaking strategies used these strategies more often, and therefore their speaking skills were better than those of students without strategy instruction. Students also reported that they wanted to continue

with strategy instruction, as this would help them develop a satisfying level of oral proficiency. Other researchers have also concluded that by employing various learning strategies, learners' language performance improves (Anderson 2005).

In line with those findings, Kawai (2008) showed how the use of speaking strategies by two very good Japanese EFL speakers contributed to their speaking proficiency. In order to build their confidence, they practiced orally in advance of any English language encounters; gathered information on potential discussion topics through books, the Internet, and interviews; sought help from native speakers if available; anticipated the comments of others; planned and prepared flexible conversational expressions to employ; reviewed discussion procedures; anticipated communication breakdown and the strategies to use if it happened; and made and followed plans to speak English every day. Moreover, the research showed that learning strategies of a non-compensatory sort (e.g. metacognitive strategies such as planning and monitoring, cognitive strategies which enhance grammar and vocabulary, affective strategies and social strategies) are helpful for improving speaking. Kawai (2008) concluded that those learners who develop good oral skills appear to be frequent strategy users, regardless of culture and learning context.

Zhang and Goh's (2006) research with 278 Singaporean secondary school learners of English confirmed that the number and level of strategies used are related to learners' proficiency in the foreign language. Méndez López (2011) also compared the use of speaking strategies by university students of English with their proficiency levels (beginners, intermediates and advanced). The results showed that the use of speaking strategies was not the same at the three proficiency levels. More specifically, all students reported using similar speaking strategies, but the frequency of strategy use was related to the students' proficiency level (Méndez López 2011). The three strategies that were employed the most were: asking for repetition, the use of paraphrasing or a synonym for unknown words and asking for clarification of a message (Méndez López 2011). The author concluded with the suggestion that strategy training should be implemented in language courses, interspersed with communicative activities (Méndez López 2011).

A more recent study by Pawlak (2018) investigated what speaking strategies higher-proficiency English language learners use prior to, during and after a speaking task. The research showed that "the employment of SSs is bound to be conditioned by the type of activity, the demands it places on interlocutors, and the communicative goals it sets" (Pawlak 2018, 286). The results with regard to the specific speaking strategies the participants employed before, during and after performing two different speaking tasks showed that the participants mostly relied on metacognitive and social strategies (Pawlak 2018). Some of the metacognitive strategies they used were preparing for their speech by choosing suitable vocabulary and deciding upon the arguments which would support their opinions. They also reflected upon their grammatical accuracy during the communication tasks. An example of a social strategy that was employed was students cooperating in order to complete the two speaking tasks by asking each other different questions (Pawlak 2018).

In view of these studies, the present research[1] focused on identifying speaking strategy use by pre-service EFL teachers and its possible correlations with several factors which have been identified as important in previous studies.

3 The Study

The present study investigates pre-service EFL teachers' perceptions of their use of speaking strategies with respect to their self-assessed language and speaking proficiency, as well as preference for speaking in EFL classes. The aim of the study is to establish whether pre-service EFL teachers use the speaking strategies which are available for them as language learners and future EFL teachers. This is especially important because their knowledge and use of speaking strategies will have a significant and immediate impact on their learners.

The research hypotheses are as follows:

1. The results will show significant use of speaking strategies by pre-service EFL teachers.

2. Pre-service EFL teachers who assess their proficiency in English with a higher grade will report using speaking strategies more often.

3. Pre-service EFL teachers who assess their speaking skills in English with a higher grade, and who claim that speaking is their favourite activity in the English classes, will report using speaking strategies more often.

3.1 Participants

The research comprised 50 participants, students at the Faculty of Teacher Education University of Zagreb studying within the *Integrated graduate and undergraduate study of primary teacher education with English language.*

3.2 Research Instrument

An online questionnaire, designed for the purpose of this study, was available for participants to complete throughout March, April and May 2018. Prior to responding to the two-part online questionnaire, the participants completed a consent form.

The initial part of the questionnaire contained questions regarding the participants' age, gender, current year of study and questions related to their English language learning history and self-assessment of their proficiency in English and speaking.

The second part of the questionnaire was an adapted version of the Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (OCSI) developed by Nakatani (2006). The original inventory contains two sets of items, the first one addressing strategies for coping with speaking problems and the second containing strategies for coping with listening problems. For the purpose of the present research, the set of items on strategies for coping with listening problems

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[1] The research described in this paper is part of a study conducted in the process of writing the first author's graduation thesis.

was excluded from the questionnaire. The OCSI, "a reliable and valid strategy inventory for communication tasks" (Nakatani 2006, 152) consists of 32 items indicating strategies for coping with speaking problems. Each item is evaluated on a five-point Likert-type scale whereby 1 indicates *Never or almost never true of me*; 2. *Generally not true of me*; 3. *Somewhat true of me*; 4. *Generally true of me*; 5. *Always or almost always true of me*. The strategies were divided into eight categories, based on the factor analysis results. Hence, Factor 1 are *social affective strategies* (items 23, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29, Factor 2 (items 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14) are *fluency-oriented strategies*, Factor 3 (items 19, 20, 21 and 22) are *negotiation for meaning while speaking strategies*, Factor 4 (items 7, 8, 17, 18 and 30) are *accuracy-oriented strategies*, Factor 5 (items 3, 4 and 5) are *message reduction and alteration strategies*, Factor 6 are *nonverbal strategies* (items 15 and 16), Factor 7 (items 6, 24, 31 and 32) are *message abandonment strategies*, and Factor 8 (items 1 and 2) are *attempt to think in English strategies*.

All of the items from the set of strategies for coping with speaking problems were included in the questionnaire, with some of them being slightly adapted to aid comprehension by the students.

In addition, although the instructions for the original OCSI state that it is to be completed after a specific speaking activity, for the purpose of the present research the questions were posed and analysed so as to refer to the general speaking behaviour of the participants.

The results obtained from the OCSI were analysed using descriptive statistics, i.e. mean and SD values indicated for the overall strategy use as well as for individual strategy use.

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 General Information on the Participants

The sample of participants comprised 50 students, of whom 48 were female and two were male. The distribution of students according to the year of study was as follows: 19 students in the second year, five students in the third year, four students in the fourth year and 22 students in the final, fifth year of study. The age span of the participants ranged from 19 to 27, with most of the participants being 23 (N = 15) and 20 (N = 13) years old. All of the participants reported having learned English prior to their enrolment at the Faculty of Teacher Education.

The majority (N = 44) reported that their final grade in English in primary school was 5 (i.e. excellent), while only six were graded with a 4 (i.e. very good). Their final grades slightly deteriorated in secondary school with N = 35 of them being graded with 5, N = 14 with 4, and N = 1 with 3 (i.e. good).

Students' exposure to the English language in their free time (e.g. listening to music, watching films, reading, surfing the Internet, communicating in English, etc.) was estimated as follows. More than half of them (N = 27) reported being exposed to English more than 10 hours per week, 11 participants being exposed to English up to 10 hours per week, while 12 participants stated that their exposure does not exceed 5 hours per week. Finally, the majority of the participants (N = 42) reported communicating with a native speaker of English at least

at some point in their lives, while the rest (N = 8) said they have never been in contact with a native speaker.

4.2 Self-Assessed Language and Speaking Proficiency and Awareness of Strategies

Speaking (N = 33; 66%) and listening (N = 23; 46%) were selected by the majority of participants as their favourite activities in English class. Reading silently (N = 19; 38%), writing (N = 17; 34%) and reading out loud (N = 11; 22%) were chosen by fewer participants. When asked to choose one or more skills in English at which they consider themselves to be very good, the most frequently chosen answers were listening (N = 30; 60%) and speaking (N = 28; 56%). Reading silently and writing were chosen the same number of times (N = 26; 52%), while reading out loud was chosen 23 times (46%).

Further along, the participants self-assessed their EFL proficiency on a scale from 5 to 1 (5=excellent; 4=very good; 3= good; 2= satisfactory; 1=fail) Most of them assessed their EFL proficiency with 4 (N = 33; 66%), followed by 5 (N = 13; 26%) and 3 (N = 4; 8%). The mean grade for participants' self-assessed general knowledge of English was M = 4.18 (SD = 0.56).

The self-assessment of their speaking skills showed that the most common grade was 4 (N = 27; 54%), although there were also some 3s (N = 8; 16%) and 5s (N = 15; 30%). The mean grade for the participants' self-assessed speaking skills in English was M = 4.14 (SD = 0.67).

We also compared the self-assessment of the participants' speaking skills in the foreign language (English) with the self-assessment of the speaking skills in their mother tongue (Croatian). The results were as follows: an equal number of students (N = 24; 48%) graded their speaking skills in the mother tongue with 5 and 4. Only 4% (N = 2) graded it with 3. The mean grade for the self-assessed speaking skills in Croatian was M = 4.44 (SD = 0.58). Even though the participants assessed their speaking skills in Croatian with slightly higher grades than their speaking skills in English, the difference is not relevant. Some of the possible reasons might be that they feel confident while speaking in both their mother tongue and English, or that their standards for assessing these two skills were not the same (maybe they had higher standards for Croatian than English). Also, since the participants are pre-service EFL teachers and their proficiency is targeted at the C1 level of the CEFR (2001) (see Cindrić, Cergol, and Davies 2010), it is not surprising that their self-assessed English language proficiency is high.

The participants also had to explain what they thought speaking and learning strategies were. With regard to the former, the answers showed that some of the participants did not know what speaking strategies are, or had difficulties explaining them. These are some of their answers: "The way we say things" and "Mechanism to help you speak more easily and fluently". Secondly, they were asked to explain/say the meaning of learning strategies, and some of their answers were: "To find the best way to learn something.", "Watching movies, communicating, repeating the words you've studied, writing them down, connecting them with Croatian words…", and "visual, auditory, kinesthetic and multimodal strategies". The obtained answers show that some participants confused learning strategies with learning

styles, some did not differentiate between strategic and non-strategic learning, some identified learning strategies in general with social strategies as one type of learning strategies, while some provided good examples of learning strategies.

4.3 Self-Reported Use of Speaking Strategies (OCSI)

The results obtained from the OCSI indicate that the average use of strategies by the participants was M = 3.77 (SD = .34). Strategies defined by inventory items 1, 24 and 32 were excluded from the total calculation, as they relate to speaking behaviours which generally do not have a positive impact on one's speaking skills. Those speaking behaviours are, for example, first thinking of what to say in one's native language and then constructing the English sentence, leaving a message unfinished because of some language difficulty, and giving up when one cannot make oneself understood.

In the text below, the results of the OCSI will be presented according to the eight factors, i.e. types of strategies. Variables in Factor 1 address *social affective strategies*, and they include six strategy items for which the following mean results were obtained: 1 *I try to use fillers when I cannot think of what to say* (M = 3.76, SD = .92), 2 *I try to leave a good impression on the listener* (M = 4.44, SD = .61), 3 *I don't mind taking risks even though I might make mistakes* (M = 3.80, SD = 1.09), 4 *I try to enjoy the conversation* (M = 4.52, SD = .74), 5 *I try to relax when I feel anxious* (M = 4.24, SD = .82), and 6 *I actively encourage myself to express what I want to say* (M = 4.28, SD = .83). Figure 1 shows how the participants assessed their *social affective strategy* use.

FIGURE 1. OCSI results indicating participants' *social affective strategy* use.

Note: 1. Never or almost never true of me; 2. Generally not true of me; 3. Somewhat true of me; 4. Generally true of me; 5. Always or almost always true of me.

It may be observed that the highest mean for the perceived use of speaking strategies is for the strategy *I try to enjoy the conversation*, while the lowest mean was recorded for the strategy

I try to use fillers when I cannot think of what to say. Since these students are instructed in and frequently made aware of the importance of their fluency in communication and the importance of using fillers in achieving this goal, such low results are rather surprising. On the other hand, it may be that due to their perceived high EFL/speaking competence they did not consider fillers to be a useful strategy, or they may simply not be aware of their use.

Factor 2 items (Figure 2) refer to *fluency-oriented strategies,* and the mean values for this category were: 1 *I change my way of saying things according to the context* (M = 4.16, SD = .77), 2 *I take my time to express what I want to say* (M = 3.64, SD = .92), 3 *I pay attention to my pronunciation* (M = 4.52, SD = .68), 4 *I try to speak clearly and loudly to make myself heard* (M = 4.34, SD = .75), 5 *I pay attention to my rhythm and intonation* (M = 4.06, SD = .94), and 6 *I pay attention to the conversation flow* (M = 4.22, SD = .96).
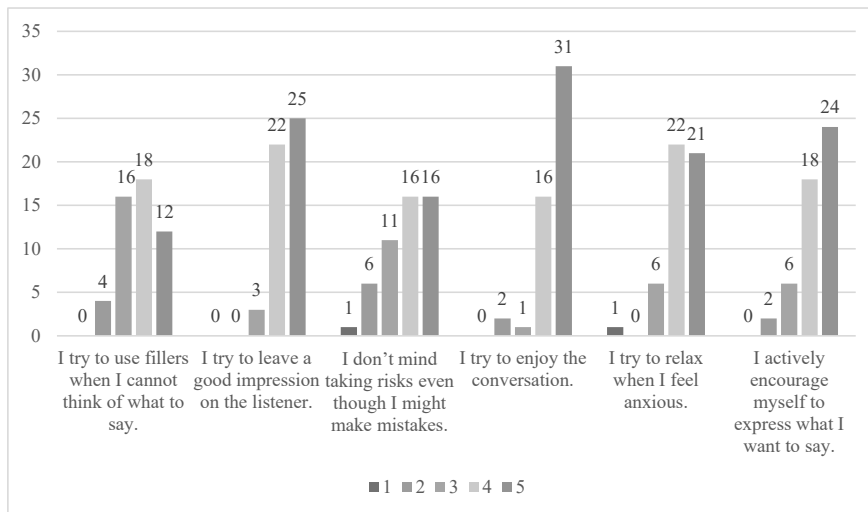

FIGURE 2. OCSI results indicating participants' *fluency-oriented strategy* use.

Note: 1. Never or almost never true of me; 2. Generally not true of me; 3. Somewhat true of me; 4. Generally true of me; 5. Always or almost always true of me.

The results show that the highest mean value for the perceived strategy use was recorded for the strategy *I try to speak clearly and loudly to make myself heard*. The lowest mean was recorded for the strategy *I take my time to express what I want to say*, and it may be a reflection of the participants' awareness of their high language proficiency in EFL which enables them to communicate confidently and without hesitation. According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001), the functional success of the learner/user is described through fluency and propositional accuracy. Fluency is the ability to articulate, to keep going, and to cope when at a dead end, whereas propositional precision is the ability to formulate thoughts and propositions so as to make one's meaning clear (Cindrić, Cergol and Davies 2010). Considering the participants' training as future teachers of English, it is expected that their fluency is at the C1 level of CEFR, which indicates the following 'can do' statement: *Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only a*

conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language (CEFR 2001). The results of this research are in line with the set level.

Factor 3 is *negotiation for meaning while speaking strategies*, and the following values were obtained for these four strategy items: 1 *While speaking, I pay attention to the listener's reaction to my speech* (M = 4.24, SD = .85), 2 *I give examples if the listener doesn't understand what I'm saying* (M = 4.64, SD = .53), 3 *I repeat what I want to say until the listener understands* (M = 4.10, SD = .91), and 4 *I make comprehension checks to ensure the listener understands what I want to say* (M = 3.68, SD = 1.10). Figure 3 shows the participants' assessment of their *negotiation for meaning while speaking* strategy use.
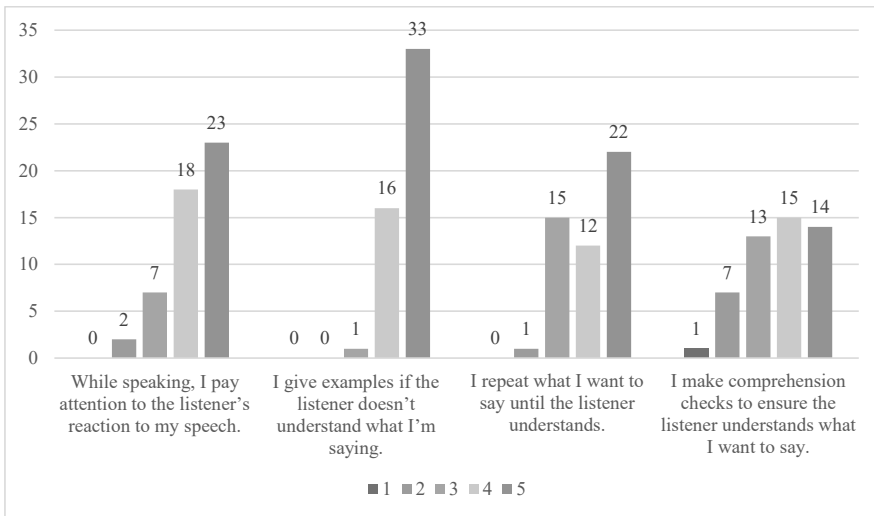
FIGURE 3. OCSI results indicating participants' *negotiation for meaning while speaking strategy* use.

Note: 1. Never or almost never true of me; 2. Generally not true of me; 3. Somewhat true of me; 4. Generally true of me; 5. Always or almost always true of me.

It may be observed that the highest perceived mean was obtained for the strategy *I give examples if the listener doesn't understand what I'm saying*, while the lowest mean was recorded for *I make comprehension checks to ensure the listener understands what I want to say*. The low results for *making comprehension checks* may stem from the participants' greater reliance on the collocutors' non-verbal signals indicating miscommunication. On the other hand, when warned about lack of understanding of their utterances, they willingly provide examples to facilitate understanding. Moreover, exemplification is considered a useful instructional technique in EFL teaching and learning (Byrd et al. 1993), and since the participants are pre-service EFL teachers, such significant use of this speaking strategy is understandable.

For the five strategy items grouped under Factor 4, i.e., *accuracy-oriented strategies*, the following mean values were calculated: 1 *I pay attention to grammar and word order during conversations* (M = 4.30, SD = .86), 2 *I try to emphasize the subject and verb of the sentence* (M = 3.04, SD = .95), 3 *I correct myself when I notice that I have made a mistake* (M = 4.62,

SD = .57), 4 *I notice myself using an expression which fits a rule that I have learned* (M = 4.08, SD = .80), and 5 *I try to talk like a native speaker* (M = 4.12, SD = .98). Participants' self-assessed *accuracy-oriented* strategy use is presented in Figure 4.
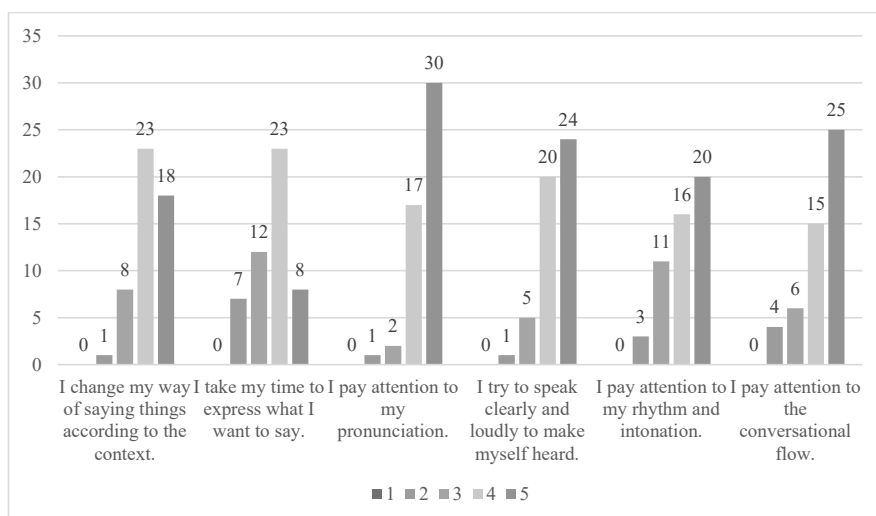

FIGURE 4. OCSI results indicating participants' *accuracy-oriented strategy* use.

Note: 1. Never or almost never true of me; 2. Generally not true of me; 3. Somewhat true of me; 4. Generally true of me; 5. Always or almost always true of me.

The strategy *I correct myself when I notice that I have made a mistake* is reported to be used the most, while *I try to emphasize the subject and verb of the sentence* is used the least. It is not surprising that self-correction was the strategy used most in this category, as well as the second most used strategy in the entire inventory, since self-correction has been identified as an essential form of error correction and a procedure that may contribute to learner autonomy in contemporary learner-centred educational settings (Edwards 2000, Sultana 2009).

The perceived use (Figure 5) of *message reduction and alteration strategies*, grouped under Factor 5, was as follows: 1 *I use words which are familiar to me* (M = 4.56, SD = .50), 2 *I reduce the message (what I want to say) and use simple expressions* (M = 3.04, SD = 1.01), and 3 *I replace the original message with another one when I feel I cannot execute my original intent* (M = 3.70, SD = 1.00).

The highest and lowest perceived mean uses of *message reduction and alternation strategy* were recorded for the strategies *I use words which are familiar to me*, and *I reduce the message (what I want to say) and use simple expressions,* respectively. However, this category had an overall lower mean result in comparison to most other categories, which may be related to the participants' high EFL proficiency, since Metcalfe and Noom-Ura (2013) found that the mean result for this strategy category was lower for the group of high proficiency learners in their research.

Strategies concerned with the aspect of communication which does not include speech are grouped under Factor 6, and are called *nonverbal strategies while speaking*. These were assessed

FIGURE 5. OCSI results indicating participants' *message reduction and alteration strategy* use.

Note: 1. Never or almost never true of me; 2. Generally not true of me; 3. Somewhat true of me; 4. Generally true of me; 5. Always or almost always true of me.

by the participants in the following way: 1 *I try to make eye-contact when I am talking* (M = 4.46, SD = .86)*,* and 2 *I use gestures and facial expressions if I do not know how to say something* (M = 4.28, SD = .83). Figure 6 shows how the participants assessed their use of *nonverbal strategies while speaking*.
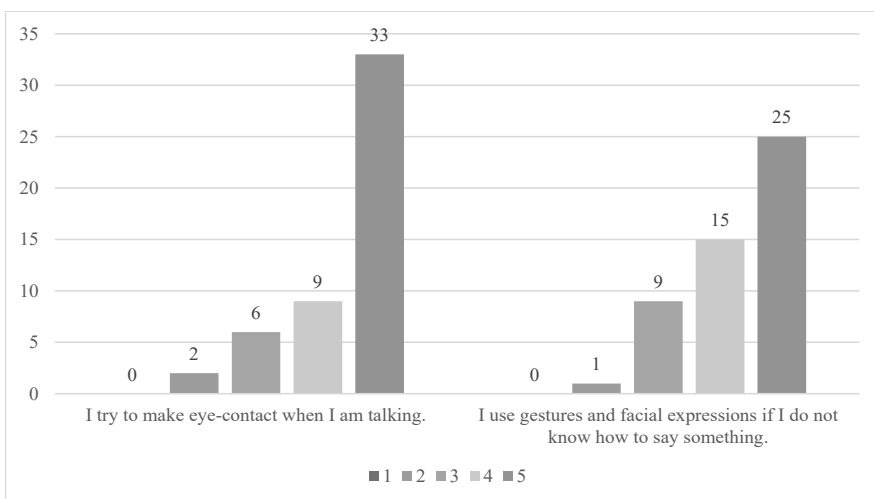
FIGURE 6. OCSI results indicating participants' use of *nonverbal speaking strategies*.

Note: 1. Never or almost never true of me; 2. Generally not true of me; 3. Somewhat true of me; 4. Generally true of me; 5. Always or almost always true of me.

The results were, as expected, rather high for both of the assessed strategies, although the participants perceive that they use the strategy *I use gestures and facial expressions if I do not*

know how to say something somewhat more than *I try to make eye-contact when I'm talking.* The importance of nonverbal strategies was recognized by Canale and Swain (1980, 30), who claimed that strategic competence relies on "verbal and nonverbal communication strategies to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or due to insufficient competence".

Message abandonment strategies, categorized under Factor 7, are employed when speakers give up on delivering their original message because they do not feel capable of doing so. This group of strategies (Figure 7) was assessed by the participants as follows: 1 *I abandon the execution of the original message and just say some words when I don't know what to say* (M = 2.32, SD = 1.12), 2 *I leave a message unfinished because of some language difficulty* (M = 1.98, SD = .74), 3 *I ask other people to help when I can't communicate well* (M = 3.74, SD = 1.14), and 4 *I give up when I can't make myself understood* (M = 2.04, SD = .99).
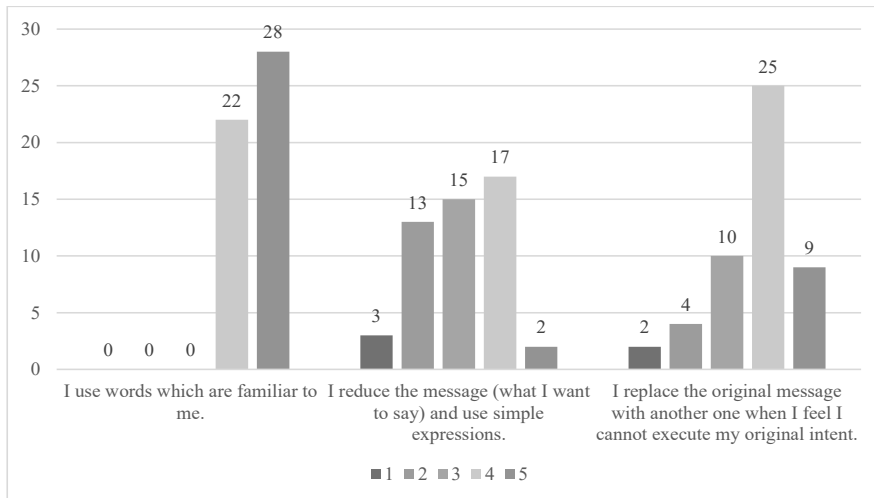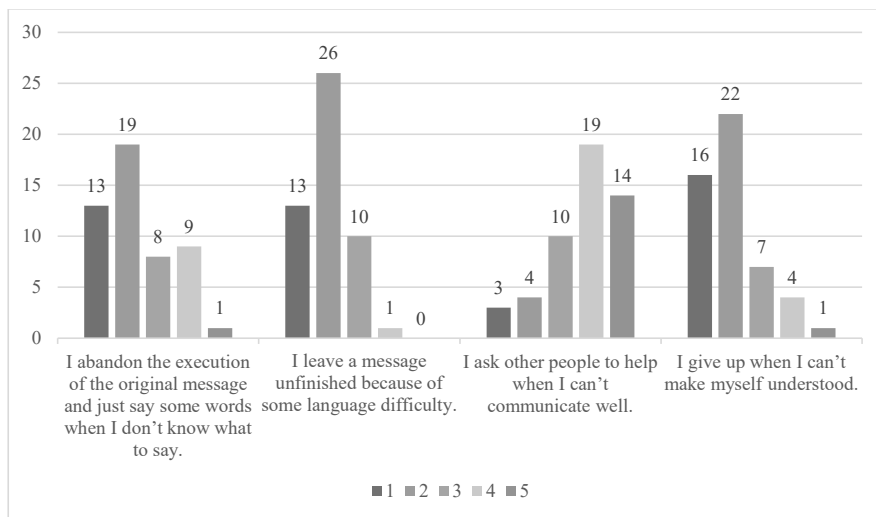

Figure 7. OCSI results indicating participants' *message abandonment strategy* use.

Note: 1. Never or almost never true of me; 2. Generally not true of me; 3. Somewhat true of me; 4. Generally true of me; 5. Always or almost always true of me.

The overall analysis shows that the results for *message abandonment* strategy use were lower than those obtained for the previously presented strategy groups. The highest perceived mean use was recorded for the strategy *I ask other people to help when I can't communicate well*, while the lowest mean was recorded for the strategy *I leave a message unfinished because of some language difficulty*, which is also the lowest recorded value in the entire inventory. This particular strategy category has been found to be significantly more used by low proficiency learners (Metcalfe and Noom-Ura 2013). Therefore, this result actually speaks in favour of the participants and reflects positive practices in teaching, as this particular group of students are continually encouraged throughout their studies to employ various speaking strategies to avoid breakdowns in communication.

Factor 8 includes *attempt to think in English strategies*, and the following results were obtained for these two strategies: 1 *I first think of what I want to say in my native language and then construct the English sentence* (M = 2.34, SD = 1.00)*, and 2 *I first think of a sentence I already know in English and then try to change it to fit the situation* (M = 2.62, SD = 1.18) (Figure 8).
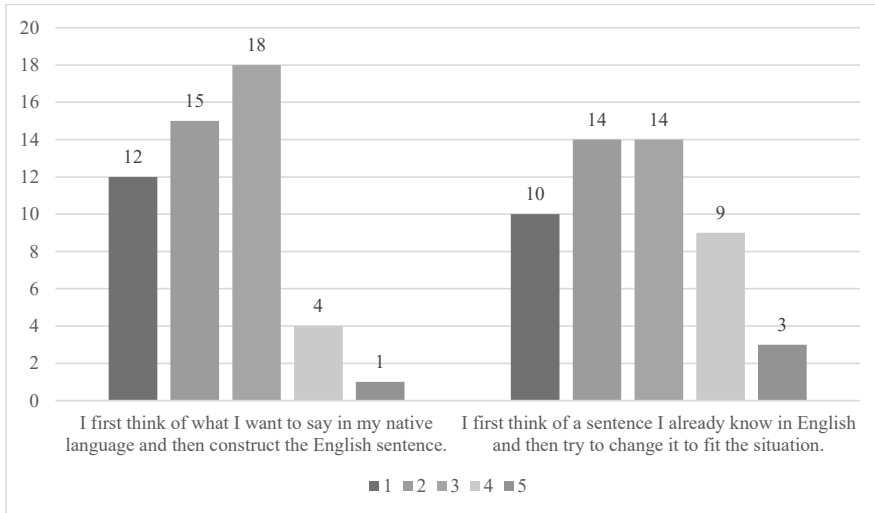
Figure 8. OCSI results indicating participants' *attempt to think in English strategy* use.

Note: 1. Never or almost never true of me; 2. Generally not true of me; 3. Somewhat true of me; 4. Generally true of me; 5. Always or almost always true of me.

The results for these two strategies were also lower in comparison to the other strategies, with the lower mean results recorded for *I first think of what I want to say in my native language and then construct the English sentence*. This indicates that most students do not use this strategy, which is positive since thinking in the language of communication as much as possible is considered important, and has been proven to be more useful than thinking in one's mother tongue (Nakatani 2006, 155–56).

Based on the presented results, it may be concluded that, apart from the *message abandonment* and *attempt to think in English strategies*, most of the obtained mean values were generally rather high as well as the overall result. Therefore, the first hypothesis, H1. *The results will show significant use of speaking strategies by pre-service EFL teachers,* was confirmed.

4.4 The Relationship Between the Participants' Use of Speaking Strategies and Their Self-Assessed EFL Knowledge and Speaking Skills

A series of Spearman rank-order correlation analyses were conducted to test the second hypothesis: H2. *Pre-service EFL teachers who assess their knowledge of English with a higher grade (4 - very good and 5 - excellent) will report using speaking strategies more often.* The results confirmed a statistically significant weak positive correlation between the participants'

self-assessed knowledge of English and their perceived use of the following four speaking strategy categories: *social affective* (r_s (50)=.34, p< .05), *fluency-oriented* (r_s (50)=.32, p< .05), *negotiation for meaning while speaking* (r_s (50)=.39, p< .01), and *accuracy-oriented* category (r_s (50)=.38, p< .01). In other words, the participants who assessed their EFL proficiency to be (relatively) high reported using the above-mentioned speaking strategies more often. Therefore, it may be proposed that the second hypothesis was confirmed partially, as the correlations were weak, and they were confirmed for only four out of eight speaking strategy categories.

In order to test the third hypothesis (H3. *Pre-service EFL teachers who assess their speaking skills in English with a higher grade, and who claim that speaking is their favourite activity in the English classes will report using speaking strategies more often*), a correlation analysis and two one-way ANOVA tests were applied. A series of Spearman rank-order correlations confirmed a statistically significant weak positive correlation between the participants' self-assessed speaking skills in English and their perceived use of only one speaking strategy category: *social affective* (r_s (50)=.38, p< .01). A statistically significant weak correlation was confirmed for one more strategy category, *message reduction and alteration* (r_s (50)= - .29, p< .05), but this one was negative, i.e. the participants who assessed their speaking skills with a higher grade reported using this speaking strategy category less often.

The first one-way ANOVA test confirmed a statistically significant difference in favour of the participants who mentioned speaking as their favourite activity in EFL classes for the *social affective*: F(1,49)=22.958, p=.000, and *accuracy-oriented* strategy categories: F(1,49)=6.817, p=.012. In other words, their use of these speaking strategies was perceived to be greater than that of the participants who did not refer to speaking as their favourite activity. A statistically significant difference was also found for *message reduction and alteration strategies*: F(1,49)=5.757, p=.020), but it was in favour of the participants who did not identify speaking as their favourite activity in EFL classes. The results show that having speaking as a favourite activity was determined as a relevant factor only for two out of eight strategy categories.

The second one-way ANOVA test confirmed a statistically significant difference in favour of the participants who see themselves as being good at speaking for the *social affective*: F(1,49)=20.308, p=.000; *fluency-oriented*: F(1,49)=4.032, p=.050; and *accuracy-oriented* strategy categories: F(1,49)=4.712, p=.035. For two categories the difference was statistically significant, but it was in favour of those who did not perceive themselves as being good at speaking (*message reduction and alteration*: F(1,49)=5.645, p=.022, and *attempt to think in English*: F(1,49)=4.131, p=.048). The fact that participants who do not perceive themselves as being good at speaking reported using message reduction strategy category more often is in accordance with previous findings indicating that this strategy category was used more often by low proficiency learners (Metcalfe and Noom-Ura 2013).

The results of the second ANOVA test show that being good at speaking was proven a relevant factor only for three out of the eight strategy categories. Therefore, it may be proposed that the third hypothesis was only partially confirmed, as the relationship between the perceived use of speaking strategies and the three tested variables was confirmed only for some of the strategy categories.

5 Conclusion

The study presented students' (pre-service primary school English teachers) perceptions of their use of speaking strategies with respect to their self-assessed language and speaking proficiency, as well as preference for speaking in EFL classes. The results showed significant use of speaking strategies by pre-service EFL teachers (H1) although, when asked to define both learning and speaking strategies, some participants were not able to provide satisfactory explanations. Hence, it may be proposed that the majority of the target group of learners predominantly showed satisfactory use of strategies acquired in the course of their studies. The somewhat weaker knowledge or understanding of strategies recorded in this sample may be related to the fact that some of the participants were only in their second year of study, and they have not yet had any EFL teaching methodology classes.

Considering that the students in this sample will in the future teach the English language to young learners, their expected level of accuracy and fluency in the four skills is a high one. This in particular refers to grammar and pronunciation (Cindrić, Cergol, and Davies 2010), as it is important that their speech is comprehensible and grammatically correct. This may be the reason for high mean results obtained for the majority of *fluency-* and *accuracy-oriented* strategies, and for the fact that in addition to the *social affective* and *negotiation for meaning while speaking* strategies, the *fluency-* and *accuracy-oriented* strategies were positively correlated with the participants' self-assessed EFL proficiency. It is also worth mentioning that some of the strategies for which the lowest mean results were obtained are actually considered less efficient, and students are warned not to use them, e.g. the *message abandonment strategy* category and the strategy *I first think of what I want to say in my native language and then construct the English sentence.*

Since the second hypothesis (*Pre-service EFL teachers who assess their knowledge of English with a higher grade will report using speaking strategies more often.*) and third hypothesis (*Pre-service EFL teachers who assess their speaking skills in English with a higher grade, and who claim that speaking is their favourite activity in the English classes will report using speaking strategies more often.*), were only partially confirmed, we propose considering additional factors that may be related to EFL learners' speaking strategy use, or even expanding the inventory with additional open-ended questions related to speaking strategies.

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ESL Teachers and Diagnostic Assessment: Perceptions and Practices

ABSTRACT

Diagnostic assessment is an indispensable aspect of pedagogy. Past research has shown that teachers' perceptions and attitudes to diagnostic assessment could influence their classroom practices. This article discusses teachers' perceptions of diagnostic assessment, reiterates the essence of diagnostic assessment in English language classrooms, explores teachers' attitudes and utilization of diagnostic assessment techniques, and also investigates the factors influencing teachers' knowledge of assessment practices. To achieve these objectives, an empirical study on English language teachers' perceptions of diagnostic assessment, teachers' attitudes and utilization of diagnostic assessment techniques and factors influencing teachers' knowledge of assessment practices was conducted. The results show that the majority of English language teachers in the sample have inaccurate perceptions of the purpose of diagnostic assessment and also have negative attitudes to diagnostic assessment in classrooms. The results of the survey indicate that schooling, professional coursework and context are factors that influence ESL teachers' classroom assessment practices.

Keywords: English as a Second Language (ESL); diagnostic assessment; perception; attitude; utilization

Učitelji angleščine kot drugega jezika in diagnostično ocenjevanje: Stališča in izkušnje

POVZETEK

Diagnostično ocenjevanje je nepogrešljiv del poučevanja. Raziskave so pokazale, da učiteljeva stališča do diagnostičnega ocenjevanja vplivajo na njihovo prakso ocenjevanja v razredu. V prispevku so predstavljena stališča učiteljev do diagnostičnega ocenjevanja, diagnostično ocenjevanje pri pouku angleščine, učiteljeva uporaba tehnik diagnostičnega ocenjevanja in dejavniki, ki vplivajo na znanje učiteljev o ocenjevanju. Za dosego teh ciljev je bila izvedena empirična raziskava, ki je preučevala stališča učiteljev angleščine do diagnostičnega ocenjevanja, učiteljevo rabo tehnik diagnostičnega ocenjevanja in dejavnike, ki vplivajo na znanje učiteljev o ocenjevanju. Rezultati kažejo, da ima večina anketiranih učiteljev nepravilne zaznave o namenu diagnostičnega ocenjevanja ter negativna stališča do diagnostičnega ocenjevanja pri pouku. Rezultati nakazujejo, da so šolanje, profesionalno delo in kontekst poučevanja dejavniki, ki vplivajo na prakso ocenjevanja v razredu.

Ključne besede: angleščina kot drugi jezik; diagnostično ocenjevanje; stališča; praksa ocenjevanja

1   Introduction

English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers need to have working knowledge of how to devise credible assessments which will "deepen student engagement in content" (Price, Pierson, and Light 2011, 2) and yield valid information about learners' real performance without distorting pedagogical practices and learning objectives. Assessment should be considered alongside behavioural objectives and teaching methods during the preparation phase of instruction. Assessment should assist ESL teachers in establishing the baseline knowledge of students about the topic to be taught, and also help them gain insight into what learners already know. Assessment planned together with behavioural objectives gives clues to students' misconceptions and probable difficulties that they might encounter in the course of learning. The reverse applies in some Nigerian Public Senior Secondary Schools, where assessment is only administered at the end of the course for local and national examinations, which neither fosters students' knowledge of the content nor promotes teachers' assessment knowledge and skills.

In the Ado-Ekiti Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria, the English language is generally taught once a day, that is five times in a week, and each English language lesson lasts for 40 minutes. As such, each week Senior Secondary School students are taught English for 200 minutes, that is, 3 hours 20 minutes. At the start of the term many Nigerian teachers begin with the first topic in the scheme of work, leaving out diagnostic assessment. Reed (2006) discovered that many teachers avoid diagnostics completely and simply begin their teaching with Chapter 1 of the recommended textbook, assuming that they will get to know the students better in time. In ESL classrooms, however, many things could lead students astray. Students may have formed various inaccurate, incomplete or false opinions, conjectures, and beliefs about the concept to be learnt before stepping into their classrooms based on their observations, backgrounds, exposure and experiences. Students do not discard these misconceptions, but merely adjust the pre-existing false information to accommodate the new concept rather than wholly incorporating the correct information, which could be worse than complete ignorance. Teachers thus need to address these misconceptions as early as possible.

Moreover, in Nigeria English language teachers' assessment practices do not seem to have positively influenced students' learning nor met students' needs regarding assessment, due to various factors. One of these is that diagnostic assessment has not been sufficiently researched, as it has garnered little attention in second language assessment and education, while greater focus is placed on proficiency, achievement, formative and summative assessment (Reed 2006; Jang and Wagner 2013; Olagunju 2015; Fakeye 2016; Al-Shehri 2008;). Some of the studies conducted on diagnostic assessment centred on using diagnostic classroom assessment (Ciofalo and Wylie 2006), the relationship between students' diagnostic assessment and achievement in a pre-university instruction (Shim, Shakawi, and Azizan 2017), diagnostic teaching for primary level students (International Reading Association 2005), diagnostic assessment guide (Stevens 2009), diagnostic assessment in language teaching and learning (Reed 2006), diagnostic assessment in science as a means to improve teaching, learning and retention (Treagust 2006), diagnostic assessment to improve teaching practice (Sun and Suzuki 2013), and diagnostic assessment strategies for teachers (Chin 2001). From the

foregoing it could be deduced that little has been done on teachers' perceptions of diagnostic assessment, attitudes to diagnostic assessment, utilization of diagnostic assessment techniques and the factors influencing teachers' knowledge of assessment practices.

Other notable factors that have contributed to English language teachers' poor assessment practices are the inadequate training of teachers, insufficient exposure of teachers to varieties of assessment techniques, the dearth of proper knowledge of assessment skills (Plake and Impara 1997; DeLuca and Klinger 2010), teachers' complacency with regard to traditional methods of assessment, and teachers' reluctance to adopt learner-centred assessment strategies. The present study stems from a need to reveal Nigerian ESL teachers' perceptions of the purpose of diagnostic assessment in classrooms, their dispositions to the use of diagnostic assessment and whether they conduct such assessment in their classrooms.

The article is structured as follows. Section 1 introduces the background to the study, while Section 2 presents the theoretical framework. Section 3 reveals the relevance of the theoretical framework to the study, and Section 4 explains diagnostic assessment. Section 5 focuses on the teachers' perceptions of the purpose of diagnostic assessment, attitudes to diagnostic assessment, utilization of diagnostic assessment techniques and factors influencing their knowledge of assessment practices. The last sections (6 and 7) discuss the results and their implications for ESL classrooms.

2 Theoretical Framework

The theory of teacher cognition underlies this study. Teacher cognition, which is also known as teacher knowledge, refers to the unnoticeable cognitive dimension of teaching which entails "what teachers know, believe and think" (Borg 2003). It came about in the mid-1970s in the US (Borg 2009), and its perception "includes a variety of notions like teachers' knowledge, perceptions, beliefs and attitudes towards their actual performances and practices in a specific context" (Yunus, Salehi, and Amini 2016, 20). Teacher cognition emanates from four sources (i) schooling – early protracted personal experiences during initial learning as a language learner, (ii) professional coursework – attending professional activities, in-service training about curricula, subject matter, instructional activities, (iii) contextual factors, teachers' classroom experiences and practices – through exposure to classroom situations, and (iv) personality – the constructs that merged to form the thinking dimension such as attitudes, perspectives, conceptions and beliefs which exert influence on their present pedagogical practices (Borg 2003; Hill 2014; Siamak 2014; Mathiesen Gilje 2014; Chan 2015; Jamalzadeh and Shahsavar 2015).

3 Relevance of the Theoretical Framework to the Study

This theory is relevant to this work because teachers' classroom practices, including their perceptions, decisions, judgments and justifications with regard to assessment, are projections of their beliefs, knowledge and thoughts which are as a result of the four sources of teacher cognition (Fan 1999). Teachers are not machines, their actions and attitudes towards students' and pedagogical activities are substantially controlled by their belief systems. This thus affects their pedagogical practices, including their perceptions of

and disposition towards various classroom assessments. In order to advance the frontiers of classroom assessment practices, the dimension of cognition therefore stresses the significance of ESL teachers "deconstructing their own prior knowledge and attitudes, comprehending how these understandings evolved; exploring the effects they have on actions and behaviour, and considering alternate conceptions and premises that may be more serviceable in teaching" (Adeosun, Oni, and Oladipo 2013, 43).

4   Diagnostic Assessment

Stevens (2009) asserts that the diagnostic assessment process[1] is a decision-making strategy for determining when and how to deliver instructional remediation to learners through additional instruction, and also to help teachers determine whether the students can move on to the next skill or concept to be taught, as outlined as expectations in the curriculum. Some assessment techniques that ESL teachers can employ to probe students' thinking faculty at the beginning of instruction are interviews, questionnaires, inventories, checklists, portfolios, misconception/preconception checks, background knowledge probes, discussions, presentations, KWL[2] charts, observations, performance-based assessments, pre-tests, interview-based assessments, play-based assessments, concept mapping, predict-observe-explain, thought experiments, card-sorting, students' drawings, the post-box technique, surveys, student questions, brainstorming, viewfinders, and teacher questioning (Mussawy 2009; Chin 2001).

Diagnostic assessment can help teachers pinpoint students' present understanding of a subject, their competences, abilities, learning preferences and styles before teaching starts. Knowing students' strengths and weak points can help ESL teachers plan what to teach, have a focus and "plan intervention strategies in their teaching to deal with the issue" effectively (Abang and Farah 2017, 370). Diagnostic assessment helps ESL teachers monitor students' understanding of the subject matter and performance before, during and after teaching the lesson, establish any differences and examine teaching and learning effectiveness on a continuous basis. Alderson (2005) explains that diagnostic assessment is known for the following (also cf. Shim, Shakawi, and Azizan 2017):

1. a greater focus on weaknesses than on strengths;
2. leading to remediation in further instruction;
3. providing detailed feedback which can be acted upon;
4. being based on content covered in instruction;
5. being discrete-point rather than integrative, or more focused on specific elements than on global abilities.

Alderson, Brunfaut and Harding (2014, 318) explain that "diagnostic assessment should ideally be embedded within a system that allows for all four diagnostic stages: (1) listening/ observation, (2) initial assessment, (3) use of tools, tests, expert help, and (4) decision-

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[1]   Diagnostic assessment is also known as pre-assessment (Mussawy 2009).
[2]   KWL Charts is an acronym of a graphical organizer designed to help students in the course of a lesson. The acronym stands for "what I already *know*", "what I *want* to know" and "what I *learnt*".

making." Diagnostic assessment determines a student's current level when he or she enters a new school or "at specified times during the school term to help shape teaching strategies" (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2005, 3). Teachers may employ diagnostic assessment to detect students' abilities and comprehension of language skills; listening, speaking, reading, writing, linguistics and grammar structures.

In Nigeria, there are deficiencies in speaking the target language[3] due to the structural differences between Nigerian and English. Consequently, most Nigerian learners of English have problems with the pronunciation of English words. Some notable pronunciation problems are found in the use of consonants, substitution, consonant cluster(s), initial and final consonants, vowels, vowel shortening and lengthening, spelling-pronunciation, and prosody (Bamisaye 2006). Explanations of linguistic concepts should be complemented with guiding questions that could improve students' thinking skills. This task is quite different from a situation where a teacher asks content questions to which the answers are easily located in a textbook or known (Intel Corporation 2014). The use of diagnostic assessment could help English language teachers discover grey areas and remediate where necessary and foster and strengthen further instruction, leading to better decisions about where and when to focus instructional time and exert effort in the classroom.

5 The Study

5.1 Aims of the Study

The study aimed at examining English language teachers' perceptions of diagnostic assessment, their attitudes to and utilization of diagnostic assessment techniques, and factors influencing their knowledge of assessment practices.

5.2 Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. How do English language teachers perceive the purpose of diagnostic assessment?
2. What is the attitude of English language teachers towards the use of diagnostic assessment?
3. To what extent do English language teachers utilize diagnostic assessment techniques in the classroom?
4. What factor(s) mainly influence English language teachers' assessment practices?

5.3 Method

This study adopted a descriptive research design using a survey. This was considered suitable because the purpose was to collect information on the existing situation and describe the phenomenon according to the reports of the respondents.

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[3]   English language, which is the target language, is the official language and second language of most Nigerians.

5.4 Participants

Fifty respondents who were English language teachers in public senior secondary schools in the Ado-Ekiti Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria, participated in the study, which took place in 2018. The ages of the teachers who participated ranged from 25 to 50, while the ages of the senior secondary schools students they taught ranged from 14–16. Fifty-six percent of the participants were female, while forty-four percent were male. The respondents' years of work experience were in the range of 1–35 years.

5.5 Instrument and Procedure

One research instrument was used for data collection. Sixty questionnaires were distributed in hard copies in senior secondary schools in Ado-Ekiti Metropolis, Nigeria, and 50 were completed and returned. Respondents were given adequate time to fill out the questionnaires. The questionnaire was titled "Questionnaire on Teachers' Perceptions and Utilization of Diagnostic Assessment in English Language Classrooms". This questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A dealt with the demographic information of the respondents, that is, gender, age and years of work experience, while the items on section B were subdivided into groups A, B and C. Group A addressed teachers' perceptions of and attitude to diagnostic assessment in English language classrooms with 22 items. This part was measured using a four-point-Likert-type scale (Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Group B focused on utilization of diagnostic assessment techniques in English language classrooms, with 10 classroom assessment activities. In this part, the respondents were asked to respond by ticking the types of activities they used for conducting diagnostic assessment in classrooms choosing 'never', 'rarely', 'sometimes' and 'always' as applicable. Group C focused on factor(s) that influenced English language teachers' knowledge of classroom assessment practices. This part was measured using a four-point Likert-type scale ranging from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (D) to Strongly Disagree (SD).

5.6 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The face and content validity of the instrument was ascertained by experts in language, testing, measurement and evaluation. Thorough scrutiny of the instrument was carried out and the necessary corrections, suggestions and comments were made before the final draft was judged valid for the study. The reliability of the questionnaire on teachers' perceptions and utilization of diagnostic assessment in English language was ensured by administering this instrument to 20 English language teachers selected outside the sample of the study. The reliability of the instrument was estimated through a test-retest method using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and a reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained.

6   Results

The results are discussed in four sections according to the target research areas, as presented below.

6.1 Teachers' Perceived Purpose of Diagnostic Assessment

As shown in Table 1, 32 teachers (64%) perceived that the purpose of diagnostic assessment is to assign marks to students, while 37 (74%) stated that diagnostic assessment is about ranking of students at the end of each term. Thirty-six teachers (72%) supported the statement that the purpose of diagnostic assessment is to detect students' comprehension of the lesson at the end of the task, while 32 (64%) agreed that the purpose of diagnostic assessment is not to spot students' strengths. Thirty-eight (74%) claimed that diagnostic assessment establishes the exact nature of the specific learning difficulties at the end of the task, and 33 (66%) agreed that the purpose of diagnostic assessment is to marshal further instruction for remediation. Moreover, 34 (68%) and 39 teachers (78%), respectively, agreed that diagnostic assessment fosters students' engagement in learning and contributes immensely to the improvement of the learning and teaching practices.

TABLE 1. Teachers' perceived purpose of diagnostic assessment N=50.

S/N	Items	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)	Mean
1	Assign marks to students.	14 (28%)	18 (36%)	10 (20%)	8 (16%)	2.76
2	Rank students at the end of each term.	20 (40%)	17 (34%)	7 (14%)	6 (12%)	3.02
3	Detect students' comprehension of the lesson at the end of the task.	19 (38%)	17 (34%)	8 (16%)	6 (12%)	2.98
4	It is not to spot students' strengths.	15 (30%)	17 (34%)	10 (20%)	8 (16%)	2.78
5	Establish the exact nature of the specific learning difficulties at the end of the task.	21 (42%)	16 (32%)	8 (16%)	5 (10%)	3.06
6	Marshal further instruction for remediation.	15 (30%)	18 (36%)	9 (18%)	8 (16%)	2.80
7	Foster students' engagement in learning.	14 (28%)	20 (40%)	9 (18%)	7 (14%)	2.82
8	Contribute immensely to the improvement of the learning and teaching practices.	21 (42%)	18 (36%)	7 (14%)	4 (8%)	3.12

6.2 Attitude of English Language Teachers towards Diagnostic Assessment

In Table 2, the results show that 33 teachers (66%) considered diagnostic assessment as time consuming, 40 (80%) indicated that they do not plan in advance for assessment techniques to be used during the preparation phase of instruction, but they think of assessment after the end of the course, i.e. as a form of summative assessment. The results indicate that 40 teachers (80%) rarely used diagnostic assessment to evaluate students' prior knowledge. They also reveal that 28 (56%) and 33 teachers (66%), respectively, do not like asking questions before starting the lesson and claimed that diagnostic assessment makes their class boring. Similarly, 35 (70%) and 33 teachers (66%), respectively, claimed that diagnostic assessment would disrupt their lesson if utilized and considered it very tedious to administer promptly and regularly.

The results further show that 41 teachers (82%) do not give diagnostic assessments because of the large class size, while 25 (50%) disagreed that diagnostic assessment demoralizes students. The results also indicate that 45 teachers (90%) affirmed that diagnostic assessment helps them in knowing their students' readiness, whereas 35 (70%) do not consider diagnostic assessment as important as formative and summative assessments. Moreover, 41 (82%) agreed that diagnostic assessment increases the workload of teachers. Thirty-three (66%) of the participants claimed that they do not conduct assessment before they begin a topic, while 33 (66%) affirmed that they do not conduct assessment at the beginning of each term.

TABLE 2. Attitude of English language teachers towards diagnostic assessment N=50.

S/N	Items	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)	Mean
1	Diagnostic assessment is time consuming.	18 (36%)	15 (30%)	10 (20%)	7 (14%)	2.88
2	I plan for assessment technique to be used after the end of the course.	22 (44%)	18 (36%)	5 (10%)	5 (10%)	3.14
3	I rarely use diagnostic assessment to evaluate students' prior knowledge.	21 (42%)	19 (38%)	6 (12%)	4 (8%)	3.14
4	I do not like asking questions before commencing the lesson.	13 (26%)	15 (30%)	10 (20%)	12 (24%)	2.58
5	Diagnostic assessment makes my class boring.	17 (34%)	16 (32%)	11 (22%)	6 (12%)	2.88

S/N	Items	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)	Mean
6	Diagnostic assessment would disrupt my lesson.	20 (40%)	15 (30%)	6 (12%)	9 (18%)	2.92
7	Diagnostic assessment is very tedious to administer promptly and regularly.	19 (38%)	14 (28%)	7 (14%)	10 (20%)	2.84
8	I do not give diagnostic assessment because of the large class size.	20 (40%)	21 (42%)	4 (8%)	5 (10%)	3.12
9	Diagnostic assessment might demoralize students.	12 (24%)	13 (26%)	12 (24%)	13 (26%)	2.48
10	Diagnostic assessment helps me in knowing my students' readiness.	22 (44%)	23 (46%)	2 (4%)	3 (6%)	3.28
11	Diagnostic assessment is not as important as formative and summative assessments.	20 (40%)	15 (30%)	6 (12%)	9 (18%)	2.92
12	Diagnostic assessment increases teachers' workload.	20 (40%)	21 (42%)	4 (8%)	5 (10%)	3.12
13	I do not conduct assessment before I begin a topic	17 (34%)	16 (32%)	11 (22%)	6 (12%)	2.88
14	I do not conduct assessment at the beginning of each term	18 (36%)	15 (30%)	10 (20%)	7 (14%)	2.88

6.3 English Teachers' Utilization of Diagnostic Assessment Techniques in the Classroom

Table 3 shows that all 50 (100%) of the teachers do not use questionnaires for diagnostic assessment, while 40 (80%) use oral interviews for this purpose. The results also reveal that all 50 (100%) do not use misconception checks for diagnostic assessment in the classroom, but 37 (74%) use discussions. The results further reveal that all 50 (100%) and 48 (96%), respectively, never use checklists, portfolios or inventories as diagnostic assessment techniques. In contrast, 33 (66%) and 45 (90%) agreed that they use observation and questioning techniques, respectively, while 40 (80%) stated that they do not use written pre-tests for diagnostic assessment. Thus, the majority of the English language teachers who participated in the survey use oral interviews, discussions, observation and questioning for such assessments.

Table 3. English teachers' utilization of diagnostic assessment techniques in the classroom N=50.

S/N	Diagnostic assessment techniques	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Mean
1	Questionnaires	50 (100%)	-	-	-	1.0
2	Oral interviews	3 (6%)	7 (14%)	15 (30%)	25 (50%)	3.24
3	Misconception checks	50 (100%)	-	-	-	1.0
4	Discussions	7 (14%)	6 (12%)	17 (34%)	20 (40%)	3.0
5	Checklists	50 (100%)	-	-	-	1.0
6	Portfolios	46 (92%)	2 (4%)	1(2%)	1 (2%)	1.14
7	Inventories	45 (90%)	3 (6%)	2 (4%)	-	1.14
8	Observation	2 (4%)	10 (20%)	20 (40%)	18 (36%)	3.08
9	Questioning	-	5 (10%)	18 (36%)	27 (54%)	3.44
10	Written Pre-tests	30 (60%)	10 (20%)	5 (10%)	5 (10%)	1.70

6.4 Factors Influencing English Language Teachers' Classroom Assessment Practices

Using the cut-off mean of 2.50, Table 4 reveals that schooling (M=3.14), professional coursework (M=3.12) and contextual factors (M=2.88) are the main factors influencing teachers' knowledge of classroom assessment practices, while personality (M=2.48) has the lowest mean.

Table 4. Factors influencing English language teachers' classroom assessment practices N=50.

S/N	Factors influencing teachers' assessment practices	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)	Mean
1	Schooling	22 (44%)	18 (36%)	5 (10%)	5 (10%)	3.14
2	Professional coursework	21 (42%)	18 (36%)	7 (14%)	4 (8%)	3.12
3	Contextual factors	17 (34%)	16 (32%)	11 (22%)	6 (12%)	2.88
4	Personality	12 (24%)	13 (26%)	12 (24%)	13 (26%)	2.48

7   Discussion

The present study reveals that some English language teachers in senior secondary school in Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria, do not have sufficient knowledge of what diagnostic assessment entails nor the reasons for conducting it. Most of the respondents stated erroneously that diagnostic assessment is only meant to assign marks to students or rank them at the end of each term, and it is not meant to spot students' strengths. Although they are aware that diagnostic assessment establishes the exact nature of a student's specific learning difficulties, they felt that it should only take place at the end of the teaching task. However, diagnosing students' learning outcomes should not only be assessed at the end of the teaching task. The respondents affirmed that diagnostic assessment marshals further instructions for remediation, fosters students' engagement in learning and contributes immensely to the improvement of both learning and teaching practices. This is supported by Susuwele-Banda (2005), which found that classroom assessment is perceived by teachers as tests given at the end of a topic or at the end of a term, and teachers prefer to check up on students' mastery of the focal subject matter at the end of the term, and not necessarily to help students learn.

It is vital to check if students have achieved the stated learning objectives at the end of the lesson, assessing them at end of the term might be too late to address students' learning problems. Nikolov (2016) in states that after carrying out tasks in the classroom learners could be questioned about the extent to which they like or dislike the tasks, how familiar they are with the tasks, and whether they find them easy or difficult. She notes that when teachers provide a forum for learners to participate in discussions after accomplishing tasks, this could help teachers "gain valuable insights into their learners' experiences, they may be able to tailor their teaching to the needs of the learners, and they may also develop their young language learners' self-assessment and autonomy' problems" (Nikolov 2016, 23). Pradhan (2014) explains that diagnostic assessment is the art of recognizing difficulties based on their symptoms, which if undiagnosed might limit students' engagement in new learning (Targema and Obadare-Akpata 2018). In Ounis (2017) it was shown that secondary school teachers who participated in the study were mostly interested in the accountability purpose of assessment, since it is mandatory that they assign, generate and record marks and grades to each pupil they teach. Ounis (2017) claimed that teachers' perceptions of assessment will build a basis and rationale for the type of assessment practice they employ while in the classroom.

Regarding teachers' attitude towards the use of diagnostic assessment, it could be inferred that the English language teachers who participated in this study exhibited negative attitudes towards the use of diagnostic assessment. The majority of the respondents claimed that they rarely use diagnostic assessment to evaluate students' prior knowledge, because it is time consuming, makes their class boring and is very tedious to administer. A larger percentage of the respondents in the study affirmed that diagnostic assessment gave them clues with regard to students' readiness to learn, yet they also felt that it is time consuming, demoralizing, boring and increases their workload. Rarely did they use diagnostic assessment to assess students' prior knowledge, and they preferred summative assessment to other kinds. Most of the respondents revealed that they do not conduct assessment before they begin a topic or

at the beginning of each term. In the research carried out by Sethusha (2012), Ofodu and Owolewa (2018), Pereira and Flores (2016), it was found that teachers complained of some of the challenges affecting their classroom assessment practices. One of these is insufficient time, and the use of learner-centred assessment techniques would put more pressure on this. The results of this research are also in line with Treagust (2006, 1), who explains that the difficulty encountered with most effective assessment methods is that "they are very time consuming and rarely practical for busy classroom teachers to create".

Another reason given by the participants in this study as responsible for their attitude towards diagnostic assessment is the large class size. The respondents revealed that diagnostic assessment could disrupt their lesson if utilized, and they considered it very tedious to administer due to the problem of large class size. In senior secondary schools in Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria, there are three classes, namely SSS1, SSS2, and SSS3, and each class consists of three arms.[4] In some schools where they are understaffed, an English language teacher could teach several arms in a day. This situation is worrisome and might not give English language teachers the opportunity to accord appropriate attention to individual learners. Consequently, English language teachers might push aside diagnostic assessment. This is supported by Pereira and Flores (2016), who affirm that teachers resist the use of certain forms of assessment and participatory methods due to the number of students per class, lack of resources, and already heavy workload. Moreover, Targema and Obadare-Akpata (2018, 22) note some challenges facing "the use of diagnostic assessment for quality control in education", such as the problem of large class size, lack of a motivation mechanism for teachers and the dearth of enthusiastic and dedicated teachers. Walsh and Wyatt (2014) reported how the assessment technique utilized by one of the participants influenced her to such an extent that there was an observed lack of fit between practices and stated principles, and how contextual factors, such as an obsession with tests, could lead a teacher away from classroom practices.

In the present study, most of the respondents stated that diagnostic assessment is not as important as formative and summative assessments. It is obvious that teachers' attitude towards the use of diagnostic assessment is rather negative. Due to their many obligations, teachers are more interested in teaching the contents of the syllabus and using summative assessment to find out if students have learnt these and to evaluate the students' performance. Some English language teachers prefer summative assessment because it is compulsory, seen as proof of students' performance, and also used for promoting a student to another class at a higher level.

It is observed in other studies that most ESL teachers are accustomed to certain assessment methods, such as paper and pencil tests, avoiding other techniques (Chin 2001; Dandis 2013; Asale 2017). Although these classroom assessment strategies, such as questionnaires, checklists, portfolios, misconception/preconception checks, pre-tests and predict-observe-explain may be time-consuming, researchers have found that they are useful in identifying students' learning problems, depending on the teachers' ability to schedule their time for assessment appropriately.

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[4]   'SSS' means senior secondary school, it is the level of education after primary education and before the tertiary stage (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2004); 'arms' means the subdivision of classes in senior secondary schools into different fields of studies (Science, Commercial and Humanities).

This study found that the majority of English language teachers in the survey track students' strengths and weaknesses via oral interviews, discussions, observation and questioning, while questionnaires, misconception checks, checklists, portfolios, inventory and written pre-test were not used. Similar results were observed in different subject areas, for example Asale (2017) confirms that teachers do not use the variety of assessment techniques available in teaching mathematics. Pereira and Flores (2016, 23) elaborate the conceptions and practices of assessment in higher education, stating that "written tests continue to be the most used method identified by the participants." This is also in agreement with the results of Ofodu and Owolewa (2018), who evaluated the linguistic and pedagogical skills of English language teachers in Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria. They find that most English language teachers made use of written examinations to measure learning capacity, while checklists are rarely used as an evaluation tool in English lessons.

A large percentage of the respondents in the present study responded that schooling (personal experience during initial learning as a language learner), professional coursework (attending professional activities, in-service training about curricula, subject matter, instructional activities), contextual factors (teachers' classroom experiences and practices) influence their classroom assessment practices. In contrast, personality (attitudes, perspectives, conceptions and beliefs) was not reported to have influenced their classroom assessment practices. This falls in line with Fan (1999), who claims that teachers' own teaching experience and reflection, professional activities, in-service training, and experience as school students are the most important sources of teachers' cognition.

This research was constrained by some factors such as time constraints, teachers' reluctance to participate and the lack of relevant research materials. The limited time available restricted the researcher from extending the area covered by the study to other parts of Ekiti State and even other regions of Nigeria. Moreover, some of the English language teachers who could have taken part in this study were reluctant to participate, and it took the researcher a lot of time to convince them that it was solely for research purpose and the questionnaires were confidential, not a way to find evidence of poor practices. Some of these teachers then agreed to participate, but a larger number remained disinterested as they considered the project as threat to their careers. This made the sample smaller and less representative, hence it is not possible to provide generalizations, but only hints at the broader picture.

Furthermore, the research design was descriptive and non-experimental. To the best of the author's knowledge, while there are many researchers worldwide working on diagnostic assessment there are limited numbers of home-grown studies on this topic in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Those that are available defined diagnostic assessment and its importance to pedagogy without recourse to its use and application to teaching English as a Second Language.

8 Conclusion

Classroom assessment in ESL is essential, as it determines when and how to deliver instructional remediation to learners through additional instruction. Besides, Erin (2009) asserts that diagnostic assessment could help teachers identify students for additional school services, including tests of cognitive functioning, behaviour, social competence, language

ability, and academic achievement. However, despite this, some Nigerian ESL teachers do not realize the importance of diagnostic assessment in ESL classrooms, because they believe that it is not as important as formative and summative assessment. Consequently, most of the Nigerian English language teachers who participated in this study do not administer diagnostic assessment in their classrooms, some have incorrect perceptions of the purpose of diagnostic assessment in English language classrooms, while some have a negative attitude to the use of such assessment.

Training in diagnostic assessment is vital, as it enables teachers to diagnose the problems of the students and thus better understand the teaching and learning process. Trained teachers could diagnose students at the inception of a course of study, whenever students' entry behaviour is to be determined in order to assess their prior knowledge, language skills, preconceptions, and misconceptions, and to pinpoint learners' persistent learning difficulties in any aspect of the English language. This could afford the teacher the opportunity to discover in good time the various potentials and recurring problems that students are faced with, and as well adjust their teaching instructions to meet the learners' needs individually or collectively and offer better remedial instruction, as needed. Otherwise, if teachers avoid diagnostic assessment or postpone it to a later time it may have harmful effects on learners. In the long run, by the time teachers get acquainted with the students and discover their strengths and weaknesses it may already be too late too help them.

The results of this study could be useful for English language teachers, students and curriculum designers. For teachers, this study may remind them of the importance and essence of diagnostic assessment in the English classroom. For students, it may help them overcome a fear of assessment. Finally, curriculum designers would be aware of English language teachers' perceptions of the purpose of diagnostic assessment and utilization of diagnostic assessment techniques. They can thus focus on teachers' perceptions of and attitude to the use of diagnostic assessment, and reiterate the essence of this important technique in pedagogy.

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The Effectiveness of Using Games for Developing Young Learners' Grammar Competence

ABSTRACT

The main aim of this paper is to explore the effectiveness of using games in teaching English grammar to young learners. Today there is an overall agreement among researchers in foreign language teaching and language acquisition that grammar should be taught at all levels of instruction, including to young learners, bearing in mind that it should be considered in the context of meaningful communication. The paper first presents a review of the literature in the area of grammar teaching and using games for language teaching purposes. The second part presents the results of an experimental study aimed at testing the hypothesis that activities based on grammar games are a more efficient strategy for teaching grammar than more traditional ELT activities. The results of the experiment prove the efficacy of using grammar games in teaching grammar to young learners.

Keywords: grammar teaching; young language learners; language learning games; communicative language teaching; form-focused instruction

Učinkovitost rabe iger za razvijanje slovnične zmožnosti mlajših učencev

POVZETEK

Prispevek preučuje učinkovitost rabe iger pri poučevanju angleščine na razredni stopnji osnovne šole. Dandanes se avtorji na področju poučevanja in usvajanja tujih jezikov v glavnem strinjajo, da je slovnico smiselno poučevati na vseh ravneh, vključno z zgodnjim učenjem tujega jezika, vendar ob tem opozarjajo, da mora biti slovnica vedno obravnavana v kontekstu smiselne komunikacije. V prispevku najprej predstavljamo pregled literature poučevanja slovnice na področju tujega jezika in rabe iger za namene poučevanja jezika. Nadalje predstavljamo rezultate eksperimentalne raziskave, katere namen je bil preveriti hipotezo, da so dejavnosti, ki temeljijo na slovničnih igrah, učinkovitejše za poučevanje slovnice kot bolj tradicionalne dejavnosti na področju poučevanja angleščine kot tujega jezika. Rezultati eksperimenta dokazujejo učinkovitost rabe slovničnih iger pri učenju slovnice na zgodnji stopnji.

Ključne besede: poučevanje slovnice; zgodnje učenje jezika; igre za učenje jezika; komunikacijsko poučevanje jezika; na obliko osredotočeno poučevanje

1   Introduction

Teaching grammar has undoubtedly been one of the most controversial issues in the history of English language teaching, strongly influenced by different approaches which have dominated the area of foreign language teaching (FLT) in different periods. With the emergence of communicative language teaching (CLT) in the 1970s, grammar was first marginalised as the focus shifted from accuracy to fluency. Krashen's (1987) language acquisition theory rejected the explicit teaching of grammar on the grounds that language and grammar can be acquired subconsciously. However, the effectiveness of this theory was later questioned as reports of low writing proficiency and poor grammar came through. Two different ways of understanding the role of grammar developed in the process, the weak and the strong views (Nunan 2015). According to the strong view, learners will 'pick up' grammar subconsciously through communicative tasks, so there is no need to teach it explicitly. On the other hand, the weak view sees explicit grammar teaching as beneficial for language development. There is a general consensus among researchers today (Nunan 2015; Ellis 2006; Larsen-Freeman 2000; Cameron 2001) that there is a place for grammar in the foreign language curriculum, but that it should be considered in the context of meaningful communication and that learners need to be helped to link grammar items and structures with the communicative functions they perform in different contexts.

Most authors in the area of teaching English to young learners (YL) (Cameron 2001; Pinter 2006; Brewster, Ellis, and Girard 2002) agree that grammar is an essential component of language learning and should be taught at all levels, including YL. However, since young learners are able to comprehend meaningful messages, but are unable to analyse the language as a system, it is clear that grammar learning should be mostly implicit rather than explicit. In addition, given the learners' cognitive level, grammar should be presented and used within a meaningful context, reflecting authentic uses of language. As Cameron (2001,122) notes, "a grammar-sensitive teacher will see the language patterns that occur in tasks, stories, songs, rhymes and classroom talk, and will have a range of techniques to bring these patterns to the children's notice, and to organise meaningful practice".

In the past, games were often seen as entertaining, relaxing activities by teachers, rather than as effective tools for achieving specific aims in the foreign language classroom. With the advent of communicative language teaching, however, it became clear that games provide much more than merely enjoyment and fun for language learners. In the communicative classroom, games give learners the opportunity to use and develop language in a creative and communicative manner by providing them with meaningful context. Besides being motivating and fun, games provide students with plenty of opportunities for practising pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and the four language skills in an integrated way (Brewster, Ellis, and Girard 2002). The main aim of the present paper is thus to investigate the application of games in developing young learners' grammatical competence.

2   Approaches to Teaching Grammar

The poor grammatical competence of language learners, which was noted in the early development of CLT as well as later evaluations of different immersion programmes,

resulted in several attempts to reintegrate grammar into foreign language teaching (Cameron 2001; Ellis 2006). A variety of grammar teaching models have emerged aimed at making learners aware of form/function mappings or connections between grammatical forms and the meanings which they typically signal (Batstone and Ellis 2009). The central question addressed by these attempts is to what extent it is sensible to direct the learners' attention to form whilst retaining the focus on the need to communicate (Sheen 2002). This is clearly illustrated in the debate revolving around the distinction made between 'focus on form' and 'focus on formS' proposed by Long (1998). The first type, 'focus on form', is related to situations in which the learners' attention is directed to particular language elements which emerge incidentally in a task in which there is an overt focus on meaning or communication (Sheen 2002; Doughty and Varela 1998). Grammar is taught in a series of separate lessons, usually involving a single grammatical structure (Ellis 2006). The theoretical framework for this option is related to the identity hypothesis according to which there are a number of parallels between first and second language acquisition, which both depend on comprehensible input deriving from natural communication. However, since there are important differences in the exposure to L2 and L1, it is necessary to direct the learners' attention to grammatical forms to compensate for these. On the other hand, the 'focus on formS' option reflects the discrete-point approach to teaching grammar according to which a language is best learnt by accumulating separate language features, such as verb endings or noun suffixes, but also functions, such as greetings or apologies (Doughty and Varela 1998). This view is based on the belief that the process of learning a foreign language is essentially the same as learning any other skill, as it derives from a person's general cognitive processes (Sheen 2002). As Ellis (2006) points out, there has been considerable debate over which of the two options is most effective in developing implicit knowledge.

Another problem is that the two terms are not used consistently in the ELT literature. While the differences between the two approaches might seem to be clear-cut at first sight, this is not the case (Sheen 2002, 304). One reason for confusion derives from the fact that the use of the terms 'form-focused instruction' or 'formal instruction' has led some authors to see the two terms as polar opposites, much like the difference between 'focus on form' and 'focus on communication' (Doughty and Varela 1998). As these two authors point out (1998, 4), "focus on form *entails* a focus on formal elements of language, whereas focus on formS is *limited* to such focus, and focus on meaning *excludes* it." On the other hand, several authors see focus on formS as useful and legitimate "provided that students are given chances to use the discrete forms they have studied in communication tasks" (Baleghizadeh and Mozaheb 2011, 365).

The controversy over which type of instruction is more effective is not so simple to resolve. In laying out a list of ten key assumptions about grammar teaching, Ellis (2006, 102) first argues that "an incidental focus-on-form approach is of special value because it affords an opportunity for extensive treatment of grammatical problems (in contrast to the intensive treatment afforded by a focus-on-formS approach)", but later also contends that "grammar instruction should take the form of separate grammar lessons (a focus-on-formS approach) and should also be integrated into communicative activities (a focus-on-form approach)". In a YL context, the focus on formS option used for communicative purposes may be especially useful, due to the learners' limited language competence.

One type of instruction which entails focusing on form has been referred to as 'noticing', a concept introduced by Schmidt (1990). It refers to the process by which learners pick up the language they hear form different sources, known as 'input'. Input turns into 'intake' when learners pay conscious attention to specific features of the target language which are fed into the learning process. Noticing can be done in different ways, providing sufficient exposure and using a variety of noticing techniques to enhance the process of converting input into intake (Cross 2002; Richards and Burns 2012; Batstone 1996). In the YL classroom, noticing will necessarily take into account the cognitive level of learners, especially as regards the use of grammatical metalanguage.

It is important here to make two distinctions: first between explicit and implicit knowledge and then between explicit knowledge as analysed knowledge and as metalinguistic explanation (Ellis 2006). The former differentiates between knowledge which is learnt by paying conscious attention to form and that which is acquired subconsciously and accessed easily in the process of communication. The latter refers to the distinction between a conscious awareness of how a grammatical feature works, and a metalinguistic explanation which entails knowledge of grammatical metalanguage and the ability to understand explanations of rules. While it is clear that explicit metalinguistic explanation is not a productive grammar teaching strategy in the YL classroom, explicit focus on grammar in terms of analysed knowledge may be a valuable teaching technique. This is further discussed in the following chapter which focuses on different aspects of teaching grammar to young learners.

3   Grammar and Young Learners

There is a general agreement among authors in the field of teaching English to young learners (Cameron 2001; Brewster, Ellis, and Girard 2002; Pinter 2006) that it is possible to facilitate the natural acquisition of grammar through instruction. Pinter (2006) argues that it is natural for children to make grammatical mistakes in the early stages of language acquisition, not only in learning a foreign language, but also in acquiring the first language. In fact, some mistakes are universal and not the result of negative transfer from L1. The teacher therefore needs to attend to language form in different ways to help learners to internalise and automatize grammatical patterns so they can be retrieved efficiently in communication.

Cameron (2001, 105–6) illustrates the difference between explicit and implicit grammar teaching from the YL perspective through two opposing metaphors: the "building block" and the "organic" metaphor. The building block metaphor implies the introduction of grammar rules one-by-one as discrete blocks of knowledge, often using metalinguistic labels to describe the rule and following the sequence from 'easy' to 'difficult'. The building block sequence is clearly not appropriate for younger children whose ability to think about language in abstract, formal ways is still limited. The author proposes using a more organic metaphor with YLs for the growth of internal grammar, one that does not see grammar learning as "the piling up of discrete blocks of knowledge, but that captures the idea of non-linear and interconnected growth: grammar grows like a plant, perhaps, watered by meaningful language use, and pushing out new shoots while older stems are strengthened" (2001, 106). However, this does not mean that it is not useful or sensible to teach young language learners grammatical patterns explicitly as analysed language

(cf. Ellis 2006 above). On the contrary, Cameron (2001) suggests occasionally applying explicit grammar instruction with children – as a "fertiliser at certain key points in the growing season". We would like to argue that this is a valuable metaphor in trying to calibrate and balance the introduction of different aspects of language in FL teaching.

Brewster, Ellis, and Girard (2002) further point out that by failing to attend to language form and, more generally, accuracy, learners will have difficulties participating in activities which focus on purposeful communication. As noted above, one way of supporting learners in this is to make them notice the grammatical patterns of the foreign language and help them make these patterns part of their internal grammar. Batstone (1994) suggests a useful sequencing of grammar learning activities which consists of three stages. The first one is "noticing" or "(re)noticing" and involves the learners becoming aware of the grammar patterns and connecting form and meaning. At the second stage, which is referred to as "(re)structuring", learners manipulate the forms and meaning through a series of controlled activities. In the last stage, or "proceduralising", learners use the language patterns by formulating their own meanings for communicative purposes. The three stages are especially valuable as they allow for a combination of both accuracy and fluency. A number of guided noticing activities may be used with young language learners, and some activities may be designed in such a way as to make the noticing more likely to occur, such as tasks which can only be completed by focusing on a particular grammar feature (Cameron 2001).

Kersten and Rohde (2013) caution that different grammar teaching strategies should not override the principle of meaningful communication and the role of a stimulating learning environment. A grammar lesson can be contextualised and made meaningful in various ways which the children can identify with. For example, stories and storytelling can be used as efficient meaningful context for teaching the use of articles (Puhner and Dagarin Fojkar 2018; Dagarin Fojkar, Skela, and Kovač 2013). The teacher can use audio or visual materials, realia and props, storytelling, problem solving, giving examples, showing grammar usage, playing games, etc. It is also important to consider that young learners are good observers. In order to make sense of what they hear or see, they make use of contextual clues, such as movement, intonation, gestures, actions and messages (Arikan 2009).

4 Games as Language Teaching Tools

Hadfield (1998, 4) defined a game as "an activity with rules, a goal, and an element of fun", and also made a distinction between linguistic and communicative games. The former are focused on linguistic accuracy and usually result in the production of a correct grammatical feature, while the latter are fluency-focused as they have a non-linguistic aim which may or may not involve language production. To exploit the full potential of games for language development, teachers need to be aware of what language learning or other educational gains they provide (Brewster, Ellis, and Girard 2002).

There are several reasons why games are considered an effective teaching tool in language teaching. One of the most salient advantages of using games is the fact that they provide a meaningful context in which the language is embedded. The most important characteristic of this context is that, at least as long as the game lasts, for its participants the game becomes

an alternative and thus 'authentic' reality (Lewis and Bedson 1999). As such, it provides a platform for learner-learner interaction, the language used in the game is "a tool for the children to reach a goal which is not directly language related" (Lewis and Bedson 1999, 5). In addition, games are also effective language scaffolds as they commonly contain some kind of repetition, and since they are governed by rules they provide a frame which is to a certain extent predictable. The language of games is full of typical communicative patterns or chunks, such as 'my turn', 'give it to me' or 'I win' which are quickly learnt and enable the participant "easy access to social interaction on the playground" (Girard and Sionis 2004, 49).

Another advantage of using games in the classroom is that learners become active participants in the learning process. They are encouraged to play an active role and are thus given a chance to direct their own learning (Crookall and Oxford 1990 in Yolageldili and Arikan 2011), in a similar way as an active role in choosing their reading materials encourages learners to read more (Pirih 2015). This also affects the learners' motivation to learn a language. Students become naturally absorbed in trying to win the game and as a result they become more motivated and willing to learn (Deesri 2002; Yolageldili and Arikan 2011). In addition, the competitive or co-operative context encourages learners to pay attention and think intensively during the learning process, which enhances unconscious language acquisition (Chen 2005).

There are also several benefits which are more closely related to learning language patterns. First of all, games promote the memorisation of chunks of language, including useful pronunciation practice. In games, language patterns and chunks are usually "memorised through constant repetition in the form of 'hidden' or 'disguised' drills" (Brewster, Ellis, and Girard 2002, 175). Besides repetition, games also encourage more creative uses of language as learners negotiate, collaborate or compete in the informal context of the game (Brewster, Ellis, and Girard 2002).

Finally, learners are not exposed to the pressure of foreign language performance when playing a game. They thus become anxious to take an active part in the game and win rather than use the language correctly. Since learners are not afraid to be corrected or criticised for incorrect language use, they are more willing to use the language freely. Therefore, games play an important role in reducing foreign language anxiety and enhancing positive feelings towards foreign language learning (Chen 2005; Ibrahim 2017). In an action research aimed at exploring the effectiveness of learning vocabulary through games in the classroom, Huyen and Nga (2003) reported more efficient language learning and better retention of the learning material in a stress-free and comfortable environment.

5   Study

5.1 Statement of Problem

Copland, Garton and Burns (2014) identified grammar as one of the most important challenges in teaching English to young learners today, in addition to teaching speaking, motivation, differentiating learning, teaching large classes, discipline, and teaching writing. The overall objective of the present paper is, therefore, to explore different ways of enhancing the effectiveness of grammar teaching in the young learners' classroom by analysing the application of games in developing young learners' grammatical competence.

Despite the overall consensus among researchers and teaching practitioners that games are useful teaching tools in learning English grammar in EFL classes, there are few studies which reveal the actual effects of games on developing grammatical competence. In addition, in a small-scale study aimed at identifying teachers' attitudes towards using games in teaching an FL, Yolageldili and Arikan (2011) concluded that while teachers see the pedagogical value of using games in their YL classrooms, they do not use them as frequently as we might expect.

The main aim of the present study is to promote the use of games for developing grammatical competence in the YL classroom by investigating the effectiveness of using grammar games with young learners aged 10/11. To this end, an experiment was carried out in two primary schools in Slovenia.

5.2 Participants

As can be seen from Table 1, the sample (n=85) consisted of four groups of fifth graders (two experimental and two control groups) from two primary schools in Slovenia, an experimental and a control group at each school. All the students had the same amount of exposure to English language courses at school; it was their second year of formal English language learning.

TABLE 1. Sample of participants.

	Experimental group	Control group
School 1	21	19
School 2	23	22
Total	44	41

5.3 Procedure

At the beginning of the experiment, the participants were pre-tested using an adapted version of *The English Unlimited Placement Test* (Cambridge University Press 2010) to determine the differences in English language proficiency between the experimental and control groups. A week after the placement test was administered, a lesson was carried out in the four groups aimed at developing grammatical competence with a focus on the use of present continuous for actions in progress at the moment of speaking. The learners in the control group received instruction which was mostly teacher-centred, the teacher modelled the language using gestures and body language, examples of language use were presented on the whiteboard with pictures and PP slides, with learners copying the sentences into their notebooks. Controlled practice was based on teacher-class interaction and question-answer drills, followed by an activity in which the learners described a picture using the present continuous. At the end of the lesson, the participants completed a worksheet with the language point being practiced.

The experimental group received instruction which was mostly learner-centred and contained activities based on grammar games, which was the main aspect tested in the experiment. The lesson started with a miming activity in which learners had to guess what their school friends were doing. The second activity was based on a strategy board game similar to the board game snakes and ladders. In this game, learners in groups of four rolled the die and moved across the board. When they landed on a square with an animal, they had to answer the question

put forward by the player next in line about what the animal was doing. The third activity was a card game for pairs in which learners had to match the animals with respective actions, and the last activity was a memory game which required learners to match pictures with the descriptions of the actions shown in them.

Following the lessons, the learners were administered a post-test which consisted of 15 items at the starter and elementary levels. Eight of the items referred to the correct use of the present continuous.

5.4 Results

The quantitative data were analysed using the SPSS software package and values were recorded as means (M) and standard deviations (SD). An independent-samples t-test was carried out to compare the test scores for the experimental and control groups. Homogeneity of variance was assumed using the non-parametric Levene's test. The standard of sig.<0.05 was used in order to depict the statistical significance throughout the study.

Learners were first administered a pre-test which contained 15 items on two levels – starter and elementary. The results of the t-test showed that the differences in the average amount of points gained by the experimental and control groups for individual items in the test were not statistically significant (sig.>0.05). In fact, the two groups gained exactly the same amount of points in several items. In addition, we calculated the coefficient of difficulty for each item in the test so that the pre-test and post-test results could be compared. After the intervention in the form of lessons, a post-test was administered. The number of items and scoring procedure of the post-test were the same as the pre-test. As can be seen from Table 2, the items were divided into two levels of difficulty, which differed in the number of points given.

TABLE 2. Items according to the level of difficulty.

Level	Items	No. of points
Starter level	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 14 1	1
Elementary level	9, 10, 12, 13, 15 2	2

Table 3 provides descriptive statistics for the experimental group 1 (ExG1) and control group 1 (CoG1) for items in the placement test which test the correct use of the present continuous (Items 5, 5, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14 and 15). The values presented are the number of learners in the group (N), the coefficient of difficulty for each item (Item Diff.), the mean value of the number of points gained (M), standard deviation (SD), and finally the Levene's test and t-test results.

TABLE 3. Post-test results of the present continuous items (ExG1 and CoG1).

Item	Groups	N	Item Diff.	M	SD	Levene's test		T-test		
						F	P	t	df	sig.
5	CoG1	19	0.526	0.53	0.513	79.561	0.000	-3.356	23.802	0.003
	ExG1	21	0.952	0.95	0.218					

Item	Groups	N	Item Diff.	M	SD	Levene's test		T-test		
						F	P	t	df	sig.
6	CoG1	19	0.579	0.58	0.507	8.969	0.005	-1.582	34.318	0.123
	ExG1	21	0.809	0.81	0.402					
8	CoG1	19	0.789	0.79	0.419	4.328	0.044	-0.991	32.373	0.329
	ExG1	21	0.905	0.90	0.301					
10	CoG1	19	0.421	0.84	1.015	8.969	0.005	-2.665	34.318	0.012
	ExG1	21	0.809	1.62	0.805					
12	CoG1	19	0.684	1.37	0.955	14.678	0.000	-1.727	29.787	0.095
	ExG1	21	0.905	1.81	0.602					
13	CoG1	19	0.368	0.74	0.991	6.038	0.019	-3.071	34.749	0.004
	ExG1	21	0.809	1.62	0.805					
14	CoG1	19	0.316	0.32	0.478	7.109	0.011	-4.021	33.258	0.000
	ExG1	21	0.857	0.86	0.359					
15	CoG1	19	0.368	0.74	0.991	2.950	0.094	-2.670	38	0.011
	ExG1	21	0.762	1.52	0.873					

As we can see from Table 3, the first experimental group scored significantly higher than the first control group in all items which required the participants to choose the correct use of the present continuous. The greatest differences between the two groups can be noted in items 5, 10, 13, 14 and 15, where the differences are also statistically significant (sig.<0.05). These results are also reflected in the item difficulty (Item Diff.), which shows the proportion of students (p value) who answered an item correctly. In this case, larger p values indicate that the students found the items easier, while smaller p values mean the items were more difficult for them. As can be seen from Table 3, the participants in the experimental group found the items in the test less difficult than the learners in the control group as the coefficient of difficulty is higher in each item of the experimental group, with the greatest differences in items 5, 10, 14 and 15.

Table 4. Post-test results of other items (ExG1 and CoG1).

Item	Group	N	Item Diff.	M	SD	Levene's test		t-test		
						F	P	t	df	sig.
1	COG1	19	0.421	0.42	0.507	8.969	0.005	-2.665	34.318	0.012
	EXG1	21	0.809	0.81	0.402					
2	COG1	19	0.947	0.95	0.229	4.970	0.032	-1.000	18.000	0.331
	EXG1	21	1.000	1.00	0.000					
3	COG1	19	0.947	0.95	0.229	4.970	0.032	-1.000	18.000	0.331
	EXG1	21	1.000	1.00	0.000					

Item	Group	N	Item Diff.	M	SD	Levene's test		t-test		
						F	P	t	df	sig.
4	COG1	19	0.947	0.95	0.229	1.028	0.317	0.500	38	0.620
	EXG1	21	0.905	0.90	0.301					
7	COG1	19	0.526	0.37	0.496	0.025	0.874	-1.594	38	0.119
	EXG1	21	0.667	0.62	0.498					
9	COG1	19	0.579	1.16	1.015	5.080	0.030	-1.217	35.752	0.232
	EXG1	21	0.762	1.52	0.873					
11	COG1	19	0.684	0.68	0.478	0.162	0.690	-0.202	38	0.841
	EXG1	21	0.714	0.71	0.463					

Table 4 presents the results of the post-test for items other than the ones testing the present continuous form. As we can see, the differences between the experimental and control groups are considerably smaller compared to those in Table 3. While the experimental group performed better than the control group in the majority of items (the exception is item 4, where the control group scored 0.95 points and the experimental 0.90 points on average), in general there is a very small difference between the two groups, and a statistical difference between the two groups was identified only for item 1. This is also reflected in the smaller differences between the two groups in the level of difficulty of the items, which are less pronounced than the differences related to the items in Table 3.

TABLE 5. Post-test results of the present continuous items (ExG2 and CoG2).

Item	Group	N	Item Diff.	M	SD	Levene's test		t-test		
						F	P	t	df	sig.
5	COG2	22	0.636	0.64	0.492	14.925	0.000	-1.834	37.427	0.075
	EXG2	23	0.869	0.87	0.344					
6	COG2	22	0.409	0.41	0.503	19.890	0.000	-3.567	36.948	0.001
	EXG2	23	0.869	0.87	0.344					
8	COG2	22	0.818	0.82	0.395	10.465	0.002	-1.460	31.558	0.154
	EXG2	23	0.956	0.96	0.209					
10	COG2	22	0.318	0.64	0.953	5.099	0.029	-3.911	40.495	0.000
	EXG2	23	0.826	1.65	0.775					
12	COG2	22	0.727	1.45	0.912	12.742	0.001	-1.626	35.207	0.113
	EXG2	23	0.913	1.83	0.576					
13	COG2	22	0.500	1.00	1.024	25.314	0.001	-2.829	36.579	0.008
	EXG2	23	0.869	1.74	0.689					
14	COG2	22	0.591	0.59	0.503	35.845	0.000	-2.620	33.124	0.013
	EXG2	23	0.913	0.91	0.288					
15	COG2	22	0.409	0.82	1.006	19.890	0.000	-3.567	36.948	0.001
	EXG2	23	0.869	1.65	0.689					

As can be seen from Table 5, similar to the results of the first experimental and control groups, the second experimental group also scored considerably higher than the second control group in all items which tested the correct use of the present continuous. The greatest differences

between the two groups can be noted in items 6, 10, 13, 14 and 15, where the differences are also statistically significant (sig.<0.05). Table 5 shows that participants in the experimental group found the items in the test less difficult than the learners in the control group, as the coefficient of difficulty (Item Diff.) is higher in each item of the experimental group, with the greatest differences in items 13 and 15.

TABLE 6. Post-test results of other items (ExG2 and CoG2).

Item	Group	N	Item Diff.	M	SD	Levene's test		t-test		
						F	P	t	df	sig.
1	COG2	22	0.818	0.82	0.395	1.604	0.212	0.626	43	0.535
	EXG2	23	0.739	0.74	0.449					
2	COG2	22	0.864	0.86	0.351	0.013	0.910	-0.057	43	0.955
	EXG2	23	0.869	0.87	0.344					
3	COG2	22	0.591	0.59	0.503	11.763	0.001	-1.751	39.462	0.088
	EXG2	23	0.826	0.83	0.388					
4	COG2	22	0.818	0.82	0.395	3.619	0.064	-0.924	43	0.361
	EXG2	23	0.913	0.91	0.288					
7	COG2	22	0.545	0.55	0.510	0.066	0.799	-0.130	43	0.897
	EXG2	23	0.565	0.57	0.507					
9	COG2	22	0.818	1.64	0.790	0.343	0.561	0.292	43	0.772
	EXG2	23	0.783	1.57	0.843					
11	COG2	22	0.682	0.73	0.456	5.552	0.023	1.727	42.802	0.091
	EXG2	23	0.478	0.48	0.511					

Table 6 presents the results of the post-test in items other than the ones testing the present continuous form. As we can see, the differences between the experimental and control groups are considerably smaller compared to those in Table 5. The experimental group performed better than the control group on items 1 (mean score 0.82 compared to 0.74), 9 (1.64 compared to 1.57) and 11 (0.73 compared to 0.48), which is also reflected in the item level of difficulty. The coefficient of difficulty of these items is higher for the control group, which means that the participants found these items in the test easier. The score differences between the two groups are marginal for items 2, 4 and 7, and none of them is statistically significant (sig. > 0.05).

6   Discussion and Conclusion

This empirical study was aimed at exploring the effectiveness of using grammar games for developing grammar competence in a young learners' classroom. The results of the experiment presented above indicate that the use of grammar games is indeed an efficient teaching strategy for language development. Both experimental groups performed better than the control groups in all the items which contained the grammatical feature tested, and the differences were statistically significant for the majority of items. These results indicate that there are clear benefits in using games for language teaching purposes. This is in line with the conclusions drawn from the literature review which emphasise that games are not

only time-fillers, motivating and fun, but can also be used for effective language practice, as argued by Brewster, Ellis, and Girard (2002). Games are learner-centred, create a meaningful context for language use, promote communicative competence and the learning of language skills in an integrated way. Furthermore, they enhance the learners' participatory attitudes and reduce language learning anxiety, thus motivating even shy learners to take part and use the language. Finally, games cater to young learners' needs and help teachers contextualize language instruction.

What are the implications of the results of this study for teaching grammar to young learners? As noted above, few issues have provoked more passionate and heated debates in foreign language teaching than grammar. There is a general consensus among researchers today that while grammar should be taught as a component of communicative competence, there are also clear benefits in using a more direct focus on language forms. This can be done in a variety of ways, considering the learners' needs and preferences. Today, the question is no longer whether grammar should or should not be taught, but rather how to teach it considering the learners' age, level and needs. As argued by Lewis and Bedson (1999), the use of games gives young learners plenty of opportunities for internalising grammatical patterns and vocabulary in a way which is natural and meaningful for them.

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A Comparative Study of CLIL Trajectories in the Polish Education System

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to present a comparative study of the existing curricular Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) models as used by teachers in Polish lower- and upper-secondary schools in the system of education which ended in 2017 when the New Education Reform was implemented. The article reveals the details pertaining to general language education in Poland and bilingual classrooms focusing on CLIL. The main goal is to analyse which languages are most frequently employed in bilingual education as the medium of instruction, the school subjects whose content is imparted through the medium of a foreign language as well as the four major curricular models developed and implemented for the needs of bilingual provision in Poland.

Keywords: bilingualism; bilingual education; CLIL; language teaching; secondary schools

Primerjalna študija oblik CLIL-a v poljskem izobraževalnem sistemu

POVZETEK

Prispevek predstavlja primerjalno študijo obstoječih učnih modelov pristopa CLIL, ki so jih uporabljali poljski učitelji v nižjih in višjih srednješolskih sistemih pred Novo izobraževalno reformo leta 2017. Avtor se v članku osredotoči na splošno tujejezikovno izobraževanje na Poljskem in na dvojezične šole, ki uporabljajo pristop CLIL. Glavni cilj prispevka je ugotoviti, kateri jeziki se najpogosteje uporabljajo v dvojezičnih programih kot učni jeziki in kateri predmeti se poučujejo v tujem jeziku, ter opisati štiri vodilne kurikularne modele, ki so se razvili za potrebe dvojezičnega pouka na Poljskem.

Ključne besede: dvojezičnost; dvojezično izobraževanje; CLIL; učenje jezikov; srednje šole

1   Language Education in Poland

Poland's transition to democracy led to the end of the Communist system in 1989. The transformations that occurred after 1989 triggered not only socio-economic changes, but also laid the foundations for changes in education in Poland. The present study is based on the system of education which was initiated with the Education Reform of 1999. Its main assumptions resulted from, among others, the Act of 8 January 1999. The aim of this parliamentary act was to implement changes to improve the overall level of Polish education. A comprehensive primary school cycle of six years was introduced, to be followed by a lower-secondary school of three years and three- or four-year secondary schools (general upper-secondary or technical schools). The New Reform enacted by the Government in 2017 redrew the existing school system adjusted to other EU member states by implementing radical changes and re-establishing the two-tier education system that had existed prior to 1999. This reform was implemented at the beginning of the 2017/2018 school year, and it aimed to reinvigorate vocational schooling. The key element of the "old-new" two-level system was eliminating three-year lower-secondary schools and extending the primary school cycle by two years to eight in total, and the secondary school cycle by one year to four and five years. Within both the new structure (after 2017) and old one (1999–2017) English has always been one of the most popular foreign languages taught in Poland. This might be surprising, as due to historical influences the languages that were traditionally popular in Poland were Russian and German. However, after 1989, when Poland became a democratic country, and especially after 2004, when it joined the European Union, the Polish education system started to favour English as the main foreign language (Górowska-Fells 2012).

2   Bilingual Education in Poland

While bilingual education in Poland is not a new phenomenon, it should be noted that no uniform methodology has been implemented successfully yet. The reasons are twofold. First of all, as observed by Baetens-Beardsmore (1993), educational traditions in a particular country determine whether certain subjects are to be taught by the medium of a foreign language. Secondly, these are the prevailing linguistic needs that dictate the most desirable provision. As rightly posited by Wolff and Otwinowska-Kasztelanic (2010) and Romanowski (2018b), approaches to Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) vary in specific EU states as a result of administrative decisions taken by governments. Depending on the educational context while implementing CLIL, such factors as the choice of content subjects, the proportion of CLIL and non-CLIL classes, the recruitment process, or the type of school in which CLIL is introduced, are considered (Czura and Papaja 2013).

The first CLIL-related pedagogies were introduced in Poland as far back as the 1970s, when selected content subjects were taught through the medium of a foreign language for the whole duration of a lesson in a secondary school in Gdynia (Zielonka 2007; Papaja 2014). The language initially used was English. At the time this form of instruction was regarded as elitist, and in some environments it still is. Nowadays, a vast number of schools offer CLIL instruction using English, German, French, Spanish and Italian as the languages of

instruction. Recently, there has also been an attempt to introduce Russian-medium class sections, although these proved very unpopular, and thus the project was dropped.

It must be underlined that CLIL provision in Polish schooling is labelled as bilingual education (Dzięgielewska 2008). Special sections are established in primary and secondary schools where learners undergo instruction in a selected foreign language as well as in their mother tongue. The instruction is usually limited to two, three or four subjects, most commonly maths, physics, chemistry, biology, geography, and history of art.

3 Theoretical Underpinnings of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a commonly applied term describing the approaches when the teaching of content subjects is realized through the medium of a foreign language (Coyle, Hood, and Marsh 2010). Wolff (2003, 11) assumes that foreign languages are best learnt by focusing not so much on the language itself but on the transmitted content taken from school subjects, e.g. mathematics, geography, biology, physics, chemistry, etc. As such, from the very beginning CLIL referred to the promotion of innovative methods and, in particular, to the teaching of classes in a foreign language for disciplines other than languages, providing bilingual teaching. As indicated by Perez Cañado (2016), high hopes have been pinned on the potential of CLIL as a lever for change and success in the linguistic arena.

The CLIL methodological approach seeking to foster the integrated learning of languages and other areas of curricular content has been a fast-developing phenomenon in Europe. At the European level, interest is growing in the approach which, according to Mehisto, Marsh and Frigols (2014), brings many benefits to students.

Complementing the national profiles reported in the Eurydice survey, numerous teacher-based publications provide insights into how CLIL is being realized in more than 20 European countries (Maljers, Marsh, and Wolff 2007; Marsh and Wolff 2007; Dalton-Puffer 2011; Pérez Cañado 2014; Merino and Lasagabaster 2015). One important fact, common to all these studies, is the predominance of the English language. Over the past two decades an increasing body of research has demonstrated that CLIL can enhance multilingualism and provide opportunities for deepening learners' knowledge and skills. CLIL has been found to be additive (one language supporting the other) and not subtractive (one language working against the other). It involves a process which is generally curriculum-driven with the language curriculum arising from the content curriculum (Gierlinger 2017).

Following the same line of reasoning, it should be noted that CLIL has been very explicit about delineating that Learning involves the Integration of both Content and Language, i.e. learning of any content must involve the learning of the language associated with it (Romanowski 2018a). At the level of schooling, successful education in either a first or additional language requires from the learners to be equipped with the language for thinking about the content. When learning through CLIL, where an additional language is used, language-supportive resources, methods and activities are actively and coherently used to enable learners to make use of language purposefully. This support acts as a form of scaffolding helping learners to effectively

process information, negotiate understanding, and co-construct knowledge (Mehisto, Marsh, and Frigols 2014; Anderson 2009; Dalton-Puffer 2017; Ruiz de Zarobe 2017).

Considering the fact that English has become, on the one hand, the language of science and academic research and, on the other, an obligatory subject in all schools, the most logical decision would be to combine the two conditions so that a learner could take advantage of them simultaneously (Romanowski 2016a). This is the core of CLIL, also labelled as a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of content and language, with the objective of promoting both content and language mastery to pre-defined levels (Marsh et al. 2010). It is essential to highlight that the additional language is not supposed to be the only medium of instruction, and thus it should be used interchangeably with the mother tongue. Its frequency of use will largely depend on the level of proficiency among teachers and students, as well as the complexity of the issues being discussed. That is why integrating language and non-language content has been referred to as the hallmark of all forms of bilingual education (Genesee 1987; Cenoz and Genesee 1998: 35–67; Lo and Macaro 2015).

All the approaches implemented in bilingual education in Polish schools originated from CLIL methodology. Four main types of instruction or curricular models are to be distinguished in schools (Marsh, Zając, and Gozdawa-Gołębiowska 2008; Romanowski 2016a). The distinctive feature lies in the amount of target language used versus the application of the mother tongue. In Extensive Language Medium Instruction (A), lessons are mainly conducted in a foreign language. The mother tongue is restricted to situations where translation of terminology is required, or short recapitulation of the main points is needed. This model is used to achieve the syllabus aims as well as to develop learners' language competence to a very high level. In Partial Language Medium Instruction (B), lessons are conducted in both Polish and a foreign language and the two languages are used interchangeably. About 50% of lesson time is devoted to each language. The predominant aim is to achieve course objectives, and less attention is paid to linguistic competence. The logic behind this model is that this will achieve the expected content learning outcomes while developing and using a very high degree of competence in the target language. Limited Language Medium Instruction (C) offers lessons with limited use of a foreign language, with between 10% and 50% of lesson time being devoted to it. Teaching the course content is the primary objective, while linguistic knowledge is expanded chiefly through the study of new lexis, in order to achieve the expected content learning outcomes alongside the limited use of the target language. Last but not least, when a foreign language is used only on particular occasions we opt for Specific Language Medium Instruction (D). With this, very little time is devoted to the foreign language, which is used to achieve particular aims (e.g. a lesson is conducted in Polish, but it is based on texts in the target language or project work where the results are presented in the target language, however most of the content studied earlier is available in Polish). This model is complementary as it focuses on the course objectives and the secondary aim involves the use and development of foreign language competence. The major objective is to complement courses taught in Polish and fulfil the expected content learning outcomes by providing opportunities for specific forms of the foreign language usage and development (Romanowski 2018b).

4 The Scale of Bilingual Education in Polish Lower- and Upper-Secondary Schools

In a report published by the Centre for Education Development in Warsaw, Pawlak (2015) indicates that there are 180 lower-secondary schools in Poland with bilingual instruction educating almost 19,500 students. In comparison, it is noteworthy that the number of upper-secondary schools with bilingual instruction in Poland is around half as many – only 94 institutions with over 9,400 students.

Table 1. Schools with bilingual education.

Provinces	Number of schools		Number of students	
	Lower-secondary	Upper-secondary	Lower-secondary	Upper-secondary
Mazovian	45	25	4,851	2,660
Silesian	29	13	2,942	1,621
Lower Silesian	21	6	2,066	503
Greater Poland	16	8	2,026	894
Łódzkie	13	6	1,085	478
Opole	10	7	827	235
Lublin	8	2	754	252
Kuyavian-Pomeranian	8	4	691	435
Pomeranian	7	10	752	1,077
Subcarpathian	6	1	518	13
Western Pomeranian	5	5	1,208	448
Lesser Poland	4	3	434	499
Lubusz	3	1	475	43
Podlasie	3	2	313	119
Warmian-Masurian	2	1	441	126
Świętokrzyskie	0	0	0	0
Total	180	94	19,383	9,403

Bilingual instruction at lower- and upper-secondary levels takes place in all the Polish provinces except for one, namely Świętokrzyskie. The highest number of schools and students has been found in bigger cities, such as: Warsaw, Kraków, Katowice, Gdańsk, Poznań, Łódź and Wrocław. The most popular language used as a medium of instruction is English, present in 65% of the reported schools. German, performing the same role in 52 schools, seems to be the second most popular language if we consider the number of institutions; however, if

our criterion changes to the number of students, it appears that French, with almost 4,000 students is the second leading foreign language offered in both types of schools. Spanish is less popular, and utilized in around 10% of the schools with bilingual instruction. Italian and Russian are rare, as they are present in only five and four schools respectively, with the former being slightly more popular.

The geographical distribution of bilingual sections according to languages is also interesting. English is present in all the provinces whereas German is particularly popular in the western part of Poland (Western Pomerania, Lubusz, Lower Silesian, Silesian and Opole Provinces). In contrast, the instruction in Spanish and French is offered only in the biggest cities (Warsaw, Kraków, Poznań, Wrocław, Łódź). With the least popular languages, the following conclusion can be drawn: the less popular a language is, the more likely it is that it will be taught only in the provinces with the highest populations (Warsaw, Poznań, Kraków).

Table 2. Languages as the medium of instruction.

Languages of instruction	Number of schools		Number of students	
	Lower-secondary schools	Upper-secondary schools	Lower-secondary schools	Upper-secondary schools
English	134	56	12,789	5,144
German	30	22	2,289	1,307
French	23	12	2,655	1,278
Spanish	18	15	1,431	1,511
Italian	3	2	191	115
Russian	2	2	28	48
Total	210 (180)	109	19,383	9,403

Analysing the data presented in both tables, we can see that in Mazovian Province there are 70 schools educating over 6,500 students, whereas in Greater Poland there are only 24 schools educating almost 3,000, and hence the number of schools is not necessarily in proportion to the number of students. On top of that, it needs to be emphasized that the density of schools in a particular province does not determine the total number of students involved in bilingual provision. As indicated earlier, there are schools which offer bilingual education in all the sections, however there are those institutions that decide specifically how many sections to launch each year where this type of provision will be available. In addition, there are schools where bilingual instruction is possible in one language only, in contrast to those institutions where two or three languages are used in parallel. There thus exists a discrepancy in the total number of lower-secondary schools (see Table 2).

5   The Study

The present study was conducted between September 2016 and March 2017. It is part of an ongoing research project devoted to bilingual programmes at the (lower- and upper-)

secondary level of education in Poland. The intention was to focus on the teachers of content (non-linguistic) subjects involved in the teaching in bilingual classrooms and seek answers to the following questions:

1. How many subjects are taught in parallel? Do the numbers differ depending on the type of school (lower- or upper-secondary)?

2. Which subjects are taught through the medium of a foreign language? Do they vary depending on the type of school (lower- or upper-secondary)?

3. Which languages are used in lower- and upper-secondary schools as the medium of instruction?

4. Which curricular models are used by teachers of lower- and upper-secondary schools?

Altogether 203 teachers from 101 schools agreed to provide their responses to the outlined problems. There were 145 teachers from 62 lower-secondary schools and 58 teachers from 39 upper-secondary schools who participated in the survey.

TABLE 3. Participating teachers by each type of school.

	Number of participating teachers N = 203			
	Number of teachers / lower-secondary schools	**%**	**Number of teachers / upper-secondary schools**	**%**
	145		58	
English	76	52.5	27	46.5
German	46	31.8	14	24.1
French	13	8.9	9	15.5
Spanish	10	6.8	7	12.2
Italian	0	0	1	1.7
Russian	0	0	0	0

5.1 The Frequency of Occurrence of Particular School Subjects in CLIL Provision

The choice and number of taught subjects varies from country to country, and in most EU states it does not exceed two or three subjects (Iluk 2000; Dzięgielewska 2002; Romanowski 2016b). In Poland, however, up to four subjects are offered concurrently. In addition, exact sciences, such as mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology, are the most frequent choices in lower-secondary schools, whereas it is physics, chemistry and biology in the case of upper-secondary education. They are regarded as difficult courses in comparison to the humanities, such as geography, philosophy, or history, where instruction is also provided in a foreign language. Depending on the availability of qualified teachers, the intensity and language

exposure may vary. In exceptional situations one subject in lower-secondary schools and two subjects in upper-secondary schools are taught every year, and hence the available subjects change from one year to another.
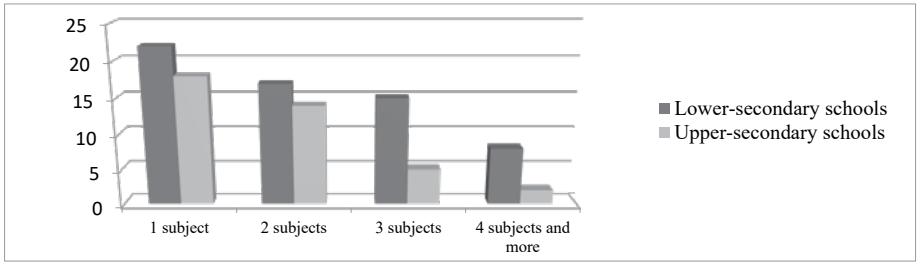

Figure 1. Intensity of CLIL provision.

On the basis of the conducted study, the following findings were collected. Out of 62 surveyed lower-secondary schools, there were 22 where one subject was taught every year, 17 schools where the instruction in a foreign language was offered in two subjects, 15 schools with three subjects and eight schools with four or more subjects provided concurrently. With regard to the 39 upper-secondary schools, the following data was collected: 18 schools with one subject, 14 schools with two subjects, five schools with three subjects and three schools with four subjects.

Seven content subjects are investigated in the present study. The results are presented as two circles: the inner circle represents the results for lower-secondary schools, whereas the outer circle shows those for upper-secondary schools. In addition, it seems that the most widely instructed content in lower secondary schools comes from maths, physics, geography, chemistry, history of art and philosophy. Biology is not represented in this type of schooling. On the other hand, the structure slightly differs for upper-secondary schools. While maths and physics still prevail, chemistry is the third most popular subject, in contrast to the findings for lower-secondary schools, Biology is also taught through the medium of a foreign language in upper-secondary schools. Geography and philosophy are the least represented, while history of art is not taught at all.
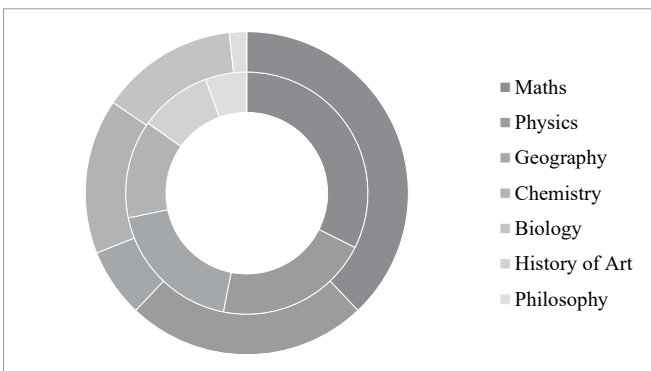

Figure 2. Popularity of subjects taught by each type of school.

5.2 The Languages as Medium of Instruction

As indicated earlier, the most popular language of instruction is English, and the results of the study seem to confirm this trend. The dominance and ubiquity of English as the language of instruction in bilingual teaching has been widely observed in Poland. There is no denying the importance of English as a common means of communication across the world, or its strength as the first foreign language of choice for most non-Anglophone countries in Europe and outside. Hence, most of the students involved in bilingual programmes in Polish lower- and upper-secondary schools are exposed to English, because they undoubtedly perceive its superiority over other foreign languages (Romanowski 2016b).

English is the language used in bilingual provision in 54 out of 62 lower-secondary schools and 31 out of 39 upper-secondary schools. German is obviously the second most popular language, at 26 of the lower-secondary and 10 of the upper-secondary schools surveyed. French is present in 13 lower-secondary schools, and Spanish in only 10 of them. The balance is different in the case of upper-secondary schools, where Spanish is present in nine schools whereas French in only seven of them. Italian is used in only one upper-secondary school, whereas instruction is not offered in this language at the level of lower-secondary education. Russian is not used at any of the school examined in this study. The results demonstrate that in the 101 schools where the study was conducted two or three languages were offered as the medium of instruction at the same time.
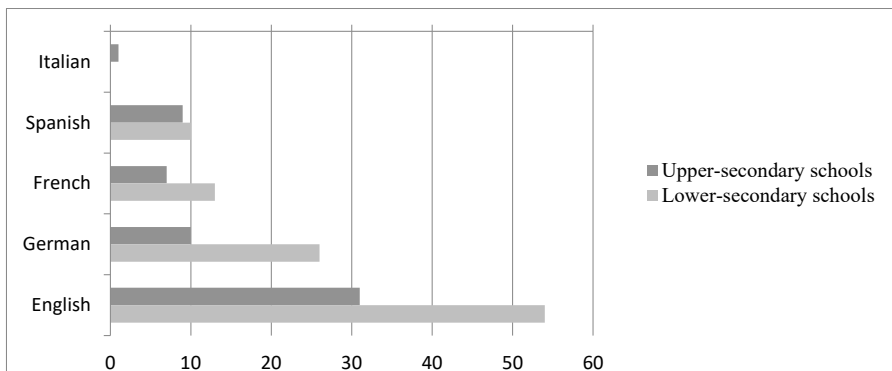

FIGURE 3: Languages as medium of instruction by each type of school.

5.3 Curricular Models as Applied by the Surveyed Teachers

To understand the complex phenomenon of CLIL provision in Polish secondary schools, it seems essential to analyse the ubiquity of the four curricular models as applied by the teachers involved in the present study. This will also shed some light on the teachers' linguistic competence and their familiarity with the methodology used. As seen in the results outlined below, there is a certain discrepancy between the teachers' overall competence and familiarity with the methodology when comparing the findings in both types of schools, lower- and upper-secondary.

First of all, in Model A, referred to as Extensive Language Medium Instruction, on average 90% of the lesson time is devoted to studying in a foreign language. The mother tongue is limited to

those moments where translation of terminology is necessary or short recapitulation of the main points is needed. Hence, according to the collected data, Model A is the most frequently used one. Altogether 87 teachers of lower-secondary schools and 44 teachers of upper-secondary schools admitted using it. The majority of teachers using Model A instruct in English – 50 in lower-secondary schools and 21 in upper-secondary schools – which represents 34.9% of all the surveyed teachers and 54.2% of all the English teachers participating in the study. For German there are 28 teachers of lower-secondary schools and 10 teachers of upper-secondary schools using Model A, which constitutes 18.8% of all the questioned teachers and 63.3% of all the teachers of German. With French the tendency is similar, as five teachers of lower-secondary schools and seven teachers of upper-secondary schools stated that they used this model. This accounts for 5.9% of all the teachers and 54.5% of all the surveyed teachers of French. Out of 10 lower-secondary school teachers of Spanish and seven upper-secondary school teachers, four and five respectively answered that they devoted 90% of their lesson time to Spanish, accounting for 4% of all the surveyed teachers and 52.9% of all the teachers of Spanish. In this study Italian was present in only one school, where the surveyed teacher claimed to be applying Model A (less than 0.5% of all the teachers and 100% of all the teachers of Italian).

Model B, Partial Language Medium Instruction, allows for about 50% of lesson time to be devoted to a foreign language, and thus two languages mingle whenever necessary. In the study 28 teachers of lower-secondary schools and 10 teachers of upper-secondary schools claimed to have used the model successfully. As far as English as the medium of instruction is concerned, 14 teachers of lower-secondary schools and three teachers of upper-secondary stated that they used it, which accounts for 8.3% of all the surveyed teachers and 16.5% of all the teachers of English. There are altogether 13 teachers of German (10 teachers in lower-secondary and three teachers in upper-secondary schools) using Model B. This comes to 6.4% of all the surveyed teachers and 21.7% of all the teachers of German. For French, only two teachers in lower-secondary and another two in upper-secondary schools said they used Model B in their lessons (1.9% of all the surveyed teachers and 18.2% of all the teachers of French). Much the same situation is observed in the case of Spanish, with two teachers in lower-secondary and two teachers in upper-secondary schools, accounting for 1.9% of all the surveyed teachers and 23.5% of all the teachers of Spanish.
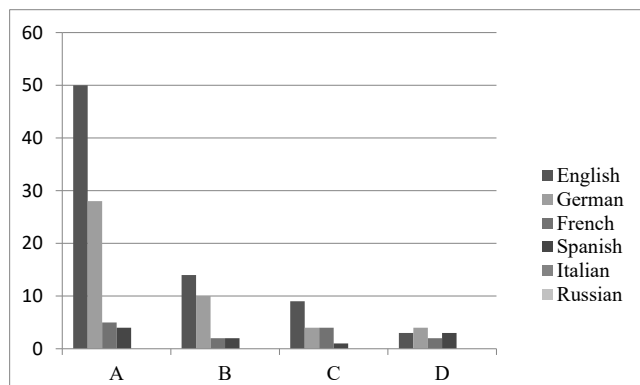

FIGURE 4: Curricular models as distributed by language in lower-secondary schools.

Limited Language Medium Instruction (Model C) offers lessons with restricted use of a foreign language, for only between 10% and 50% of the lesson time. Eighteen teachers out of those surveyed in lower-secondary schools and only four in upper-secondary schools stated that they used this particular model in their everyday teaching. With regard to Model C, English is represented by nine teachers in lower-secondary schools and three teachers in upper-secondary schools. This accounts for 5.9% of all the surveyed teachers and 11.6% of all the teachers of English. Only five teachers of German apply Model C (four in lower-secondary and one in upper-secondary schools) – this signifies 2.4% of all the participating teachers and 8.3% of all the teachers of German. As for French, it must be noted that Model C is present only in lower-secondary schools, where four teachers stated that it was used in everyday teaching (this accounts for 1.9% of all the surveyed teachers and 18.2% of all the teachers of French). With regard to Spanish a similar trend can be observed, as Model C is not used in upper-secondary schools at all and only one teacher in lower-secondary schools claimed to be using it (0.5% of all the questioned teachers and 5.9% of all the teachers of Spanish).

Last but not least, it is Model D – Specific Language Medium Instruction – where little time is offered to students in the selected foreign language. Its use is limited to project work, while most of the content is studied in Polish. This model does not seem to be popular. According to the answers made by the teachers from upper-secondary schools, it is not used at all there. Hence, the presented numbers will only refer to the findings from lower-secondary schools. Only three teachers of English said that they used it (1.5% of all the teachers and 3% of all the teachers of English), along with four teachers of German (almost 2% of all the teachers and 6.7% of all the teachers of German). In the case of French, only two teachers used Model D (less than 1% of all the teachers and 9.1% of all the teachers of French), while only three teachers of Spanish applied it (1.5% of all the teachers and 17.7% of all the teachers of Spanish).
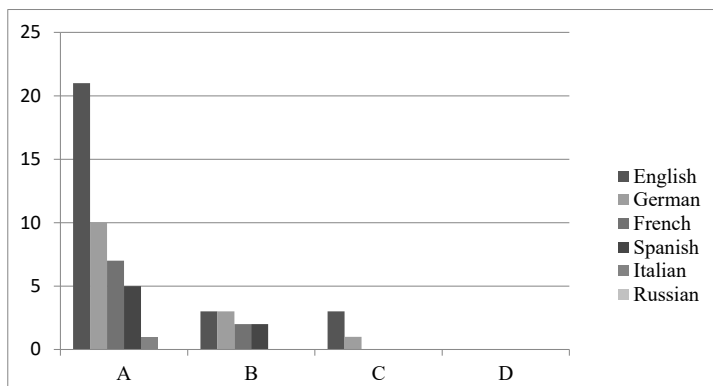

FIGURE 5: Curricular models as distributed by language in upper-secondary schools.

The noted earlier, CLIL curricular models affect the development of students' linguistic competence in the target language. Models A and B, where exposure to L2 is high, increase the students' competence. In other cases, where the focus of the lesson is on the content and the language serves as a tool for instruction (Models C and D), the development of language

skills will be much slower (Romanowski 2018b). The results to be achieved, depending on the assumed objectives as well as a teacher's qualifications for teaching in bilingual classrooms, vary accordingly. In Poland, in order to be eligible for teaching in CLIL classes, teachers are required to have obtained double qualifications: in both a content subject and a certificate of proficiency in a foreign language (Regulation of the Ministry of National Education 2017). Following this line of reasoning it might be assumed that the choice of curricular model is contingent upon the level of competence a teacher has. Those teachers who are less proficient in a foreign language – the one employed as the language of instruction – are more likely to focus on the content itself as they might have majored from a programme reflecting the taught subjects, i.e. biology, geography, maths, etc. In contrast, teachers who have obtained full qualifications in a foreign language will move the balance towards developing learners' language competence to a very high level (Romanowski 2018b).

It should also be noted that based on the results of the survey, more than a half of the teachers (131 teachers out of 203) said they used Model A, which would signify their high competence in a foreign language. In addition, the teachers in upper-secondary schools seem to have developed greater linguistic preparation for conducting lessons in a foreign language, as they mainly stick to Models A and B. The study also reveals one more interesting finding, which is that the teachers of English most often use Model A. This is because there are more possibilities in terms of the preparation, courses and seminars that are available for teachers of this particular language, along with the wider availability of course books, guidebooks and supplementary materials.

6   Conclusion

Bilingual teaching in secondary schools became a necessity in Poland a long time ago, and the majority of schools have realized this type of provision through CLIL, which is also the most common type of methodology that had been adopted successfully in most EU countries. The subjects offered in bilingual provision do not differ much from those in other countries, i.e. Germany and Spain, which can be regarded as pioneers of CLIL (Papaja 2014; Romanowski 2018b).

The results of the study clearly indicate that there is still much to be worked on and improved. The need to unify the curricula and the amount of exposure in a foreign language employed as a medium of instruction would seem the most urgent issues to be resolved. As English is the most commonly used language of instruction prevailing in all secondary education and reaching far beyond it, it would be reasonable and natural to promote German and French in this context, as they are regarded as the procedural languages of the European Commission. The learning of Spanish and Italian, which, as revealed by the study, there is a growing demand for, will hopefully raise the interest of Europeans in mastering lesser known languages and introduce them to system of education in the future. In addition, European citizens need competences in more than one foreign language, so bilingual education may be the only solution for the multilingual EU of the future. As such, we need to pursue the further development of plurilingual competence in bilingual programmes, as envisaged in the Council of Europe documents (Romanowski 2016a).

Finally, yet importantly, the classroom procedures and strategies employed by the majority of in-service teachers require further elaboration and investigation. The qualifications of those working in bilingual classrooms need to be verified against the existing regulations. Polish teachers involved in bilingual teaching require subsequent training, without which effective teaching will not be possible. Obviously, we can benefit enormously from the experiences of other countries. In the first step, the aim(s) of bilingual education through CLIL should be rigorously defined. It is of the utmost importance to be clear about the expected outcomes of CLIL provision for the Polish students. As a second step it could be possible to point out which non-linguistic disciplines seem to be particularly appropriate for this type of instruction. Every content subject (geography, biology, chemistry, etc.) may give their own contribution to the bilingual aim, even if not every topic is adequate for it.

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Teachers' Perceptions of Developing Writing Skills in the EFL Classroom

ABSTRACT

Despite the fact that English is taught as a foreign language in schools from an early age, students often face difficulties when it comes to the development of their writing skills. This paper aims at exploring teachers' perceptions regarding the development of the writing skills of elementary and secondary school EFL learners. Altogether, 85 Kosovar teachers were included in the survey. Even though the teachers believe that writing is important, they do not give the same emphasis to developing it as to other skills. According to their responses, some common difficulties learners experience while writing are a lack of vocabulary, writing anxiety, lack of ideas, mother tongue interference, grammar difficulties, weak structure organization and poor spelling. The teachers suggest that these difficulties might stem from a lack of reading and writing practice, ineffective teaching methods and low motivation for writing. We recommend various actions, such as teacher development courses to help them acquire more effective strategies of teaching writing, increased writing practice in the classroom, and the use of different learning strategies to meet all students' needs.

Keywords: teachers' perceptions; writing skills; EFL students; learning strategies

Stališča učiteljev do razvijanja pisne zmožnosti pri pouku angleščine kot tujega jezika

POVZETEK

Kljub dejstvu, da se angleščino poučuje že od začetka osnovne šole, se učenci še vedno soočajo s težavami pri razvijanju pisne zmožnosti. V prispevku raziskujemo stališča učiteljev do razvijanja pisne zmožnosti v angleščini osnovnošolskih in srednješolskih učencev. V raziskavi je sodelovalo 85 učiteljev s Kosova. Verjamejo, da je pisanje pomembno, a temu ne posvečajo toliko pozornosti kot razvijanju drugih zmožnosti. Ugotavljajo, da se njihovi učenci pri pisanju soočajo s težavami, kot so pomanjkanje besedišča, strah pred pisanjem, pomanjkanje idej za pisanje, medjezikovna interferenca, slovnične napake, slabša struktura pisnega izdelka in pravopisne napake. Učitelji menijo, da prihaja do teh napak, ker učenci premalo berejo in pišejo, zaradi neučinkovitih metod poučevanja ter zaradi slabše motivacije za pisanje. Za izboljšanje stanja priporočamo seminarje za učitelje, na katerih bodo spoznali učinkovitejše strategije za poučevanje pisanja, več vaj za razvijanje pisne zmožnosti med poukom in uporabo različnih učnih strategij, ki bodo upoštevale različne potrebe učencev.

Ključne besede: stališča učiteljev; pisna zmožnost; učenci angleščine kot tujega jezika; učne strategije

1 Introduction

Writing is considered one of the essential language skills that needs to be developed for successful communication. Moreover, it needs to be developed effectively in English as a foreign language (henceforth EFL), since English is used as a global academic language (Rahman 2002; Mansoor 2005; Marlina and Giri 2014; Mahboob 2014). Many authors have noted the common misconception that writing is simply a graphic representation of the spoken language. Hirvela and Belcher (2007) state that writing needs more planning while speaking is more highly contextualized. Johns (1990) argues that writing is not easy because writers are required to create and produce texts using significant discourse components. To produce a coherent and fluent piece of writing readers have to understand it without the possibility of asking for explanation or without seeing the writer's facial expressions or hearing the tone of their voice (Nunan 1999). Javid and Umer (2014) note that students' academic progress is often evaluated through writing, and so the evaluation of their overall language competence often depends on the level of their writing skills (Fageeh 2011). Furthermore, more communication is performed in writing nowadays due to advances in technology and the use of social media (Storch 2018).

EFL students are expected to produce logical, cohesive, clearly structured and well-organized texts (Jacobs 1981; Hall 1988), but such writing requires accurate language use and a deep understanding of the language. However, English is not a transparent language, and learners often have difficulties because of the discrepancies between the sounds and letters (Cook 2016). Moreover, foreign language writers face difficulties because of the language transfer from their first language (Schoonen et al. 2009). A study conducted by Hisbullah (1994) reveals that patterns of the first language (in this case, Arabic) interfere significantly with regard to the syntactic errors made in the target language (English).

According to Hedge (2005), writing itself is not motivating enough for English learners to practice it regularly. Few people feel comfortable while writing a task intended to be judged by someone else, in particular when that "someone else" is a teacher (Hamp-Lyon and Heasly 2006).

Kroll (1990) claims that teachers play an essential role in helping students develop their writing skills, and should therefore consider some important points in making a course plan for developing writing skills. This begins with allocating time for a writing section, presenting aspects of the composition process, helping students with the use of grammar, determining the students' score in writing and also working on techniques that can help them improve. In addition, Harmer (2004) points out that teachers should focus on either the process of writing or the product of writing before designing a writing task. The process of writing involves five steps: pre-writing, writing, revising, editing and sharing the written work. In terms of the written production in a learning context, four steps are involved: the model text, controlled practice, organizing ideas and final product (Kamrul and Moniruzzaman 2010). The role of the teacher is significant in this process, since they guide students towards an effective writing achievement. According to Harmer (2007), the teacher has three roles in the classroom. First, the teacher plays the role of the motivator by providing opportunities to help students generate their ideas, encouraging

them by using different techniques for writing. Secondly, the teacher acts as a resource, either offering help to learners in the writing process or guiding them in using the other resources available. The third role is the teacher as a feedback provider, giving effective feedback to students.

According to Noe (2004), there is a correlation between our perceptions and practice. Thus, teachers' perceptions influence their performance in teaching. If teachers perceive that writing in a foreign language is not as important as grammar, listening, vocabulary, speaking and reading, then this perception can influence their teaching of this skill (Ferede, Melese, and Tefera 2012). Consequently, if English language teachers do not pay attention to developing writing with their students, their performance in this skill will lag behind.

2 The Study

The present study addresses the issue of teachers' perceptions concerning developing learners' English language writing skills in primary school (1–9 grades) and secondary school (10–12 grades), and attempts to provide answers to the following research questions (RQ):

RQ1: How do English language teachers perceive writing as a language skill?

RQ2: How do students feel about writing in English, according to their teachers' perceptions?

RQ3: How do English teachers teach EFL writing in primary and secondary school?

RQ4: What strategies do teachers suggest for learners who have difficulties in developing writing skills?

RQ5: Are there any differences in novice and experienced teachers' perceptions of developing writing skills?

RQ6: Are there any differences in teachers' perceptions related to the grade they teach?

RQ7: Are there any differences in teachers' perceptions related to their gender?

RQ8: Are there any differences in teachers' perceptions related to their educational degree?

2.1 Participants

A total of 85 English language teachers were selected through systematic random sampling to participate in this study, all of whom are based in Kosovo. Among the 85 teachers selected, 70 (82.3%) were females. The median years of teaching experience was three (one–24) years. Most of the teachers, 58 (68.3%) had a bachelor's degree, 24 (28.2%) had a master's degree, and three (3.5%) had a doctoral degree (Table 1). Teachers with a bachelor's degree (68.3%) worked in primary schools, whereas teachers with master's and doctoral degree (31.7%) worked in secondary schools.

Table 1. Participants' background information.

		Number	%
Gender	Female	70	82.3
	Male	15	17.6
Educational Background	Bachelor	58	68.3
	Master	24	28.2
	PhD	3	3.5

2.2 Research Methods

The data were collected in November 2018. For the purpose of the study, a questionnaire was developed with the aim of addressing the research questions listed above. The questionnaire included 12 questions and statements. The questions were grouped into categories which were used to examine the first four research questions (Table 2). The first group of questions was aimed at finding out how the English language teachers perceive writing as a language skill (questions 1 and 2). The second group of questions were aimed at understanding teachers' perceptions of how their students feel about writing in English (questions 3, 4, 5, 6). Understanding how the English teachers approach the teaching of writing was the aim of the third group of questions (questions 7, 8 and 9).

For the first three RQs, a five-point Likert scale was used to rate the degree of agreement with a statement (strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree). The fourth group of questions was designed with options to choose from as well as the opportunity to give open answers in order to find out what strategies would help students who have difficulties in writing in English, according to the teachers.

Furthermore, during the statistical analyses we tried to find out if there was a difference in teachers' perceptions regarding their teaching experience, the grades they teach, their gender and educational degree. These were examined using the second four research questions (RQ5, RQ6, RQ7 and RQ8).

The content validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by a panel of three experts who agreed that the questions and statements were aligned with the research questions. To test the questionnaire's reliability, the retest method was used. The same questionnaire was given to 18 teachers participating in the study who were randomly selected a month later. The similarity between the answers given on both occasions was statistically tested. The results did not show any statistical differences between the first and second tests (p=0.67), supporting the reliability of the questionnaire.

The data was statistically analysed and presented as the mean (standard deviation) when normally distributed or as the median (range) if not normally distributed. The *Chi Square* statistic was *used* to test the relationships between categorical variables.

TABLE 2. List of statements and questions in the questionnaire used in the study.

1	Writing is the most important language skill in the English language. (RQ1)
2	Writing is the most difficult language skill in the English language. (RQ1)
3	Students feel good when they have a writing task. (RQ2)
4	Students feel frustrated while writing in English. (RQ2)
5	Students make more mistakes in writing in English than in speaking and reading. (RQ2)
6	Students have different preferences while writing in English. (RQ2)
7	I give the same writing task to every student in the classroom. (RQ3)
8	Writing is the language skill I find the most difficult to teach. (RQ3)
9	I dedicate the same amount of time to developing writing skills as I do to reading, speaking and listening skills. (RQ3)
10	What general difficulties do you think students experience while writing in English? (RQ4)
11	Students face writing difficulties because of… (RQ4)
12	What should be done in this regard? (RQ4)

3 Results

The results are presented below according to the main research questions.

>   *RQ1: How do English language teachers perceive writing as a skill?*

The results obtained from the analysis of the first two questions in the questionnaire were used to answer RQ1.

Figure 1 shows that 52.9% of the participants agreed and 11.7% strongly agreed that writing is the most important skill in the English language. Moreover, we can notice that most of the teachers perceived writing as the most difficult skill in the English language. These findings illustrate the awareness of the teachers that writing is an essential language skill.
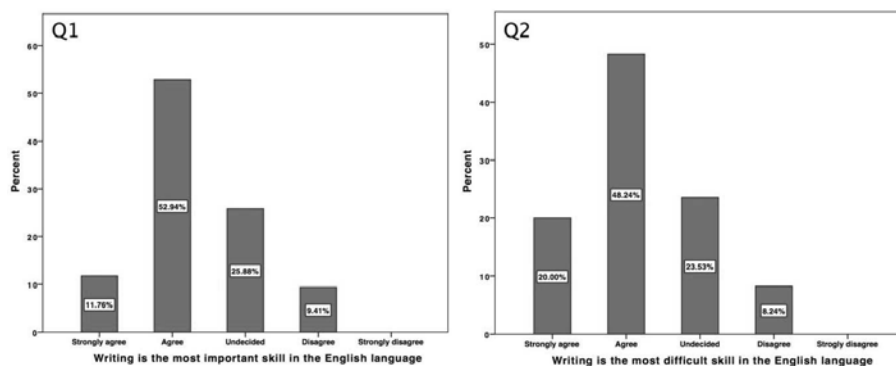

FIGURE 1. RQ1: How do English language teachers perceive writing as a language skill?

RQ2: How do students feel about writing in English?

To answer this question, the results obtained from the analysis of questions 3, 4, 5 and 6 in Table 2 were used.

The teachers agreed that most students do not feel motivated when they have to write, and even feel frustrated when given writing assignments (Figure 2, Q3 and Q4). Since motivation is a crucial factor in learning, these findings are of a considerable concern. Furthermore, 44.7% and 35.3% of the teachers strongly agreed or agreed, respectively, that primary and secondary school students make fewer mistakes in speaking and reading than in writing (Figure 2, Q5). Moreover, most of the teachers (94%) agreed or strongly agreed that there are different preferences among students when given writing assignments (Figure 2, Q6). To better understand the results of RQ2 we need to take a look at the results of RQ3.
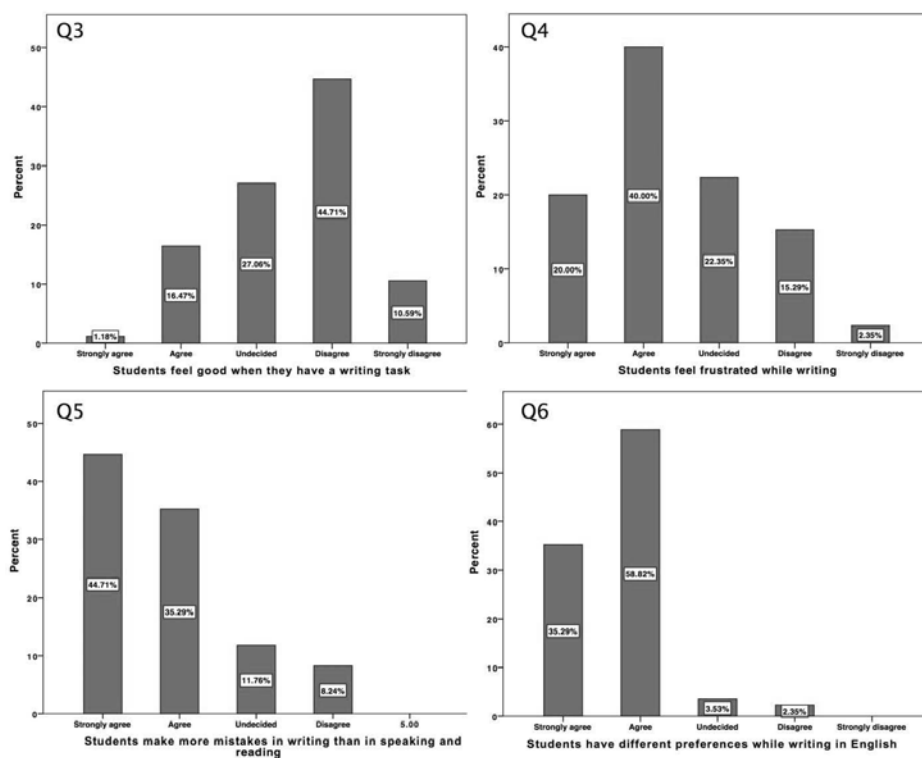

FIGURE 2. RQ2: How do students feel about writing in English, according to their teachers?

RQ3: How do English teachers teach writing?

The answer to this question was constructed from the analysis of questions 7, 8 and 9 in Table 2.

Almost half of the teachers (49.4%) disagreed when asked if they dedicated the same amount of time to writing as to the other language skills (Figure 3, Q9). Moreover, the teachers mostly (60%) gave the same writing task to every student, although they were aware of different preferences among them (Figure 3, Q7 and Figure 2, Q6). Finally, we can assume

that this might be the case because 12.9% of them strongly agreed and 51.7% of them agreed that writing is the most difficult skill to teach (Figure 3, Q8).
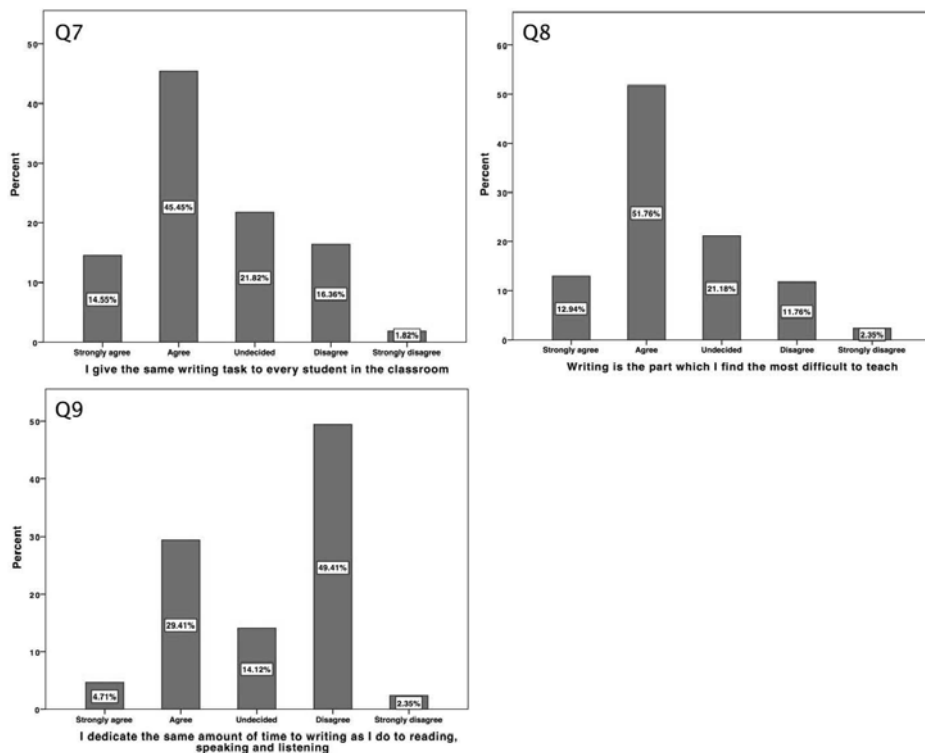

FIGURE 3. RQ3: How do English teachers teach EFL writing in primary and secondary school?

> *RQ4: What strategies do teachers suggest for learners who have difficulties in developing writing skills?*

The results obtained from the analysis of questions 10, 11 and 12 in Table 2 were used to answer RQ4. As stated above, beside the options given in the questionnaire the participants were allowed to answer the question in open text format, but none of them selected it.

The teachers' responses show that students experience various difficulties while writing in English, mostly because of a lack of vocabulary (29.4%), followed by writing anxiety (18.8%), lack of ideas (16.5%), reliance on mother tongue (12.9%), grammar difficulties (9.4%), weak structure organization (8,2%) and poor spelling (4.7%) (Figure 4, Q10). According to the teachers, these difficulties occur because of a lack of reading and writing practice (50.6%), ineffective teaching methods (25.9%), low motivation (14.1%) and lack of ideas (9.4%). Oddly enough, none of the teachers thought that having a large number of students in class is a problem (Figure 4, Q11).

When asked the most important question ('What should be done in this regard?'), the teachers responded as follows (Figure 4, Q12):

- Differentiated instruction should be used to meet individual student needs (38.8%).
- Schools should organize teacher development courses to help teachers learn new strategies about teaching writing (30.6%).
- Different strategies should be used to motivate students to write (17.6%).
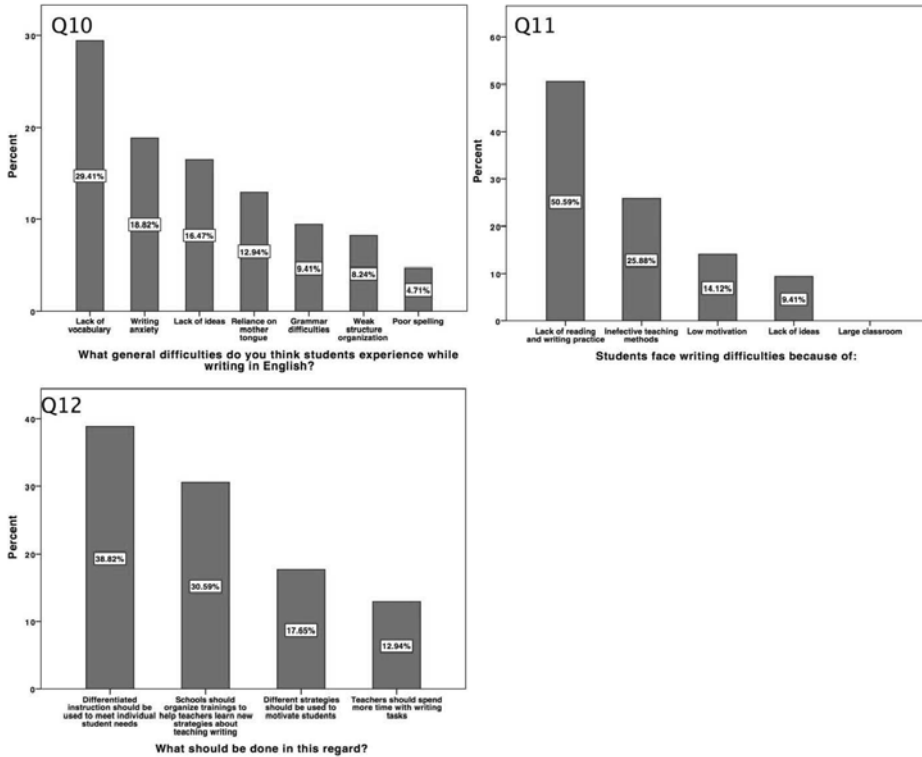- More time should be dedicated to writing tasks in a classroom (12.9%).

FIGURE 4. RQ4: What strategies do teachers suggest for learners who have difficulties in developing writing skills?

> RQ5: *Are there any differences in novice and experienced teachers' perceptions of developing writing skills?*

Comparing the perceptions between teachers with less and more than five years of teaching experience, we did not find any significant differences in their views on developing writing except for the tenth question. Teachers with less experience presumed that students have difficulties in writing due to a lack of vocabulary (31%), writing anxiety or lack of ideas (22.4% and 20.7%, respectively), while teachers with more experience were more heterogeneous in their opinions, 33.3% thought that reliance on mother's tongue is the reason, while 25.9% that a lack of vocabulary is the reason behind students' difficulties in writing, p=0.012 (Figure 5).
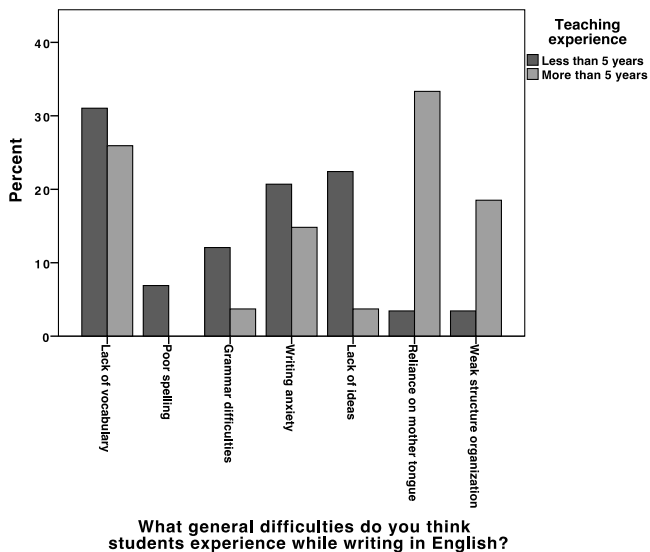
FIGURE 5. Differences in novice and experienced teachers' perceptions of students' difficulties in writing.

> RQ6: *Are there any differences in teachers' perceptions of developing writing skills related to the grade they teach?*

Significant differences were found in the eighth question when comparing perceptions related to the grades that teachers taught ($p=0.014$) (Figure 6). More teachers who taught grades 6–9 agreed that writing is the most difficult skill to teach compared to teachers who taught grades 1–5 and 10–12. No other significant differences were found regarding other questions.
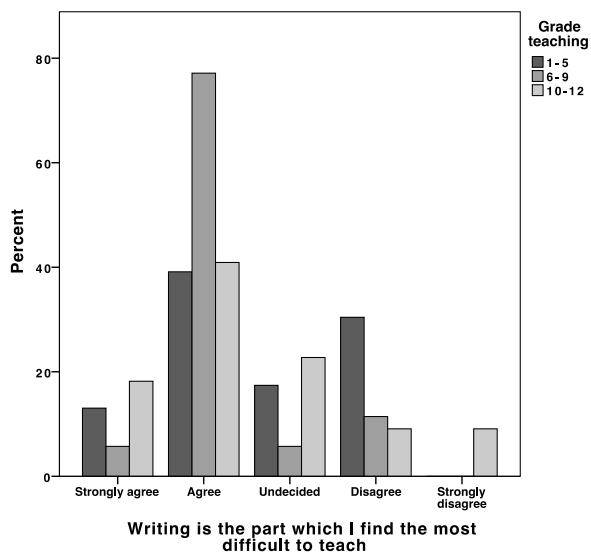

FIGURE 6. Differences in teachers' perceptions of developing writing skills related to the grades they teach.

RQ7: Are there any differences in teachers' perceptions of developing writing skills related to their gender?

There were no significant differences between male and female teachers' perceptions regarding the developing of writing skills.

RQ8: Are there any differences in teachers' perceptions of developing writing skills related to their educational degree?

Similar to the above research question, there were no differences found in teachers' perceptions among the groups with different educational degrees.

4 Discussion

In this section the results are interpreted and discussed in relation to the research questions, and the findings are compared to those of previous research. Furthermore, the implications of the results are discussed.

RQ1 showed that teachers perceive writing as the most difficult and at the same time most important skill in the English language. Similar to our study, Darwish (2016) in the work entitled "Teachers' attitudes and techniques towards EFL Writing in Egyptian Secondary Schools", which included 44 teachers and 24 students, found that the teachers perceived writing as a difficult skill to teach. Moreover, in a study conducted by Ferede, Melese, and Tefera (2012), teachers agreed on the importance of writing as a skill, but contrary to our findings they believed that teaching writing was not more difficult than teaching speaking, listening or reading.

Regarding our results for RQ2, about how students feel about writing in English, based on their teachers' perceptions, other researchers have reported similar findings. For example, Friatin (2018) observes that most of the students in her study had less interest in writing in a foreign language, because of the difficulties they faced. Her research also shows that the students had difficulties in organizing their ideas and sentences, and that insufficient knowledge of language components, such as vocabulary and grammar, might be the underlying reason for this (Friatin 2018). Thus, the difficulty of learning how to write might be the reason behind frustration and lack of motivation in this context.

The results of RQ3 revealed that teachers spend less time on developing their students' writing competence compared to other skills. Correspondingly, other studies have found that teachers do not give sufficient focus to writing. Ferede, Melese, and Tefera (2012), report that English language teachers focused more on the development of speaking skills. Similarly, Cando-Guanoluisa, Campaña-Pallasco, and Panchi-Herrera (2017) report that writing was not practiced regularly in the classroom.

Moreover, we found out that teachers give the same writing task to every student, even while being aware of learning differences amongst them. Differentiated instruction is one of the strategies that can be used to meet all the students' needs. This is crucial because not everyone learns and writes at the same rate or at the same level. Every student has their own preferences related either to their interests, learning styles or language competence, to name just a few sources of differences (Tomlinson 2017).

Koross, Indoshi and Okwach (2013) obtain similar results in a study about teachers and students' perceptions of the methods used by the teachers in teaching writing. They find that both teachers and students had negative perceptions of the methods that were applied in the writing class. They go on to state that this might be the reason behind the poor results in writing classes, and thus teachers need to adopt more effective methods when teaching writing that consider the students' needs and interests.

Other studies reveal that teachers do not differentiate writing tasks in the classroom. In a survey including fifty-eight tenth graders, Cando-Guanoluisa, Campaña-Pallasco, and Panchi-Herrera (2017) find that the writing classes they examined lacked an appropriate process of writing practice. The students were not taught strategies that would help them to organize their ideas, and most of the teachers put the main emphasis on vocabulary and grammar when teaching English (Cando-Guanoluisa, Campaña-Pallasco, and Panchi-Herrera 2017; Ferede, Melese, and Tefera 2012). Koross, Indoshi, and Okwach (2013) recommend that teachers should be more flexible, developing teaching techniques based on the students' interests and needs. This is in accordance with teachers' suggestions on what strategies to use with students who have difficulties in developing writing skills, where most of the teachers think that different forms of instruction would help students improve their writing skills. A teacher can create a successful class that will allow all the students to be engaged by giving a writing assignment that has different levels of difficulty: for example, level one students can fill in the blank spaces in a text; level two students can write with the help of the guidelines, whereas level three students can write a text on their own. The teachers can also vary the amount of time needed to complete the writing assignment, they can request different alternatives related to the writing product from the students, and the writing process can be taught by the teacher in different ways, all according to the students' needs.

Different studies have shown the importance of using various strategies when teaching writing. Harmer (2004) suggests that different types of instructional media, e.g. audio and video materials, can be used by the teachers to explain language meaning and construction. Websites and social media play an important role in learning English. Many websites are designed especially for the purpose of learning writing, while social networks, such as online communities where people can share their ideas, interests and activities through the chat and messaging functions, either individually, in pairs or in groups, can be employed successfully in teaching writing to students. This has been shown in numerous recent studies (Friatin 2018; Jothi, Neelamalar, and Prasad 2011; Yunus, Salehi, and Chenzi 2012; Ping and Maniam 2015; Bani-Hani, Al-Sobh, and Abu-Melhim 2014).

Shehadeh (2011) looks into the efficacy of collaborative writing in second language classroom. The study included 38 first-year students at a university in the United Arab Emirates. In the control group writing tasks were carried out individually, while in the experimental group they were done in pairs. The results showed that collaborative writing helped the students to progress significantly in writing English, especially in terms of content, organization and vocabulary. The strategies presented in this work proved helpful not only for practical purposes, but also for motivational reasons (Shehadeh 2011).

In accordance with the studies mentioned above, the teachers in our survey agreed that different strategies, such as differentiated instruction, should be used in class, but they were aware that they needed further support to learn new techniques in order to develop their students' writing skills.

The results of the fifth research question show that the perceptions of the teachers regarding the difficulties that students face while writing differ between teachers with less and more than five years of teaching experience. Moreover, the results show that teachers of grades 6–9 expressed a higher level of agreement with the statement that writing is the most difficult skill to teach, compared to those teaching other grades. Writing assignments are usually given more importance during this period, which might be the reason for this result. We did not find any differences between teachers' perceptions of developing writing skills when compared by gender or educational degree, which indicates that teachers have similar perceptions regarding the development of their students' writing skills regardless of their gender and degree of education.

5   Conclusion and Recommendations

This study set out to evaluate English language teachers' perceptions regarding the writing skills of primary and secondary foreign language learners in Kosovo. It found that the teachers perceive writing as the most important and difficult skill to acquire in language learning. Moreover, the teachers are aware that their students are not motivated to write in English. As such, the teachers give little attention to writing in class, and put more emphasis on the development of the other language skills. Likewise, the teachers do not differentiate writing tasks for their students. The fact that they view writing as just as significant as the other skills shows that the problem does not lie with the teachers' perceptions regarding the importance of these skills, but with the way writing is taught. It might be said that Kosovar teachers fail to practice what they believe in. In future studies it would be interesting to research teachers' perceptions of developing writing skills in other European countries, as well as investigate the reasons behind the lack of writing practice in language classrooms through more in-depth teacher interviews. Similarly, it would be beneficial to conduct classroom observations regarding the development of writing, and to find some examples of good writing practice.

Based on the teachers' responses of why learning and teaching writing in the English language are difficult, and the conclusions drawn from them, the following recommendations are made for practitioners.

a) It is important that English language teachers give equivalent emphasis to writing as they do to other skills, since writing is an essential language skill, especially in these days of greater technology use and the need to write more often.

b) Educational institutions need to focus on helping teachers to develop their teaching skills, especially different strategies to teach writing and how to motivate students to write in a foreign language. Differentiated instruction is one of the strategies that can be adapted to suit all students, since writing assignments can be differentiated by content, process and product.

c) The use of technology in teaching writing is also a great opportunity to motivate students by showing them that writing can be a pleasant process and that following such steps can improve their writing skills.

Finally, it may be concluded that only by empowering teachers to use modern technology in their teaching and apply differentiated forms of writing instruction can we be sure that their students will become successful writers in a foreign language, and use this skill effectively in their professional and personal lives.

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Part III

Language

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Tracing the Space Between Euphemisms and Dysphemisms: The Case of Obesity in English and German

ABSTRACT

The paper investigates how obesity as an aspect of physical appearance is represented in English and German. The existence of various expressions that refer to obesity leads to the assumption that both investigated languages rely on euphemisms and dysphemisms to talk about obesity. Using a corpus of different expressions from lexicographic sources, we analyze their descriptions and their classification as euphemisms in specialized and general dictionaries. Semantic phenomena that might be identified within such expressions were also taken into consideration. To investigate the usage of the identified euphemisms and dysphemisms, a questionnaire was administered among native speakers of English and German. The corpus was used to trace the space between euphemisms and dysphemisms in language use. The main goal was to identify the ways in which obesity is referred to in two different sociocultural contexts, and to establish the extent to which lexicographic identifications and descriptions of euphemisms overlap with native speakers' perceptions and use of such items.

Keywords: euphemisms; dysphemisms; obesity; English; German

Razmejitev prostora med evfemizmi in disfemizmi: Primer prekomerne teže v angleščini in nemščini

POVZETEK

V prispevku raziščemo, kako je prekomerna teža kot del zunanjega videza predstavljena v angleščini in nemščini. Ker v obeh jezikih obstajajo različni izrazi za prekomerno težo, predpostavljamo, da opisujeta ta vidik zunanjosti tako z evfemizmi kot z disfemizmi. S pomočjo korpusa izrazov iz leksikografskih virov analiziramo opise teh izrazov in njihovo klasifikacijo med evfemizme v specializiranih in splošnih slovarjih. Opazujemo tudi semantične pojave, ki jih najdemo med proučevanimi izrazi. Da bi razkrili rabo identificiranih evfemizmov in disfemizmov, uporabimo vprašalnik za rojene govorce angleščine in nemščine. S korpusom razmejimo prostor med evfemizmi in disfemizmi v jezikovni rabi. Glavni cilj je opredeliti izraze, ki se v dveh različnih sociokulturnih kontekstih nanašajo na prekomerno težo, in ugotoviti, v kolikšni meri se leksikografske oznake in opisi evfemizmov prekrivajo s percepcijo teh izrazov med rojenimi govorci.

Ključne besede: evfemizmi; disfemizmi; prekomerna teža; angleščina; nemščina

1 Introduction

Euphemisms represent a very productive area of linguistic analysis, and this is particularly evident in the analyses of euphemisms used to avoid the direct mention of what is considered to be an unpleasant or embarrassing concept in a given sociocultural context. Some areas of human experience, such as religion or death, have traditionally been euphemised. Besides these, there are many other areas that reveal characteristics of euphemistic usage in a specific community at a given point in time. As Sawerschel (2001, 18–19) points out, euphemisms are used to avoid an unpleasant, ominous or offensive issue because of religious reasons, shame or decency. In such cases, social norms and conventions play a decisive role. For example, age seems to have become a taboo in our time, so old people are referred to as 'not young anymore' or 'seniors' ("Senioren, Betagte, nicht mehr Junge"). Also, out of courtesy, instead of using the offensive 'fat' to refer to a woman, 'full-figured', 'plump' or 'stout' ("vollschlank, mollig oder wohlbeleibt") are used. Whether these words are taken as euphemisms or merely synonyms depends on the context they are used in.

This paper deals with euphemisms related to obesity as a particular aspect of physical appearance, as identified by R. W. Holder (2002). Holder's dictionary contains English euphemisms, and the corpus in this paper also consists of German euphemisms related to obesity. German euphemisms were retrieved from other sources since no specialized dictionary of German euphemisms was available. A special focus is placed on descriptions of euphemisms from the lexicographic point of view by comparing their classification as euphemisms in a specialized dictionary of euphemisms to the treatment of such items in a general dictionary. Although categorized as euphemisms, the investigation of the analysed items reveals that the space between euphemisms and dysphemisms may be vague. A reference is also made to semantic phenomena that might be identified within such expressions. Finally, a questionnaire was administered among native speakers of English and German. The aim of this part of the research is to use the corpus in order to trace the space between euphemisms and dysphemisms – the two concepts discussed at length by scholars such as Keith Allan and Kate Burridge (1991) and Eliecer Crespo Fernández (2007). Therefore, besides the analysis of the ways in which obesity is referred to in two different sociocultural contexts, the research aims to compare lexicographic identifications and speakers' use of euphemisms. By doing so, it is possible to evaluate the extent to which lexicographic identifications and descriptions of euphemisms overlap with native speakers' perceptions and use of such items, primarily in terms of distinguishing between items that are perceived as euphemisms and those perceived as dysphemisms.

Euphemisms may be viewed as a means of avoiding the use of linguistic expressions considered to be a taboo. Schröder (2013) deals with taboo words – those which are often avoided because they evoke unpleasant, dangerous or offensive thoughts. Lexical items that refer to certain taboo parts of the body and which should be replaced with other expressions are well-known. The replacement of taboo words in language is dealt with by Pieper (1991), who notes that people have the need to talk about taboo topics and always find a way to do so, and that linguistic taboos reflect both a specific time and any sociocultural changes that are occurring.

In research on euphemistic expressions a substantial focus is placed on investigating the structural characteristics and semantic changes that occur in such expressions. Strategies of avoiding taboos can be found on all levels (phonemic, morphological, lexical, and syntagmatic), and can include, for example, changing the taboo form, ellipsis, saying the opposite of what one means, using diminutives or general forms (Pieper 1991, 5–6). It is tempting to hypothesize that euphemisms in other languages might exhibit a greater overlap in the area of semantic change and that the structural characteristics might exhibit this to a lesser degree due to differences in the formation patterns available in a given language. In the classification of strategies that are used to create euphemisms, Kate Burridge (2012) distinguishes and discusses at length a range of phenomena that fall under the following three broad categories: analogy, distortion, and borrowing. The author puts forward English examples and states that "they illustrate universal processes", but also adds the following: "All of these devices figure strongly in the formation of X-phemism across the languages of the world to a greater or lesser extent" (Burridge 2012, 72–73).[1] It seems that the analysis of reasons why languages differ in the extent to which they make use of the different processes to create euphemisms deserves special attention.[2]

According to Havers (1946, 117–50), taboos were known early on – even Aryan knew them, and he gave the typology of substitutes: changes of sounds, loanwords, antiphrasis, substitutional pronouns, euphemistic blendings, paraphrase, ellipsis, and generalization.

2   Euphemisms and Dysphemisms as Partial Synonyms and Indicators of Sociocultural Changes

The question of whether absolute synonyms exist or not has been a matter of frequent discussions among scholars. However, even more attention has been paid to identifying the different ways in which synonyms in a given language differ and can, therefore, be regarded as partial synonyms. One of the ways in which they differ refers to stylistic differences, i.e., different stylistic forms and levels of formality. For example, in discussing partial synonyms, i.e., ways in which synonyms can differ, Palmer (1981, 60–61) refers, among other aspects, to differences in 'styles' or 'registers', and discusses them with reference to colloquial and 'posh' expressions as well as in terms of different degrees of formality. Similarly, in discussing the ways in which the meanings of propositional synonyms differ, Cruse (2000) mentions certain aspects of non-propositional meaning, including stylistic differences. Stylistic differences are identified as those that occur "on the colloquial-formal dimension" (Cruse 2000, 158).

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[1]   See also Warren (1992) regarding the ways of constructing euphemisms.

[2]   Such topics have been analyzed in other languages as well, including Croatian. In the analysis of the linguistic strategies used to create Croatian euphemisms as identified in Anić's Dictionary, Pasini (2005, 64) mentions the following: metaphor; word extension and shortening; generic for specific and specific for generic (metonymy and synecdoche); hyperbole and litotes; and borrowing from other languages. Kuna (2007, 107–10) identifies the following semantic changes, i.e., rhetorical figures involved in the creation of Croatian euphemisms: metaphor, metonymy (including antonomasia), periphrasis, and antiphrasis. The overview of the semantic changes is preceded by a presentation of other processes included in the creation of Croatian euphemisms, and these include: phonetic-syllabic changes (further subdivided into five subcategories), different formation processes (including suffixation, prefixation, and compounding), and lexical means (modification, pronominalization, borrowing foreign words, neologization or assigning a new meaning to a word, and dropping of words (Kuna 2007, 104–7).

The question that arises here is whether and to what extent euphemisms and dysphemisms can be regarded as partial synonyms. Firstly, the identification of euphemism as a particular type of synonym has already been explicitly attested (cf. Keyes 2010, 8). Secondly, synonymy is a sense relation that functions on the paradigmatic level, and this applies to euphemisms and dysphemisms too. Finally, if the above-mentioned identification of one of the ways in which synonyms can differ is taken into account, euphemisms and dysphemisms can indeed be regarded as a specific type of synonymic sense relation that is inextricably connected to stylistic aspects of linguistic expressions. This will become evident in subsequent parts of the paper, i.e., in the analysis of the corpus where reference is made to lexicographic notes on stylistic aspects of euphemisms.

On the other hand, the investigation of euphemisms and dysphemisms in a given sociocultural context provides the possibility to investigate these two phenomena not only from the point of view of their stylistic value and use, but also from the point of view of the social value that is attached to such expressions. Such a sociolinguistic analysis could significantly contribute to research where the only focus is placed on the typological and lexicographic classifications of euphemisms and dysphemisms. Thus, euphemisms and dysphemisms may be regarded as indicators of sociocultural changes that have occurred in a given community. Similarly, Keyes (2010, 10) refers to euphemisms as "an accurate barometer of changing attitudes".

Rocco (2015, 258) states that the term euphemism is multi-faceted, and not only can it be seen as a linguistic but also as a social phenomenon, whose stylistic-rhetoric impact was already studied in the antiquity. In contrast, the term dysphemism has not been used for such a long time, and can be linked to investigations of vulgar words, pejoratives, slurs, etc. Rocco (2015, 259) sees euphemisms as hyperonyms for using linguistic means with mantling, blurring, weakening, or palliative functions, whereas dysphemisms refer to language use which is pejorative, which creates distance or stigmatizes persons or ideas. Euphemisms and dysphemisms can be seen as dynamic and interactional categories, whose production and reception depend on the context and text types.

Keyes (2010) also notes the importance of euphemisms in illuminating those areas of life that a community is particularly sensitive about at different periods. Similarly and more specifically, Kuna (2007, 100–101) makes reference to Moskvin (2001, 62) in discussing communicative functions of euphemisms, one of which is to replace the items which are considered inappropriate at a given point in time or in a given community, and these have to do with "states, physiology, and human anatomy". Kuna (2007, 101) illustrates this function of euphemisms by several examples from Croatian, e.g., "*upitna ljepota* – 'ružnoća'"[3].

Different functions of euphemisms become evident in comparative analyses of values of different cultures and the ways in which such values are transferred onto the linguistic arena. Namely, it has been noted that "the usage of euphemisms develops from and builds up community's beliefs as a sharing ground in that community" (Yang and Depner 2016, 95). Yang and Depner (2016) obviously place substantial emphasis on the relevance of folk beliefs in their analysis of specific euphemisms in Mandarin Chinese. A cross-cultural and

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[3]   "Questionable beauty – 'ugliness'".

cross-linguistic analysis in which, for example, the situation in Mandarin Chinese would be compared to the situation in American English, might hypothetically reveal that in comparison to Eastern cultural and linguistic systems, in the Western ones a greater emphasis is placed on political correctness rather than specific folk beliefs in the processes of creating and using euphemisms.

3   Euphemisms and Dysphemisms – Where Should the Line Between the Two Be Drawn?

If euphemisms and dysphemisms are regarded as particular types of partial synonyms which are used in situations in which one expression is substituted with another, and where both refer to the same concept, we may analyse the possibilities of drawing a clear line between what may be regarded as a euphemism and what may be regarded as a dysphemism. The line between the two is in some cases blurred, and it seems that the reason behind this is rather subjective and related to users' intention or illocutionary force. Casas Gómez (2018, 16) identifies the differences between the two in "motivation and purpose", and claims that "although both euphemism and dysphemism are based on the same principle and use the same linguistic devices, the aim of dysphemism is not to attenuate or soften, but to have the opposite effect, the motivation or reinforcement of the forbidden sign or concept". Some expressions are undoubtedly euphemisms and have nothing to do with the purpose behind using an expression that might be identified as a dysphemism. However, there are certainly cases in which an expression might be classified by a lexicographer as a euphemism, but may be used as a dysphemism in different contexts. Allan and Burridge (2006, 31) claim that individuals use dysphemisms "to talk about people and things that frustrate and annoy them, that they disapprove of and wish to disparage, humiliate and degrade". In this sense, among the analysed euphemisms presented later on in this paper, some might be regarded as dysphemisms if they are perceived by native speakers as expressions that they might use in order to ridicule or humiliate. In distinguishing between euphemisms and dysphemisms, emphasis is also placed on the emotional or affective aspect. Thus, euphemisms are described in terms of carrying "a light emotional load", and dysphemisms in terms of carrying "a heavy affective load" (Herrero Ruiz 2009, 252).

Terminological distinctions used by scholars illustrate how difficult it is to distinguish between euphemisms and dysphemisms. Allan and Burridge (1991) discuss 'euphemistic dysphemisms' and 'dysphemistic euphemisms', and what seems to be the basic criterion for the distinction between the two is the speaker's intention, i.e., the illocutionary force of an utterance.[4] Crespo Fernández (2007) analyses the space between euphemisms and dysphemisms in relation to 'quasi-euphemisms' and 'quasi-dysphemisms'. 'Quasi-euphemisms' have the euphemistic illocutionary force, but dysphemistic form, while 'quasi-dysphemism' take the form of a euphemism, but have a humiliating or degrading illocutionary force (Crespo Fernández 2007, 214). Moreover, in his thorough analysis of the two phenomena Crespo Fernández

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[4]   A focus on illocutionary force is evident in scholars' analysis of euphemisms in relation to saving face (cf. Allan and Burridge 1991). See also Allan and Burridge (2006) regarding the distinction between dysphemisms, orthophemisms, and euphemisms.

(2007) investigates, among other perspectives, the ironic perspective of quasi-dysphemisms. Since the corpus consists of expressions which are attested by lexicographers as euphemisms, i.e., they appear in the form of a euphemism, we may hypothesize that some of the analysed items might be identified as quasi-dysphemisms, and their use might be closely associated with irony as illocutionary force. This becomes especially plausible if we consider the fact that in today's society different aspects of a person's physical appearance are frequently ridiculed and referred to in ironic terms (which is not the case with, for example, euphemisms related to death or religion). It is evident that scholars rely heavily on speaker meaning, i.e., the illocutionary force of an utterance in distinguishing between euphemisms and dysphemisms. However, Warren (1992) emphasizes the importance of an individual's evaluation of what is communicated by the speaker as an attempt to euphemise a certain concept. Thus, native speakers' evaluations of items classified as euphemisms provide a valuable insight into the overall value of an expression.

4 English and German Euphemisms Related to Obesity – Corpus Analysis

This part of the paper consists of the presentation of the methodology of the research, analysis of lexicographic presentation and semantic changes of English and German euphemisms related to obesity, as well as the analysis of native speakers' evaluations of such expressions.

4.1 Methodology

For the purpose of comparing the ways in which euphemisms related to obesity are dealt with in general and specialized dictionaries, the analysis of selected items[5] which are included in Holder's dictionary of euphemisms (2002) will also include reference to the ways in which these items are dealt with in the online edition of Oxford English Dictionary.[6] The aim of this part of the analysis is to evaluate the extent to which lexicographers identify these items as euphemisms in general dictionaries and the extent to which they simply regard them as (stylistically) marked expressions without further classification of such items as euphemisms. The importance of this type of analysis is attested by Pasini (2005, 62), who discusses the situation in Croatian with regard to the lexicographic identification of euphemisms and the dilemmas that lexicographers working on general dictionaries encounter in dealing with such items and indicating '(stylistically) marked words' or 'loaded words'.

Since euphemisms have previously been identified as indicators of sociocultural changes in a given community, the aim of the questionnaire is to gain insight into native speakers' evaluations of the ways in which obesity is euphemised and to relate these to lexicographers' approaches and analyses of such euphemisms. It should be noted here that Holder's dictionary of euphemisms (2002) relies on different dictionaries, reference books, and literary sources

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5   The conducted research included euphemisms related to 'obesity' and 'cosmetics', as identified in Holder (2002). However, since the collected data for both is extensive, in this paper we present only the results related to items referring to obesity. Furthermore, the expression 'led astray' is also listed under the semantic field of obesity in Holder (2002). However, since its meaning is too broad (see Holder 2002, 230) and since it is also listed by Holder under the semantic fields of copulation and drunkenness, it is not included in this analysis.

6   https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/english. Accessed January 16, 2019.

which cover a substantial period of time, some of them dating several centuries back. In that respect, the informants' feedback regarding the evaluations of items listed in Holder's dictionary provides a valuable insight into the extent to which contemporary means of euphemising obesity differ from those used in the past. The relevance of taking the temporal dimension in both the identification of linguistic expressions as euphemisms and their evaluation is attested by Burridge and Benczes (2019, 190) who claim the following: "In the life cycle of a euphemism, wear and tear sees metaphorical ties cut, imagery buried, and expressions stripped of their force; time pushes these expressions below the level of consciousness". The data collected via the questionnaire thus provide a valuable insight into the changes in perception and use of different linguistic items as euphemisms. This, in turn, allows for the possibility of drawing a clearer line between items that might be regarded as euphemisms and those that might be regarded as dysphemisms. Namely, if speakers use dysphemisms to discuss annoying individuals, objects or phenomena with the intention to humiliate, as indicated by Allan and Burridge (2006, 31), it becomes evident why expressions related to obesity represent a productive arena for such investigations. Namely, with the development of technology and new forms of social media and ways of communicating, there has been an increase in pressure on individuals to conform to certain standards of physical appearance, but also an expansion of virtual spaces where one might be humiliated for not conforming or living up to a standard of physical beauty.

Furthermore, it is possible to draw additional conclusions from the synchronic analysis. Since Holder (2002) associates certain euphemistic expressions with a specific gender, the questionnaire elicits this type of response as well. Age and education were found to be the most important variables in the evaluations of use and understanding of other figures, such as antonomasia (cf. Grgić and Nikolić 2011, 131). However, since our sample is relatively restricted, we were not able to use these variables in establishing correlations.

4.2 Analysis of Lexicographic Presentation and Semantic Changes of Euphemisms Related to Obesity

This part of the paper consists of the analysis of lexicographic presentation and semantic changes of English and German euphemisms related to obesity.

4.2.1 Analysis of English Euphemisms

This part consists of the presentation of euphemisms related to obesity as identified and defined by Holder (2002), and a comparison with the treatment of that item in the online Oxford English Dictionary. After such a comparison, reference will also be made to semantic phenomena that might be identified within the examples.

ample fat. *Literally, wide and commodious, but only in this sense of a woman*[7] (H[8], 9). In one of the two indicated subsenses the general dictionary offers the following definition: *(of a person's*

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[7]   Bolded item refers to the euphemism, followed by its meaning in Holder, which is not placed in bold. The part in italics refers to Holder's further comments about the item. Italics are also used where OED definitions are provided.
[8]   H stands for Holder (2002).

figure) full or broad (OED)[9]. It should be noted that Holder also includes **a full figure** as a euphemism, so it could be noted here that a euphemism is in OED defined with a further euphemism. There is no indication in OED that this is a euphemism.

battle of the bulge a desire to slim. *The 'bulge' is the evidence of obesity around the waist and hips* (H, 22). Here there is also reference to the Battle of the Bulge, fought during World War II. OED defines 'bulge' in the following way: *a rounded swelling which distorts an otherwise flat surface*, but also as: *informal [in singular] an unusual temporary increase in number or size.* Here there is also an indication for informality.

bay window a fat person's stomach. *Literally, the architectural feature of a house which protrudes from the lower floor only* (H, 22). In OED the following definition of the expression is given: *a window built to project outwards from an outside wall.* No further subsenses are provided or an indication for style.

big-boned fat. *The phrase is used of children and adults, seeking to suggest that their frame needs the extra padding* (H, 28). In OED this adjective is defined only as: *(of a person or animal) of larger than average build.* There is no indication for style.

brewer's goitre frontal obesity in a male. *The thyroid gland, from the swelling of which you may find yourself with a 'goitre', is situated in the neck, not around the waist* (H, 42). In OED this expression is defined as: *a fat stomach caused by excessive consumption of beer*, and it is marked as *NZ, Australian, informal.* Here it is interesting to note that Holder defines this euphemism with a further euphemism ('frontal obesity'), while OED does not.

calorie counter a fat person. *Advertising jargon, suggesting that the physical condition is not due to gluttony, the lack of exercise, and so on* (H, 52). OED does not offer this expression, but in one of its senses 'counter' is defined in the following way: *a device used for counting*, and in one of the subsenses: *a person who counts something, for example votes in an election.*

chubby fat. *Literally, like the thick, coarse-fleshed fish, whence agreeably plump, especially of babies. You meet the adjective in advertisements calculated to avoid upsetting mothers who have to select capacious clothes for an obese child* (H, 65). In OED it is defined as: *plump and rounded.* Here the euphemism is defined by further euphemisms.

classic proportions (of) fat. *Originally, 'classic' meant belonging to the literature of Greek or Latin antiquity when that was considered the only stuff worth reading, less taxing literature being written in the vernacular, or Romance, whence our modern romantic novels. The female models chosen by Rubens and other old masters, or 'classic' painters, were nearly always on the plump side* (H, 66). In OED the item 'proportions' is in one subsense defined as: *dimensions; size*, and 'the classics' as: *the works of ancient Greek and Latin writers and philosophers.*

contour a fat shape. *Literally, the outline of any figure, but promising to 'reduce your contour' is how advertisers try to sell you health foods, exercise equipment, and the like* (H, 82). In OED it is defined in one sense as: *an outline representing or bounding the shape or form of something.*

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9   Oxford English Dictionary.

corn-fed *American* (of a female) plump. *Especially referring to one below middle age, from the fattening of livestock on an augmented diet* (H, 85). In OED in one subsense it is defined in the following way: *plump; well fed*. Here it is also marked as *American*, but also as *informal*.

couch potato a person who habitually spends their leisure time watching television. *Not a vegetable related to the pernicious couch-grass, or 'triticum repens', but a person vegetating on a sofa* (H, 86). In OED it is marked as *informal* and defined as: *a person who spends little or no time exercising and a great deal of time watching television*.

devoted to the table gluttonous. *Not merely fond of a piece of furniture* (H, 103). There is no entry for this expression in OED.

differently affected by a taboo condition. *In a series of phrases such as 'differently abled', crippled or of low intelligence; 'differently advantaged', 'poor';* **differently weighted,** *obese* (H, 104–05); cf. OED definition of 'differently'.

dine well to be a drunkard and a glutton. *The goodness lies in the excess of food and wine* (H, 105). There is no entry in OED, but there is OED's entry for 'well' with the subsense: *to a great extent or degree (often used for emphasis)*.

fond of excessively addicted to. *More than just being favourably disposed towards. Thus a man who is 'fond of the women' is a profligate, and he who is 'fond of a glass' drinks too much alcohol, or, if* **'fond of food'***, is a glutton* (H, 148); cf. OED definition of 'fond of'.

full figure (a) obesity. *Having a* **full figure** *does not imply merely that you have all normal anatomical appendages. The expression is used of women more than men. (...)* **A fuller figure** *means much the same* (H, 156). In OED 'full' is in one of its senses defined as: *(of a person's figure or part of the body) plump or rounded*.

go to the fat farm *American* to be obese. *Not visiting a piggery* (H, 170). In OED 'fat farm' is marked as *North American* and *informal*, and defined as: *a residential establishment where overweight people seek improved health by dieting, exercise, and treatment*.

heavily built obese. *Mainly of teenage children* (H, 186). In OED the expression is entered as: *(of a person) having a large, broad, and strong body*.

larger obese. *Jargon of the clothing industry, without stating the norm against which the measurement has been made. It may also refer to females who are taller than the norm* (H, 226). In OED 'large' is defined in one of its senses as: *of considerable or relatively great size, extent, or capacity*.

many pounds heavier much fatter. *Perhaps written more of women, who can be more sensitive on the subject of weight than men* (H, 248). No entry in OED in this form and meaning.

maturer fatter. *The language of those who seek to sell clothes to older women, who generally have put on weight and acquired a* **maturer figure** (H, 250). In OED there is no entry for 'maturer' in this sense. The term 'figure' in one of the senses is defined as: *a person's bodily shape, especially that of a woman and when considered to be attractive*. In one of the subsenses 'mature' is defined

in the following way: *used euphemistically to describe someone middle-aged or old.* Here the general dictionary explicitly indicates that it is a euphemism, but not in the sense 'fat'.

middle-aged spread obesity. *A normal function of ageing* (H, 254). In OED the expression is defined as: *the fat that may accumulate around the abdomen in middle age.* It is not marked as a euphemism in OED.

people of/with those having a particular characteristic. *POLITICALLY CORRECT language adopted by those so described. (...)* **People of size**, *which might be thought to include all of us and not just interior decorators fixing wallpaper, does not refer to stature but to girth* (H, 295). In OED there is 'of a size' entry: *(of two or more people or things) having the same dimensions.*

problem an unwanted and often irreversible condition. *The word is used in many phrases to conceal truth or inadequacy. (...) Staying with health, the obese may have* **a weight problem** (H, 314–315). In OED in one sense: *a matter or situation regarded as unwelcome or harmful and needing to be dealt with and overcome.*

puppy fat obesity in a child. *Usually of a young female, with the implication that the plumpness will vanish as the child grows up, without any dietary change or regular exercise* (H, 320). In OED it is marked as *British*, but there is no indication of it being a euphemism: *fat on the body of a baby or child which disappears around adolescence.*

quantitatively challenged fat. *But not Sumo wrestlers* (H, 324). In OED, 'challenged' is listed as: [*with submodifier or in combination] used euphemistically to indicate that someone suffers disability in a specified respect*, and in its subsense: *informal. Used to indicate that someone or something is lacking or deficient in a specified respect.* This is a rare instance of the indication of a euphemistic expression in a general dictionary, which illustrates how relevant the 'challenged' modifications are for creating English euphemisms (cf. also OED's comment on the usage of 'challenged' when modified by an adverb).

shorten the front line to lose weight. *Punning on the military euphemism and usually of men.* (H, 360). 'Front line' in OED: *the military line or part of an army that is closest to the enemy.*

spare tyre obesity at the waistline. *Usually of a male, from the roll of fat overhanging his belt. (...) In America, sometimes as* **rubber tire** (H, 376). In OED in the second indicated sense: *a roll of fat round a person's waist,* marked only as *informal.*

stomach (a) obesity around the waist. *Usually of a male and incorrectly specifying the internal chamber through which food passes in the process of digestion. A* **bit of a stomach** *also implies obesity rather than postsurgical deprivation* (H, 398). In OED 'a bit of a –' is defined in the following way: *used to suggest that something is not severe or extreme, or is the case only to a limited extent.*

tuck the cosmetic removal of surplus fat or flesh by surgery. *The imagery is from adjusting clothing, whence also to 'tuck', to perform such a procedure* (H, 415). In OED in one of its senses: *a flattened, stitched fold in a garment or material, typically one of several parallel folds put in a garment for shortening, tightening, or decoration.* In a subsense it is marked as *informal* and *usually with modifier: a surgical operation to reduce surplus flesh or fat.*

weight watcher an obese person. *But at least conscious of it and often trying to do something about it* (H, 435). Unlike **calorie counter**, this expression is entered in OED as: *a person who is concerned about their weight, especially one who diets.* In OED there is the indication of origin: *from the proprietary name Weight Watchers, an organization for slimmers.*

well-built fat. *Used of men and women, and of children also, because manufacturers know better than to describe somebody's little darling as obese. Less often as **well-fleshed*** (H, 435). 'Well-built' in OED: *(of a person) having a strong, sturdy physique.* Here the meaning does not imply 'fat', and there is no indication of it being a euphemism. 'Well-fleshed' in OED: *having a substantial amount of flesh; plump, fleshy, well-covered.* Here there is no indication of the term being a euphemism, but it is defined by further euphemisms.

Our analysis of expressions related to obesity and entered in the dictionary of euphemisms and in the general dictionary points to several conclusions. Firstly, it may be observed that most expressions are not marked as euphemistic in the general dictionary. Exceptions to this are the items 'challenged' and 'mature' (although the euphemistic sense of 'mature' is related to age, and not obesity). Secondly, instead of indicating certain expressions as euphemistic, there is in certain instances an indication of style, and such expressions are marked as informal ('bulge', 'brewer's goitre', 'corn-fed', 'couch potato', 'fat farm', 'challenged', 'spare tyre', 'tuck'). Furthermore, there are also instances where, instead of indicating an expression as euphemistic, it is defined by further euphemisms ('ample', 'chubby', 'well fleshed'). Lastly, there seems to be no indication of certain expressions obviously being derogatory, such as 'corn-fed', 'couch potato', or '(go to) the fat farm'.

What may also be noted from the semantic point of view is that these examples include some of the semantic phenomena identified by different authors as prominent in the creation of euphemisms.[10] Sometimes more than one phenomenon can be identified within a single expression. We find the frequent use of metaphor (e.g., '*battle* of the bulge', 'bay window', 'couch potato', 'puppy fat', 'spare tyre'), metonymy (e.g., 'battle of *the bulge*', 'big-boned', 'brewer's goitre', 'devoted to the table'), and periphrasis (e.g., 'devoted to the table', 'go to the fat farm', 'many pounds heavier', 'middle-aged spread', 'shorten the front line').

4.2.2 Analysis of German Euphemisms

German examples are found in Duden online[11] and DWDS[12]. They are also looked up in the dictionary "Sag es treffender" by A.M. Textor (2002), which contains synonyms. There is no dictionary of the German language which deals solely with euphemisms. Most of the following explanations also contain examples of usage of euphemisms.

dick (fat; of considerable, more than normal extent; massive, bulky, not thin): *von beträchtlichem, mehr als normalem Umfang; massig, nicht dünn*[13] (e.g. ein dickes Kind, sie hat dicke Beine, du bist dick geworden, das Kleid macht dich dick; (*umgangssprachlich*) das Baby

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[10]   See the previous part of the paper where this is presented.
[11]   https://www.duden.de. Accessed January 29, 2019.
[12]   Digitales Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache; https://www.dwds.de. Accessed January 29, 2019.
[13]   Italics refer to the definitions found in dictionaries.

ist dick und rund; (*umgangssprachlich*) er ist dick und fett) (Duden). Duden online gives many synonyms which refer to obesity (like 'dicklich', 'gallertartig', 'klumpig', 'aufgeschwollen', 'rund', 'rundlich', 'fett', 'fettleibig', 'wohlbeleibt', 'pummelig', 'kugelrund', 'üppig'), but also to other related senses.

dicklich (fattish, chubby; tending to abundance, a bit fat): *zur Fülle neigend, etwas dick* (ein dickliches Kind, Gesicht; er ist in der letzten Zeit etwas dicklich geworden) (Duden)

fett (fatty, adipose; very fat, endowed with fat tissue): *sehr dick, mit viel Fettgewebe ausgestattet* (e.g. ein fetter (*abwertend; sehr beleibter, korpulenter*) Mann, fett sein, werden) (Duden)

massig (massive, bulky; to give the impression of oppressive weight based on size and dimension; slang: plentiful, very much): *aufgrund der Größe, des ausladenden Umfangs den Eindruck von lastendem Gewicht vermittelnd; wuchtig* (eine massige Gestalt) (Duden); *salopp*: *massenhaft, sehr viel* (er trinkt/isst massig) (DWDS)

mollig (plump, chubby; especially for women: a round figure): *(besonders von Frauen) weiche, runde Körperformen aufweisend, rundlich vollschlank* (e.g. ein molliger Typ; sie ist mollig (verhüllend; dick) geworden; ⟨substantiviert:⟩ Kleider für Mollige (mollige Frauen) (Duden); *umgangssprachlich*: *rundlich, vollschlank* (eine mollige Dame, ein molliger Säugling, das Mädchen hat eine mollige Figur, das Baby hat mollige Händchen, bequeme, passende Kleidung für die Molligen) (DWDS)

üppig (ample; rounded forms): *rundliche, volle Formen zeigend* (ein üppiger Busen) (Duden)

Couch-Potato (not sporty but sitting on the couch): *jemand, der sich nicht sportlich betätigt, sondern vorwiegend [fernsehend] auf der Couch sitzt oder liegt* (Duden)

Futter: **gut im Futter sein/stehen** (literally: be/stay good in feed; colloquial: well nurtured) (*umgangssprachlich*: *gut genährt sein*) (Duden)

grobknochig (big-boned; to show strong bone structure): *einen starken, kräftigen Knochenbau aufweisend* (eine grobknochige Gestalt) (Duden)

kugelrund (tubby; well-fed and fat; humorous: very fat): *wohlgenährt und entsprechend dick [als Ausdruck bester Gesundheit]* (*scherzhaft*; ein kugelrundes Baby) (Duden); *scherzhaft, bildlich*: sehr dick (DWDS)

pummelig (lumpy, chubby; colloquial rounded, fatty): *umgangssprachlich, rundlich, dicklich* (ein pummeliges Kind) (Duden)

vollschlank (stout, plump; euphemistic for women: rounded, corpulent): *verhüllend, (besonders von Frauen) füllig, rundlich* (eine vollschlanke Frau, Figur) (Duden); *ein wenig füllig, rundlich, besonders von Frauen* (eine vollschlanke junge Frau, dieses Kleid, Modell eignet sich besonders für Vollschlanke) (DWDS)

esslustig (gluttonous): *Esslust habend* (Duden)

rundlich (rounded; a bit fat, plump): *ein wenig dick, füllig, mollig* (eine rundliche Blondine; rundliche Formen haben; er ist in letzter Zeit etwas rundlich geworden) (Duden)

wohlbeleibt (stout, corpulent): ein untersetzter wohlbeleibter Mann, eine wohlbeleibte ältere Dame, er war wohlbeleibt (DWDS)

wohlgenährt (well-fed): ein wohlgenährtes Baby; jmd. ist wohlgenährt, sieht wohlgenährt aus (DWDS)

der Babyspeck (baby fat; colloquial humorous: rounded forms like in babies or small children): *umgangssprachlich scherzhaft, rundliche Formen, die der Körper eines Säuglings oder Kleinkindes aufweist; Fettpolster als (meist unerwünschte) rundliche Körperformen eines Teenagers* (Duden)

der Schmerbauch (potbelly; colloquial derogatory, also humorous): *umgangssprachlich abwertend, auch scherzhaft; dicker, vorgewölbter Bauch mit starkem Fettansatz* (einen Schmerbauch haben); *jemand, der einen Schmerbauch hat* (wer ist denn der Schmerbauch da drüben?) (Duden)

The presented words are not described as euphemisms or dysphemisms, only the words 'mollig' and 'vollschlank' are marked as verhüllend (euphemistic), and 'kuglerund' as scherzhaft (humoristic). Some others are marked as umgangssprachlich (colloquial): 'pummelig', 'gut im Futter sein', 'Babyspeck', 'Schmerbauch'. 'Fett' is marked as abwertend (derogatory) only in the context *ein fetter Mann* (a fat man). Beside these senses, 'dick' also means thick, dense, close, familiar, very; 'dicklich' means viscous, thick; 'massig' also means plentiful. 'Pummelig' and 'kuglerund' are used for chubby children, 'vollschlank' and 'mollig' for women, 'üppig' for big breasts.

As in the English corpus, metaphor is found in 'Couch-Potato', periphrasis in 'Babyspeck', 'Schmerbauch', and metonymy in 'grobknochig'.

The dictionary "Sag es treffender" (2002: 45) gives synonyms for 'dick' (fat), without giving any other information about the usage and stylistic value of these lexemes. Possible ways of referring to a fat person are simply listed as follows: **1.** stark, korpulent, stattlich, massiv, beleibt, wohlbeleibt, schmerbäuchig, rund, rundlich, dicklich, mollig, pummelig, wohlgerundet, füllig, vollschlank, gut gepolstert, stramm, drall, üppig, fett, feist, gut im Futter, fleischig, bullig, wohlgenährt, fettleibig, dickleibig, kuglerund, gemästet, prall, gewaltig, unförmig, übergewichtig, voll gefressen, **2.** angeschwollen, aufgedunsen, aufgeblasen, aufgetrieben, aufgenäht, schwammig, aufgeschwemmt, **3.** geschwollen, entzündet, wund, verdickt, **4.** schwellend, wulstig, aufgeworfen, gerundet, bauchig, vorgewölbt, gewölbt, herausstehend, vorstehend, überstehend, vorspringend, vorkragend, ausladend, kugelig.

4.3 Native Speakers' Evaluations of Euphemisms Related to Obesity

This part of the paper consists of the presentation and analysis of the results of the second part of the research investigating native speakers' evaluations of English and German euphemisms related to obesity.

4.3.1 Native Speakers' Evaluations of English Euphemisms

For the purpose of investigating native speakers' evaluations of euphemisms related to obesity,[14] a questionnaire in Google Forms was offered to native English speakers from the United States. The research was conducted from December 2018 to March 2019 among nineteen participants. The participants were aged eighteen to fifty-six, and just over half (ten of nineteen) were in their twenties. Seventeen participants were female, and only two were male.

The participants were asked the following question: "How sensitive is American society towards issues related to physical appearance in the sense that attention is paid to what sort of language is used to refer to individuals and situations related to aspects of physical appearance (obesity, cosmetic procedures, etc.)?". Only one participant stated that American society was not sensitive to such issues. Some claimed that it was either moderately/fairly/in part sensitive, and others stated that it was highly/extremely/very sensitive. One stated that it depended on the person, and another participant claimed that it depended on both person and context. Here are some of their responses:

> Americans in my experience are generally politically correct. Meaning they are very careful for the most part of how we address someone's looks or general appearance. People are generally sensitive and do not address how someone looks unless you are telling them something positive. Online however is another matter altogether. People will say anything online. (P3)

> I feel like we are generally pretty sensitive, at least when we are around others who don't fit the stereotypically 'beautiful' categories. However, our media portrayals, comedians, and comments online are not so sensitive. (P5)

> As a whole, usually negative language is used to describe people who deviate from societal norms physically. In my experience, Americans can be quick to jump to character judgement based on physical appearance, (i.e., if you are obese you are lazy, [if you have] cosmetic procedures you're vapid) (P10)

P3's and P5's responses are interesting as they point to the previously mentioned issue that has to do with the increase in interaction via different forms of social media, and the fact that this opens up new possibilities for using different linguistic expressions to humiliate others on the basis of their physical appearance.

In the continuation of the survey the participants were asked to identify expressions they would use to describe a person in order to avoid the use of the following offensive terms: 'fat', 'ugly', 'short', 'old', and 'bold'.[15] The participants provided the following as alternatives to the offensive term 'fat':[16] husky, large-boned; thicc; bigger; obese; very healthy; overweight; big, solid, big-boned, a big girl or boy, hefty; overweight, obese, bigger, larger, solid; heavy-

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[14] The questionnaire also included parts that refer to euphemisms that are in Holder (2002) classified under 'cosmetics'. However, as is the case with the first part of the analysis, we will only analyze the collected data related to obesity because of the length of the paper.

[15] Only the participants' feedback for 'fat' will be presented here, as explained in the previous note.

[16] Participants' answers are separated by semicolons.

set, heavy, large; larger, bigger, fuller; walk as loud as an elephant; larger, not thin; bigger – kind of a bigger guy or larger; she has a particular body shape/body type, sort-of plump, kind-of large, s/he struggles with weight; large, heavy-set; large, overweight, big; thicc; large, heavy; overweight, large, big. Here we can note that there are certain items that appear more frequently in the participants' responses, and these are 'big(ger)', 'large(r)', and 'overweight'. The expression 'thicc' cannot be found in OED. However, an online search revealed that it is indicated in the Urban Dictionary, and defined by 'That0neguy23' in the following way: "when a person has fat in the right places, creating sexy curves"[17].

The following part of the questionnaire consists of the list of euphemisms from Holder's dictionary. The participants were asked to evaluate the extent to which they would use each euphemism to refer to a particular concept. They were asked to do so by using a 5-point Likert scale (1-strongly disagree; 2-disagree; 3-neither agree or disagree; 4-agree; 5-strongly agree). In terms of obesity, this refers to the extent to which they would use each euphemism in order to avoid saying that a person is fat, has a fat shape, has a fat stomach (front part of the body), has (a desire) to slim or lose weight. In the last part of the survey the participants were asked to evaluate whether the items were applicable to males, females, or equally to both genders. The results are presented in Table 1.[18]

TABLE 1. Participants' evaluations of the extent to which they would use the selected items in the English language to euphemise a particular concept and their evaluations regarding whether the items were applicable to males, females, or equally to both genders.

	1	2	3	4	5	M	F	M&F
FAT								
obese	31.6%	21.1%	31.6%	0%	15.8%	5.3%	10.5%	84.2%
ample	26.3%	26.3%	31.6%	10.5%	5.3%	0%	57.9%	42.1%
big-boned	10.5%	36.8%	10.5%	26.3%	15.8%	31.6%	63.2%	5.3%
chubby	31.6%	15.8%	21.1%	15.8%	15.8%	26.3%	5.3%	68.4%
calorie counter	52.6%	15.8%	26.3%	5.3%	0%	0%	73.7%	26.3%
weight watcher	57.9%	15.8%	21.1%	5.3%	0%	0%	73.7%	26.3%
(of) classic proportions	31.6%	26.3%	26.3%	10.5%	5.3%	15.8%	52.6%	31.6%
corn-fed	73.7%	15.8%	5.3%	5.3%	0%	52.6%	0%	47.4%
couch potato	42.1%	15.8%	31.6%	10.5%	0%	57.9%	0%	42.1%
devoted to the table	57.9%	42.1%	0%	0%	0%	42.1%	0%	57.9%
differently weighted	52.6%	26.3%	5.3%	10.5%	5.3%	0%	21.1%	78.9%
dine well	42.1%	26.3%	21.1%	10.5%	0%	10.5%	10.5%	78.9%

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[17] That0neguy23. August 30, 2017. Thicc. Urban Dictionary. https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Thicc. Accessed May 23, 2019.

[18] The percentages presented in the table were computer-generated, and the results were rounded to two decimal places. That is why the total percentage may in some cases vary from 100% by 0.1% (99.9% or 100.1%).

	1	2	3	4	5	M	F	M&F
fond of food	42.1%	26.3%	26.3%	5.3%	0%	10.5%	10.5%	78.9%
have a full(er) figure	0%	10.5%	15.8%	47.4%	26.3%	0%	84.2%	15.8%
go to the fat farm	73.7%	21.1%	0%	5.3%	0%	26.3%	15.8%	57.9%
heavily built	10.5%	10.5%	21.1%	52.6%	5.3%	68.4%	5.3%	26.3%
larger	0%	10.5%	15.8%	52.6%	21.1%	15.8%	10.5%	73.7%
many pounds heavier	42.1%	31.6%	26.3%	0%	0%	5.3%	0%	94.7%
maturer	42.1%	15.8%	15.8%	26.3%	0%	0%	15.8%	84.2%
(be) of size	36.8%	36.8%	5.3%	21.1%	0%	0%	15.8	84.2%
quantitatively challenged	57.9%	36.8%	5.3%	0%	0%	0%	5.3%	94.7%
(have) a weight problem	31.6%	31.6%	21.1%	5.3%	10.5%	0%	5.3%	94.7%
well built	15.8%	5.3%	36.8%	36.8%	5.3%	26.3%	10.5%	63.2%
HAVING A FAT SHAPE								
contour	42.1%	21.1%	21.1%	10.5%	5.3%	0%	57.9%	42.1%
maturer figure	52.6%	10.5%	21.1%	15.8%	0%	5.3%	47.4%	47.4%
middle-aged spread	63.2%	21.1%	10.5%	0%	5.3%	31.6%	0%	68.4%
puppy fat	68.4%	26.3%	5.3%	0%	0%	21.1%	10.5%	68.4%
HAVING A FAT STOMACH								
bay window	78.9%	21.1%	0%	0%	0%	21.1%	5.3%	73.7%
(a) bit of (a) stomach	0%	31.6%	36.8%	21.1%	10.5%	15.8%	15.8%	68.4%
brewer's goitre	78.9%	21.1%	0%	0%	0%	63.2%	0%	36.8%
spare/rubber tyre	47.4%	31.6%	15.8%	0%	5.3%	52.6%	0%	47.4%
HAVING (A DESIRE) TO SLIM OR LOSE WEIGHT								
battle of the bulge	57.9%	31.6%	5.3%	5.3%	0%	31.6%	10.5%	57.9%
shorten the front line	68.4%	15.8%	5.3%	10.5%	0%	15.8%	15.8%	68.4%

What can be observed on the basis of the collected data is that the following are among the expressions that the participants would use most often to replace the offensive term 'fat': 'have a full(er) figure', 'larger', and 'heavily built'. More importantly, many other expressions would not be used by the participants to replace the offensive term, which would suggest that they do not recognize them as euphemisms, but rather as dysphemisms. These include the following: 'quantitatively challenged', 'go to the fat farm', 'devoted to the table', 'fond of

food', 'corn-fed', 'couch potato', 'calorie counter', 'weight watcher', 'differently weighted', and 'many pounds heavier'. The same can be observed for most expressions suggested to replace the offensive 'to have a fat shape', but also for those suggested to replace 'to have a fat stomach', especially 'brewer's goitre' and 'spare/rubber tyre'. Among these, '(a) bit of (a) stomach' was identified as the most acceptable euphemistic replacement for the concept. The two items classified as euphemisms for 'having (a desire) to slim or lose weight' – 'battle of the bulge' and 'shorten the front line' – were also not evaluated by the participants as expressions they would use to replace this concept.

In terms of evaluating the extent to which the participants would apply each item to the two genders, it can be observed that some items were more closely associated with the female gender (such as 'ample', big-boned', 'calorie counter', 'weight watcher', 'of classic proportions', 'have a full(er) figure', 'contour', 'maturer'), while others were more closely associated with the male gender (such as 'corn-fed', 'couch potato', 'devoted to the table', 'heavily built', 'brewer's goitre', spare/rubber tyre', 'amply endowed'). In comparison to Holder's entries for these items, it can be observed that there are both similarities and differences in lexicographic and native speakers' association of expressions with the two genders. For example, 'ample' and 'full(er) figure' are in Holder (2002) associated primarily with the female gender, and none of the participants associated these items with the male gender. Similarly, 'brewer's goitre' and 'spare/rubber tyre' are in Holder (2002) associated with the male gender, and none of the participants associated these items with the female gender. On the other hand, none of the participants associated the expressions 'calorie counter' and 'weight watcher' with the male gender either, but these items are not associated with either gender in Holder (2002). Furthermore, in Holder (2002) 'corn-fed' is associated with the female gender, while none of the participants associated the expression with the female gender.

In their elaboration of dysphemisms, Keith Allan and Kate Burridge (2006) claim that such expressions are frequently used in the political arena and in different situations of cross-gender reference, and state that they "include curses, name-calling, and any sort of derogatory comment directed towards others in order to insult or to wound them" (31). The analysed euphemisms do not belong to the category of curses or name-calling, nor are they characteristically used in the political arena. However, since the analysed items refer to aspects of physical appearance, some of them are more gender-specific in terms of the referent, which is what the results of this part of the analysis point to.

4.3.2 Native Speakers' Evaluations of German Euphemisms

In the group of native speakers of the German language, the participants are divided into 10 from Austria (seven female, three male) and 10 from Germany (five female, five male). The participants described both societies as "very/extremely/highly sensitive, very careful about the way obese people are referred to, especially in their presence". If words are understood as derogatory, that depends on the relationship and stance among the partners in communication.

The German list of euphemisms was compiled from Duden online, DWDS and Textor's (2002) dictionary of synonyms. In the first part of the questionnaire, the participants were

asked to name the words they would use to avoid calling/referring to someone as 'fett'. They stated the following: stärker, korpulent, rundlich; kräftig, gut gebaut, pummelig, rund, kugelig; korpulent, übergewichtig; mollig, rund, untersetzt, dick; barock, füllig, moppelig; mollig, schwere Knochen, breit, pawg, thic, speckig, schwer, optimierungsfähig, voluminös; beleibt, mollig, kräftig; stattlich, korpulent, barock, adipös, übergewichtig; korpulent, adipös; mollig, korpulent, gut genährt; stärker, dicklich; fest, füllig, dick; korpulent, stämmig, mollig; wohlbeleibt, korpulent, gut genährt; korpulent, füllig, rundlich, so breit wie hoch, hat viel Hüftgold, eine Wuchtel; stark/gut gebaut, stämmig, massig, rundlich, übergewichtig, blad, korpulent, starke Knochen; dick, gut gebaut, starke Knochen; korpulent, wohlgenährt, stämmig; beleibt; korpulent, kräftig, vollschlank.

As in the English questionnaire, the participants were asked to evaluate the extent to which they would use each euphemism to refer to a particular concept, and the results are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2. Participants' evaluations of the extent to which they would use the selected items in the German language to euphemise a particular concept and their evaluations regarding whether the items were applicable to males, females, or equally to both genders.

	1	2	3	4	5	M	F	M&F	Not familiar	For children
FAT										
etwas üppig	35%	10%	20%	15%	5%	0	45%	45%		
grobknochig			10%	20%	60%	10%	20%	40%		
pausbackig		5%	15%	30%	40%	10%	20%	50%		
mollig	40%	30%	10%	5%	25%	0	65%	30%		
wohlgenährt	40%	20%	5%	15%	10%	15%	0	70%		
korpulent	55%	20%	5%	5%	5%	10%	5%	75%		
kugelrund	5%	0	10%	30%	45%	5%	0	75%		
Couch Kartoffel	0	5%	0	25%	65%	5%	0	50%	5%	
vollschlank	20%	30%	10%	10%	20%	0	30%	50%	5%	
gut im Futter	0	0	25%	15%	50%	15%	0	50%		
stark gebaut	25%	20%	35%	0	30%	20%	0	55%		
esslustig	0	0	0	10%	85%	0	5%	55%	5%	
pummelig	15%	40%	15%	15%	10%	0	25%	65%		25%
rundlich	25%	35%	20%	10%	0	0	25%	65%		
dicklich	10%	25%	15%	20%	20%	5%	5%	60%		
ausgeleiert	0	0	0	0	85%	0	10%	50%	5%	
gut gepolstert	0	15%	40%	15%	20%	0	5%	80%		
massig	10%	20%	10%	25%	25%	45%	5%	30%	5%	
drall	5%	5%	5%	20%	55%	0	45%	15%	10%	

	1	2	3	4	5	M	F	M&F	Not familiar	For children
HAVING A FAT SHAPE										
ein Gewichtsproblem haben	15%	15%	15%	10%	25%	0	0	85%		
Brocken	15%	5%	15%	0	50%	30%	0	30%		
abgerundete Figur	0	0	5%	5%	85%	0	5%	60%		
HAVING A FAT STOMACH										
Babyspeck	0	25%	15%	10%	40%	0	10%	60%		
Schwimmreifen	15%	10%	15%	25%	25%	25%	5%	50%		
Wohlstandsbauch	10%	20%	20%	5%	35%	55%	0	15%		
Schmerbauch	5%	0	0	5%	75%	15%	0	35%	10%	
HAVING (A DESIRE) TO SLIM OR LOSE WEIGHT										
immer weniger werden	0	20%	15%	10%	40%	5%	0	65%		
vom Fleisch fallen	25%	15%	10%	15%	20%	0	5%	70%		
sich verringern	0	0	10%	0	75%	0	0	45%	5%	

The table shows that over 55% of the participants would not use 'grobknochig', 'Couch Kartoffel', 'esslustig', 'Brocken', 'Schmerbauch', 'ausgeleiert', 'abgerundete Figur' and 'sich verringern' as euphemisms for 'fat'. They would only use 'korpulent' (55%). According to the results, 45% of the participants use 'üppig' and 60% 'mollig' for women. For both men and women, the following expressions can be used, although they are not evaluated as euphemisms: 'pausbackig', 'wohlgenährt', 'korpulent', 'kugelrund', 'vollschlank', 'gut im Futter', 'stark gebaut', 'esslustig', 'pummelig', 'rundlich', 'dicklich' and 'gut gepolstert'.

A few participants gave comments on the following expressions by describing them as derogatory or negative: 'etwas üppig', 'Couch Kartoffel', 'gut im Futter', 'esslustig', 'dicklich', 'ausgeleiert', 'massig', 'drall', 'grobknochig', 'wohlgenährt', 'kugelrund', 'Babyspeck' and 'Schmerbauch'. The following items were identified as friendly: 'pummelig', 'rundlich', 'mollig', 'gut gepolstert'. Most participants do not consider 'vom Fleisch fallen', 'gut gepolstert', 'korpulent' and 'kugelrund' as euphemisms.

What needs to be taken into consideration in the analysis of native speakers' evaluations of English and German euphemisms is the fact that the number of persons who were willing to participate in the research was relatively small. However, as the analysis of the collected data presented above suggests, native speakers' feedback is extremely important in distinguishing between euphemisms and dysphemisms.

5   Conclusion

The existence of partial synonyms allows for different types of analyses whose aim is to account for the ways in which such synonyms differ and the factors that govern such differences. Adequate identification of the illocutionary force of an utterance is necessary in order to fully understand the meaning that is being communicated by the use of a linguistic expression. The importance of the speaker's intention is quite evident in certain instances of choosing one partial synonym over another, and even more so when such partial synonyms might be identified as euphemisms or dysphemisms. The analysis of euphemisms is especially relevant as it provides an insight into a specific sociocultural context at a given time, i.e., into those areas of life that are considered especially sensitive in a given context. Linguistic expressions used to refer to aspects of physical appearance, such as those referring to obesity, are, unlike some other types of euphemisms, especially conducive to the creation of both euphemisms and dysphemisms. This is particularly evident in most Western societies, in which there has been an increasing pressure to adhere to certain beauty standards.

The first part of the research points to differences in the treatment of different linguistic expressions related to obesity. Most items labelled as euphemisms in the specialized dictionary of English euphemisms are not identified as such in the general dictionary, and, if there is any special indication, such expressions are marked as informal. What has also been noted is that some euphemisms are explained by further euphemisms. In the case of linguistic expressions that resemble dysphemisms more than euphemisms, the general dictionary does not indicate them as derogatory. What has also been identified are the typical semantic phenomena that might be identified within such expressions.

The investigated German dictionaries do not mark the words as euphemisms, except for the words 'vollschlank' and 'mollig'. Most of the investigated words are marked as colloquial. Dictionaries list synonyms which also appear in some definitions.

In the second part of the research the participants were asked about the extent to which American society was sensitive to issues related to physical appearance. Most of the participants responded affirmatively, but they put forward different evaluations of the degree to which this was so. Their feedback on linguistic expressions that they would use instead of the offensive term 'fat' shows significant similarities. In the part of the questionnaire where the participants were asked to do the same for the linguistic expressions entered as euphemisms under 'obesity' in Holder (2002), it was observed that many expressions would not be used by the participants, which suggests that they might be regarded as dysphemisms. Furthermore, it has also been observed that some expressions were more closely associated with the female or male gender. In some cases such associations overlap with Holder's (2002) comments regarding the application of certain expressions to a specific gender, and in some cases this was not so.

The answers of the German participants show that the speakers themselves are unclear regarding the words that can be used as euphemisms, although they stated that the German and Austrian societies were highly sensitive about the ways in which obese people are referred to. The online dictionaries investigated in this work mostly do not provide information

regarding the stylistic usage of these words. They merely list synonyms which contain both euphemisms and dysphemisms.

In some cases it might be rather difficult to draw a line between euphemisms and dysphemisms, and that is why we have to resort not only to lexicographers' treatment of different linguistic expressions, but also to native speakers' intuition and evaluations. This is especially relevant in the contemporary context, where an increase in various forms of social media offers new virtual spaces where one has the opportunity to remain anonymous and refer to other individuals by using different expressions. Hopefully, the research conducted for the purpose of this paper has shed some further light on how both of these approaches might be used to distinguish between the euphemisms and dysphemisms that are used to refer to a particular aspect of physical appearance. Further research on the topic might include a greater number of participants, whose evaluations of linguistic items as euphemisms or dysphemisms would be taken into consideration. On the other hand, future research might also include different types of spoken and written texts, in which case the context of use might be taken into consideration in the evaluation of linguistic items as euphemisms or dysphemisms.

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Part IV

Literature

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The Image of a Woman of Colour and Native American Woman in Two Kerouac Novels: A Double Otherness

ABSTRACT

The article examines the portrayal of a woman of colour in the novel *The Subterraneans* (1958), and the portrayal of a Native American woman in the novel *Tristessa* (1960). The two works are representative examples within the opus of the American writer Jack Kerouac (1922–1969), and offer suitable starting points for the reinterpretation of his attitude towards women and non-white ethnicities. The novels reveal the ethnocentric, even colonizing attitude of the dominating male narrator in relation to the dominated and subjugated social groups. Although the treated works are considered Kerouac's "female-centred novels" (Phelan Lyke 1991, v), this syntagm is problematized here by showing that the male narrator remains the true protagonist, focused essentially on his own perceptions of the non-white romantic subject, whereas the two female characters are (mere) objects for the protagonists' self-discovery, life experience and psychological projection. In this sense, Kerouac's consistent presentation of women as representatives of an identity of the exotic/Other reveals his nested gender and racial prejudice.

Keywords: Jack Kerouac; *The Subterraneans*; *Tristessa*; female characters; Otherness; colonialist discourse; racial prejudice; gender prejudice

Podoba temnopolte in indijanske ženske v dveh romanih Jacka Kerouaca: Dvojna drugost

POVZETEK

Članek obravnava prikaz temnopolte ženske v romanu The Subterraneans (1958) in indijanske ženske v romanu Tristessa (1960). Omenjeni deli v opusu ameriškega pisatelja Jacka Kerouaca (1922–1969) predstavljata reprezentativna primera z nadvse prikladnimi iztočnicami za reinterpretacijo njegovega odnosa do žensk in pripadnikov drugih ras. V njiju se razkriva etnocentristični in celo kolonizatorski pogled dominirajočega moškega avtorskega pripovednega lika na dominirane in kolonizirane družbene skupine. Obravnavani deli veljata za Kerouacova »žensko orientirana romana« (Phelan Lyke 1991, v), vendar pa to sintagmo problematiziram, saj pravi protagonist romanov ostaja moški pripovedni lik, ki se v resnici osredotoča na lastno doživljanje nebelskih žensk, onidve pa sta (zgolj) objekta za protagonistovo samoodkrivanje in projekcijo njegovih lastnih idej nanju. Kerouacova prezentacija žensk kot predstavnic identitete drugega tako razkriva njegov spolni in rasni predsodek.

Ključne besede: Jack Kerouac; *The Subterraneans*; *Tristessa*; ženski liki; drugost; kolonialistični diskurz; rasni predsodek; spolni predsodek

1   Introduction

In this article I employ the practice of the New Historicist Reading to analyse Kerouac's novels *The Subterraneans* and *Tristessa*, keeping in mind the methodological pluralism of new-historical interpretative praxis which draws from post-structuralist epistemology or the deconstructive reading of texts in superposition with their historical context. My academic contribution is an attempt to apply to Kerouac the new-historical praxis of Stephen Greenblatt and Catherine Gallager (2000), who in their treatment of literary texts and their contexts examine whether the discourse of a particular work of literature is concordant with its contextual discourses or not, or whether the text's discourse is monologic or dialogic in nature. The scholars posit that monologic texts are characterized by the exclusive expression of colonizing discourse, while dialogic texts engage in true differentiation or open heterogeneity of discourses. Greenblatt (1978) understands the monologic or dialogic state of discourse within the binary framing in the Foucauldian interpretation of power dynamics and attitudes to the Other.[1] Greenblatt (1990, 23) transfers the Lacanian expression "discourse of the Other" to the field of colonial relations, using the term "linguistic colonialism".[2] In his treatise *Improvisation of Power* (1978) he points out that hegemonic societal structures perpetuate the monologic totality, even in ways so deceptive as to absorb subversion itself, appropriating it to further strengthen the dominant ideology (cf. Matajc 2005, 100, and Kernev Štrajn 2001, 91).

New-historical readings are "sceptical, wary, demystifying, critical, and even adversarial" (Gallagher and Greenblatt 2000, 9), and I likewise maintain a critical and sceptical position in my reading of Kerouac's works, which are in literary history all too often unjustly lauded as revolutionary and counter-cultural (cf. McDowell 1966, 413; Gair 2007, 41; Charters 1986, 16; Škerl 42, 53) on account of their purported interest in, and engagement with, the struggles of marginalized social groups, and with resistance to the hegemonic ideology of the Western mainstream (Martinez 2003, 23–24). With a comparative analysis of the texts of Kerouac's novels alongside the author's biographical and socio-historical context, I thus establish that Kerouac's discourse is in fact colonialist, and even racist in its expression. I incorporate the ideas of Post-Colonial Theory, which likewise observe the differentiation or heterogeneity of discourses in relation to the Other. Elements of Feminist Criticism are employed to disclose Kerouac's evident androcentrism and machismo, his possessive and stereotypical depiction of women, their instrumentalization, and his consequent participation in the patriarchal ideology of the Western society of the United States of America in the 1950s and 1960s.

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[1]   In Foucault (2001, 80), the notion of discourse is closely connected to that of power relations or ideology, while its fundamental unit is the enunciation (*l'énoncé*), which to him carries the significance of an event, since it unites language and authority in the sense that mechanisms of power regulate discursive production with their systems of exclusion (legal limitations, censorship, tabooization, stigmatization).

[2]   Jelka Kernev Štrajn (2001, 84) argues that Greenblatt later "likely unconsciously turned away from a [newhistorical] postcolonial orientation [...] and unwittingly assumed a position that allows colonial interpretation". I use the term colonialist discourse and refer to discourse in the "Foucauldian" sense as "systems of thoughts composed of ideas, attitudes, courses of action, beliefs and practices that systematically construct the subjects and the worlds of which they speak" (Lessa 2006, 283), though Keith Sawyer (2002, 435) claims that "Foucault's technical definition of the term 'discourse' does not include any of these senses".

In those decades Kerouac's novels enchanted America with their openness, daring style, genuine language and the thematization of contemporary issues hitherto unexplored by the preceding generations of authors. Nevertheless, in the following decades scholarly readers were disappointed with the conclusions of their close treatment of Kerouac, finding themselves mired in his world of prejudice against women, homosexuals, ethnic minorities and, in general, Otherness as such. Mariana Des Forges (2015), for instance, posits that the novel *On the Road* represents a typical case of cultural imperialism. According to Des Forges, Kerouac's own apparent enthusiasm towards blacks and other minority cultures originated in his belief that the mainstream (dominant) culture was likewise oppressing him, finding faux-identification with – rather than a genuine interest in – their Otherness. She further points out that Kerouac essentially appropriated his entire Beat slang from black subcultures, and has been falsely credited with its origination, whereas his portrayal of people of colour is at best reductionist and filled with stereotypes and at worst even racist. In this article I will provide further support with a string of examples of colonialist discourse pervading the novels *The Subterraneans* (1958) and *Tristessa* (1960).

Similar disappointment over her re-reading of Kerouac was expressed by Linda McDowell (1996, 418), who writes: "what I once saw as a doomed resistance on the part of the Beats, I now tend to see as masculine selfishness". Indeed, we cannot overlook the markedly problematic treatment of female characters in Kerouac's works. Charters (1986, 74) posits most Beat Generation writers maintained similar attitudes towards women, as did the general male population of the 1950s and 1960s: they expected women to quietly listen while in male company, laugh and be pleasant, empathize, prepare food, wash the dishes and then excuse themselves to bed. Male authors were not particularly interested in the intellectual and artistic talents of their female companions. Kerouac himself, as a relatively conservative Catholic of French-Canadian heritage, was unable to radically distance himself from the conventions of the middle class and its patriarchal constitution. He chose women from underprivileged social environments, since he liked viewing himself as a saviour, a white knight of sorts, whereas his intentions were not the true emancipation of the "saved" female but rather an indulgent self-satisfaction over his own (quasi-)noble-mindedness. Kerouac's principles in the portrayal of female characters are analysed in detail by Phelan Lyke (1991, 4–5):

> When Kerouac does write about his own relationship with a woman, he devotes an entire novel to it. The relationship exists in isolation, not as an integral part of his other adventures. […] The autobiographical protagonist in each novel becomes obsessed with a woman; she consumes him, and he becomes very unhappy with his inability to control himself and the situation.

Kerouac does not consider women true intellectual equals to himself and his male colleagues. Though in *The Subterraneans* Mardou Fox is purported to be, to the first-person narrator Leo Percepied, the ideal of the genuine Beat or subterranean spirit, a companion in reading literature and conversing on the arts, her literary output and the work she does to survive do not interest him much at all – he remains focused squarely on his own creative activities, repeatedly returning to the house of his mother ("Mamère"), in the process of which Mardou is considered more or less a hindrance. Even worse: Leo gaslights her mental distress and

anxiety, constantly framing it as minor compared to the experiences of her Native American father. In *Tristessa*, the female protagonist who gives the work its title is similarly an object for the projection of the narrator Jack Duluoz's ideas regarding her perceived sainthood, even her supposedly genuine Buddhism, while Jack shows more interest in his own hedonistic, escapist and colonialist (self)discovery in Mexico City – as an exotic space of Otherness – than in Tristessa's severe existential struggles.

2 Kerouac's Colonialist Discourse

It is evident that Kerouac, on account of his whiteness, is not aware of his own inherent privileges within the mainstream (dominant, colonizing) culture and the deprivileged position of marginalized (dominated, colonized) cultures, since he tends to glorify the supposed authenticity of their outsider status with wilful ignorance as to the systemic structures of white oppression, operating especially against racial minorities. Kerouac actually laments how *unfair* it is he is unable to reach this coveted outsider status, since he is unwittingly granted the privileges of the social hierarchy in which he, as a heterosexual white middle-class male, occupies the top position (Des Forges 2015). It is abundantly clear Kerouac's interactions with minority underprivileged cultures are naive experiments in escapism from his mundane daily life of a middle-class American male. As a member of the dominant white culture, he receives a bastardized "authentic" counter-culture experience with the marginalized, with which he engages in a superficial way, instrumentalizing them for his own artistic production. Mariana Des Forges' critique (2015) is aimed against aggrandizing Kerouac as a celebrator of non-white cultures, as his work arguably showcases a complete ignorance of the position, significance and social history of marginalized communities. She claims Kerouac even stole the term "Beat" from the black culture of America – where it had signified dejection over social issues and existential struggles – and reinterpreted it for his own purposes, appropriating it from an expressive black cultural signifier into a fashionable counter-cultural trend of the white man; a further example of his deprecating attitude of "dominator over dominated" – even withholding from the latter the rights to their own signifiers on a wide platform, a typical characteristic of colonialist discourse.

Margaret Collopy (2016) similarly posits that while Kerouac, as a prominent figure of the counter-culture Beat Generation, does thematize marginalized life in America from proximity, his leaning on the movements of non-whites within the broader counter-culture movement is naive in the sense that it presents a romanticized view of the oppressed racial minorities suiting a particular hierarchical prism. To Kerouac, the marginalized American life is noble, captivating and pristine precisely on account of its constant daily struggle: he actually feels part of this struggle, which is a contrived voyeuristic notion.

Kerouac's romanticizing of Otherness is therefore reckless, narcissistic and filled with an undercurrent of racial prejudice. His discourse in relation to the marginalized minority culture is the discriminatory voice of the dominant colonizer (Panish 1994, 107). The reduction and instrumentalization of the personalities of racial and ethnic minorities in the United States for the purposes of his own fascination with Otherness as such and its artistic manifestations, reflect his ignorance of the Other as a fellow man of equivalent and equal

value. He perceives Mexican Native Americans and people of colour as objects for his own escapist "experimentation", without a genuine ear for their social predicaments, culture or identity. Trudeau (2011, 294) points out that Kerouac entertains a notion of the "black spirit", that to him non-whites are as if unfamiliar entities from another world, to whom he attributes "mystical wisdom". Collopy (2016) on the other hand stresses Kerouac's simplistic conviction that marginalized social groups represent "the genuine essence of Beat". Kerouac's treatment of the marginalized is thus perversely (and blindly) colonizing: he celebrates them for their experience of oppression perpetuated precisely by the dominant, colonizing majority society (of which he is himself part), while displaying no insight into the underlying mechanisms of colonization.

Along this axis, Kerouac moves even further. As an admirer of jazz he takes for himself the right to the culture of the black musicians he associates with, extracting from this process a sense of superiority over the other whites who, as privileged conformists, cannot identify with his own "subterranean" sensibility: the capacity of appreciating and truly understanding black azz. He is even convinced that suffering somehow fosters a worthy artistic spirit, whereas the comfortable and privileged life cannot produce anything but a simulacrum of art (Collopy 2016). Collopy argues that the central problem of his myopic perspective is that it fails to recognize the fundamental divisions between his own personal experience and the cultures he delights in interacting with. His white privilege provides the luxury of choosing any particular lifestyle (he is able to return to his mother's home at will), whereas the marginalized non-whites are forced inexorably into their roles, or positions, by the social history of their people and the entrenched imbalances of power and class. In short, Kerouac is thoroughly ignorant of the unfairness of his status as a member of the dominant culture with regard to the truly underprivileged: with his attribution of the talent of black jazz musicians to some mystical consequence of their grave existential despair, and his unfair identification with these hardships, he robs them of their genuine experience, appropriating it for his own means.

Collopy (2016) concludes by stating that Kerouac's attitude towards marginalized social groups in the USA is concordant with the conventional attitudes of white men in the 1950s. It is reflected in his sense of racial and socio-economic superiority in relation to the oppressed, and his lack of empathy in building his career and identity from the appropriation and instrumentalization of other cultures – without being genuinely affected by the conditions of the oppressed in the midst of whom he seeks artistic refuge from the privileged status of the white American. He glorifies his own position and the position of the Beats by comparing it to the culture of the underprivileged groups, without awareness of the consequences of his disassociated cultural appropriation. His literary works fail to do justice to the lives of the minority groups, as they recurrently romanticize their suffering and lack of prospects as if there were something pristine and sacred about it, while appearing entirely oblivious to the socio-economic mechanisms underpinning and reproducing the social order. Kerouac is frivolous in his identification with the outcasts of America and his search for genuineness in the indigenous populations as his French-Canadian ("Canuck") descent lies radically removed and disengaged from the social margins proper, regardless of his own claims to the contrary.

Jon Panish (1994, 107) establishes that Kerouac's representations of American racial minorities (Afro-Americans, Native Americans) are pervasively romanticized and reflect his fundamental lack of understanding of the Afro-American culture and social experience, drawing parallels with the viewpoints of the "romantic racists" from the 1840s and 1850s who perceived social minorities as "jovial, folk-wise and noble", a purported consequence of their victimhood or distress. Panish considers Kerouac among the many white authors who intentionally placed themselves outside the American social and literary mainstream, but states Kerouac was in fact no closer to the minority cultures than the previous generations of authors since his unwillingness to admit to the complexities of oppressed minority experience merely served to perpetuate racist ideologies.

I posit that Kerouac's colonialist discourse is also reflected in the novels I am addressing here. In the work *Tristessa* (1960), the first person narrator Jack Duluoz observes the destitute Mexican reality from the haughty perspective of a white Westerner, imagining himself to possess a clear insight (as opposed to his contemporaries) into the Otherness of the cultures he is immersing himself in, on account of some self-attributed outsiderhood:

> I wish my relatives from Lowell were here to see how people and animals live in Mexico – […] Everything is poor in Mexico, people are poor, and yet everything they do is happy and carefree, no matter what is – Tristessa is a junkey and she goes about it skinny and carefree, where an American would be gloomy – (Kerouac 1992, 29)

Similarly, he describes the slum of Mexico City: "incredibly dirty, staring streets full of dead dogs, past gawking children and old women in dirty rags, out of a field of rocks" (Kerouac 1992, 82). He sees Otherness as something exotic, without a realistic appraisal of the actual conditions and problems of the "exoticism" he is consuming: "I buy stinking livers" (Kerouac 1992, 39), "the whole of Mexico is a Bohemian Adventure" (Kerouac 1992, 40), "I fly by with one quick Walt Whitman look" (Kerouac 1992, 41). He enters the Mexican slum exhilarated, as if it were a safari:

> […] big Mamacita sits near the cocina pig pottery […]. the whores are nooking the night with their crooking fingers of Come On, young men pass and give'em the once over, […] long-legged brunettes in tight yellow dresses grab them and sock their pelvics in […] – One look through the bar where the children gape and one through the whoreboy bar of queers where spidery heroes perform whore dances. (Kerouac 1992, 38–39)

During his cavorting across Mexico City, the narrator is intoxicated with copious amounts of morphine and whisky, or wine, or tequila, or pulque. He sketches Mexican children into his notebook, exchanging the drawing of portraits with a Mexican painter who notices "how young and beautiful and American I am" (Kerouac 1992, 70). He comments on the exoticism of the members of a choir led by "an old singer with his young disciple boy with thick sensitive lips and a big fat hostess woman as if out of Rabelais and Rembrandt Middle Ages" (Kerouac 1992, 71); the group's leader has a "red clay face, perfectly round and jocund, but Mexican owlish, with crazy eyes […] and like always ecstatically happy" (Kerouac 1992, 71–72). In his accounts and interactions, the narrator maintains a self-important attitude,

the conceit of a colonizer over a colonized people: he makes a toast to the police lieutenants, roguishly prodding "'Que es la vida?' […]", admitting, even, that he has done this "to prove I'm philosophical and smart" (Kerouac 1992, 71). In his drunkenness he behaves arrogantly, distancing himself behind sunglasses, patronizing even the Mexican criminals: he tosses some cash "to a big fat guy and tell[s] him to go out and get some marijuana for the whole group" (Kerouac 1992, 71). Later he even throws money on the ground "to prove something" (Kerouac 1992, 72). The protagonist's haughty and disdainful attitude towards the Mexicans is implicitly expressed: "I don't care about money, I am the King of the World, I will lead your little revolutions myself" (Kerouac 1992, 72). He gloats at the thought the Mexican musicians hold him in high regard: "I take great pride meanwhile in showing how I appreciate the music, I even drum on the table" (Kerouac 1992, 72). Later, having realized he is completely broke, he calls the Mexicans "the gay gang of thieves" (Kerouac 1992, 73). His shocking ignorance of the real conditions of the Mexican underclasses shines through in his statements that continue to describe them as joyous, carefree, even ecstatic.

The situation is very similar in the novel *The Subterraneans*, too. Leo calls people of colour "the dark men of the dark coloured district" (Kerouac 2018, 71), attributing vitality and zest to the othered races without any awareness of their true social predicaments: "as I pass Mexicans I feel that great hepness I'd been having all summer on the street with Mardou my old dream of wanting to be vital, alive like a Negro or an Indian or a Denver Jap or a New York Puerto Rican came true" (Kerouac 2018, 82).

More than to blacks, he is drawn to Mardou's Native American father,

> […] the founder of her flesh and predecessor terror-ee of her terrors and knower of much greater flips and madness she in psychoanalytic-induced anxieties could ever even summon up to just imagine), formed just the background for thought about the Negroes and Indians and America in general but with all the overtones of 'new generation' and other historical concerns in which she was now swirled just like all of us in the Wig and Europe Sadness of us all, the innocent seriousness with which she told her story and I listened to so often and myself told – wide eyed hugging in heaven together – hipsters of America in the 1950s sitting in a dim room. (Kerouac 2018, 37–38)

The exoticizing and self-aggrandizing of his own quasi-understanding of the "Other" emerges as pretentious and entirely unjustified:

> Concern for her father, because I'd been out there and sat down on the ground and seen the rail and steel of America covering the ground filled with the bones of old Indians and Original Americans. – In the cold grey fall in Colorado and Wyoming I'd worked on the land and watched Indian hoboes come suddenly out of brush […] talking quietly to one another and so distant from the absorptions of the field hands, even the Negroes of Chayenne and Denver streets, the Japs, the general minority Armenians and Mexicans of the whole West that to look at a three-or-foursome of Indians crossing a filed and a railroad track is to the senses like something unbelievable as a dream – you think, 'They must be Indians'. (Kerouac 2018, 38)

3   Kerouac's Attitude Towards Women

Kerouac's attitude towards women is in line with the typically macho and patriarchal societal relations of the 1950s America. Phelan Lyke (1991, 71–72) writes that the Beats habitually gathered in bars in male company, whereas women were allowed to join providing they were attractive enough and caused no disturbance. The Beats expected women to be fully employed so they could support their partners and children, yet admitted them no true intellectual or financial equality. The novel *The Subterraneans* depicts precisely this: Leo Percepied wishes to have fun with his friends, and his relationship with Mardou Fox is merely a hindrance. When they are in company together she appears redundant, apart from her role of exotic embellishment or symbol of personal prestige. The protagonist approves of her presence as long as she is modest and unassuming – when his friends grow interested in what she has to say, diverting their attention from Leo, he becomes resentful and petty, even slamming the door and walking away (Kerouac 2018, 85).

Joyce Johnson (1983, 79) claims that to the Beats, the woman was "a type rather than an individual" and that they therefore shaped female characters as "amalgams of several people". Overwhelmingly, the men considered their literary efforts more important than any female writing, as maintained the view women essentially did not possess comparable literary talent. Leo Percepied, Kerouac's alter ego in *The Subterraneans* (1958), might profess to idealize the "genuine Beat Generation essence" of Mardou Fox (Alene Lee), but in practice he is not particularly interested in her artistic endeavours. Leo mentions that Mardou reads Proust, Faulkner, Shakespeare and Cervantes, or that they discuss literature, yet he never thematizes her own writing. Front and centre is the protagonist's own artistic mission, he imagines himself a William Blake type, he and his wife in central London: "a bigtime 19th-century boss type dominant with women" (Kerouac 2018, 74). Naturally, Leo's relationship plans are traditionalist and egocentric: "'In fact baby, I'll be a famous man and you'll be the dignified wife of a famous man so don't worry'" (Kerouac 2018, 80).

Mardou's Beat spirit or "subterranean" nature[3] enchants the narrator Leo Percepied, especially when he realizes he can love her "as a man", i.e. according to male standards. He yet appears drawn to the masculine traits in her, such as her walking at a manly pace, her penchant for rough-and-tumble play, her ability to bravely and defiantly describe her miserable childhood, her way of being at the same time "buddy-like" and "humble and meek, too, and a real woman" (Kerouac 2018, 78). He appreciates her intelligence, admiring her Bop sensitivity and her singing. And yet Leo perpetually stresses his own masculinity, even manliness, offering coquettish identification with his male readership: "I am crudely malely sexual and cannot help myself and have lecherous and so on propensities as almost all my male readers no doubt are the same" (Kerouac 2018, 23), in which his machismo is apparent. He is proud to possess Mardou, elated when Mac Jones (John Clellon Holmes) calls her "the child of Bop" (Kerouac 2018, 108) – it is then he realizes that Mardou elevates his prestige in male

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[3]   The "subterranean" nature is to Kerouac an amalgamation of modernity, style, intellect, artistic talent and at the same time marginality, subculture: "They [the subterraneans] are hip without being slick, they are intelligent without being corny, they are intellectual as hell and know all about Pound without being pretentious or talking too much about it, they are very quiet, they are very Christlike." (Kerouac 2008, 21)

company. Lipton (1959, 20) claims the only possibility for a woman to join the male Beats was through sharing their enthusiasm over music. It is precisely her interest in jazz that makes Leo appreciate Mardou: "she is the only girl I've ever known who could really understand bop and sing it" (Kerouac 2018, 79).

As soon as Mardou does not behave according to Leo's expectations, his machismo and misogyny are readily on display. Leo describes her as uncouth, rugged and lacking good manners: "she eats an orange, she makes a lot of noise sucking it" (Kerouac 2018, 65). When a party host accuses Mardou of stealing a pornographic photograph, Leo does not defend her before his raucous friends, contemplating instead her indecency, something he later characterizes as "my first foolish mistake in my life and love with Mardou" (Kerouac 2018, 54). It is then he also notices "the first of so many indignities piled on her, not on her capacity for suffering but gratuitously on her little female dignities" (Kerouac 2018, 54). He admits "I had my 'doubts' my male self-contained doubts about her, so reasoned" (Kerouac 2018, 58). He considers breaking up with her and finding "another girl, white, white things, etc." (Kerouac 2018, 58), but he does not wish to hurt her so as not to spoil her admiration of him (Kerouac 2018, 59). His attitude is more a wish for the discovery of the Beat/subterranean world through Mardou, and less an earnest interest in her as a person (Phelan Lyke 1991, 52), meaning he instrumentalizes her as an object or means to an end.

Leo's machismo is especially evident at the novel's ending, when he decides to renew his relationship with Mardou, understanding this won't be easy, but – being a proponent of machismo – nevertheless convinced that "always the man can make the little woman bend, she was made to bend" (Kerouac 2018, 114–15). When Mardou reveals her sexual affair with Yuri (Gregory Corso) to Leo he is incensed, saying he has "a big male right to leave her" (Kerouac 2018, 116). Retreat after an experience of escapism with a woman is a typical strategy of Kerouac; in modern terms he "ghosts"[4] his love subjects, fashioning them afterwards into artistic representations through the male gaze: as if social conventions always succeed in overpowering his wish for true subversive action.

Ann Charters (1973, 195) claims that the artistic process of *The Subterraneans* was to Kerouac far more emotionally gratifying than his romantic adventure with Alene Lee, and that he was in general more concerned about his writer's reputation among colleagues and readers than the collapse of his relationship. We might state in this regard that his writing was therapeutic: the misery of getting over Alene, provided he felt any in the first place, was resolved and channelled through the process of writing, which allowed him to set closure to a life episode and move on, on his own terms, a process of personal alchemy without any particular consequences to his wellbeing (Phelan Lyke 1991, 53).

In the novel, Mardou herself is aware that to the men a woman represents a trophy in the context of prestige and *masculine* competition. She tells Leo guys jostle and posture among themselves, and that the female is for them a "prize" in this contest (Kerouac 2018, 35). After she sleeps with Yuri, her value as a "prize" is in Leo's eyes dramatically diminished (Kerouac 2018, 117). The novel ends with Leo's telling words: that he had lost Mardou's love as a "prize",

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[4]   Intimately engages with, then suddenly abandons the subject, cutting off all contact.

and hence returned home (defeated) to write his "subterranean" novel (Kerouac 2018, 118). Consequently we may establish that Leo's love story with an unhappy ending is harnessed for the purposes of his writing, where Mardou becomes twice exploited and instrumentalized: first for the purpose of experimental experience, and then for the purpose of creative inspiration – the artistic process of writing about the former. Leo considers himself a great and prolific genius deserving of "world-wide love" (Kerouac 2018, 28), for which it is essential to experience pain; or as he admits: "I wanted to both hurt and 'lacerate' myself" (Kerouac 2018, 29).

The real-life Mardou Fox (Alene Lee) recounted (Gifford and Lee 1978, 51) that she perceived those same events and people in a different light altogether compared to Kerouac's account. She states (Gifford and Lee 1978, 182) that women were attracted to Kerouac, and he was fond of them in turn, but that he was unable to support a dependent wife since it was he, in fact, who needed someone constantly looking after him. Nonetheless, Kerouac was in truth "conventional and stereotypical in his thinking" (Phelan Lyke 1991, 81). Carolyn Cassady (1987, 42) further comments that his alter ego in *The Subterraneans* is not strictly representative of the author's true character, since he was supposedly far less interested in sex than his autobiographical protagonist.

In *Tristessa*, we may observe Kerouac's portrayal of the non-sexual relationship of the narrator Jack Duluoz with the Mexican morphine addict Tristessa (a fictionalized Esperanza Villanueva), who is to him similarly exotic as Mardou Fox is to Leo Percepied in *The Subterraneans* (1958). Jack is attracted to Tristessa's provocative behaviour and unconventional aesthetics. He feels the need to court her, though she is more sexually experienced than him. He plainly describes Tristessa, who is of native Aztec heritage, as exotic (Kerouac 1992, 8). As a heavy addict, Tristessa is constantly under the influence of substances or ill (Kerouac 1992, 10). In her, Jack Duluoz seeks unconditional faith and love for others (Stephenson 1990, 33). While pursuing the relationship with Esperanza (in the summer of 1955), Kerouac lived in celibacy, committed temporarily to a Buddhist lifestyle. He projects his ideas on Tristessa, speculating she unconsciously already lives by the core Buddhist principles, something he infers from the perceived enlightened nature of her actions. Jack believes Tristessa truly understands the law of Karma (Kerouac 1992, 23), and that to the Buddhist life is fundamentally conceptualized as suffering (Charters 1986, 225). He describes her "long sad eyelids, and Virgin Mary resignation, and peachy coffee complexion and eyes of astonishing mystery with nothing-but-earth-depth expressionless half disdain and half mournful lamentation of pain" (Kerouac 1992, 8). Furthermore, he states "her face is so expressive of the pain and loveliness that went no doubt into the making of this fatal world" (Kerouac 1992, 52). Jack constantly idealizes Tristessa, transferring onto her a preponderance of religious metaphors. In several places he calls her "the Virgin Mary of Mexico" (Kerouac 1992, 11), "the majestic mother of lovers" (Kerouac 1992, 12), "a Madonna" (Kerouac 1992, 22), as well as "holy" (Kerouac 1992, 22) and "an angel" (Kerouac 1992, 57). He says she will depart as a saint, "cause of her further rebirth […] straight to her God" (Kerouac 1992, 22–23).

On the other hand, Tristessa represents to Jack a certain measure of prestige. He wishes to possess her and parade her before his friends: "She is such a beautiful girl, I wonder what all my friends would say back in New York and up in San Francisco" (Kerouac 1992, 10). He

imagines her wearing fancy clothing from New York department stores, while in Mexico she is "reduced to impoverished Indian Lady gloomclothes" (Kerouac 1992, 11). Initially, he fears her in fact; in his dreams she appears as a thief and makes him wonder: "Do you know women as well as you think you do?" (Kerouac 1992, 16). It seems to him she is the "evil Indian Joe of Huckleberry Finn, plotting my demise" (Kerouac 1992, 18), but realizes after all that she is "Sympaticus Tristessa with her heart a gold gate, I'd first dug to be an evil enchantress" (Kerouac 1992, 58). Kerouac writes: "I can picture myself and Tristessa waking up in our nuptial madbed of blankets and dogs and cats and canaries […] she shoots me in or I shoot myself in a big bang of waterycolored poison straight into the flesh of your arm" (Kerouac 1992, 49).

Ultimately, the protagonist admits he is in love with her, but not in a sexual way as he happens to be experimenting with celibacy. Kerouac a year later described this phase as "some silly ascetic or celibacious notion that I must not touch a woman" (Kerouac 1992, 65).[5] He appreciates her letting him live life in peace and demanding nothing of him, which is a consequence of the fact she is struggling with heavy addiction, and thus in no position to develop possessive feelings towards him being herself possessed by substance abuse. Although he loves her ("I love her, I fall in love with her" (Kerouac 1992, 22)), he at the same time wishes to abandon her: "I love her but I want to leave" (Kerouac 1992, 22), a highly typical internal tension of Kerouac's autobiographical literary characters.

Jack Duluoz is at that time undergoing his spiritual phase, stating: "I have sworn off lust with women […] – I want to enter the Holy Stream" (Kerouac 1992, 22). He says he loves her "with all my heart", and yet: "I'm holding myself back" (Kerouac 1992, 22). In his spirituality he states men and women forgive one another's blunders and mistakes "and go their own holy ways to death" (Kerouac 1992, 23). Further, he claims: "I can feel the spirit enter the room as she stands, waiting with her finger pointed up, on her spread legs, confidently, for her Lord to pay her back –" (Kerouac 1992, 56–57). He admires her insight into the essence of life: "Her Enlightenment is perfect" (Kerouac 1992, 57). Ultimately, Jack realizes he cannot marry Tristessa because he is too impoverished himself, because she is marrying Bull, and since "I'd have to be a junkey to live with Tristessa, and I can't be a junkey" (Kerouac 1992, 93). In the final analysis, an addicted Mexican of native heritage is not suitable for marriage because "Jack is again straying too far away from his middle-class convictions" (Phelan Lyke 1991, 67).

When Jack realizes his relationship with Tristessa is disintegrating, he attributes the blame to his pathological attachment to his mother, stating "I've screwed everything up with the mama again, Oedipus Rex, I'll tear out my eyes in the morning […], I'm always the King sucker who was made out to be the positional son in woman and man relationships […], I'm always in the way for momma and poppa – when am I gonna be poppa?" (Kerouac 1992, 93)

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5   Kerouac's relationship with Esperanza Villanueva was supposedly mostly non-sexual due to his then-commitment to celibacy as part of Buddhist doctrine, his morphine consumption, and chronic pain due to inflamed veins (Gifford and Lee 1978, 191). In the novel the narrator mentions only kissing: "Tristessa kisses me gently on the lips, the softest, just-touchingest kiss in the world" (Kerouac 1992, 75). He admits he wishes to sleep "next to Tristessa" (Kerouac 1992, 77), but the sexual act never occurs as he elevates her to the level of a saint, spiritually invaluable and physically untouchable. In reality, it appears Kerouac did get physical with Esperanza Villanueva but ultimately crossed this part out of the manuscript on the advice of Lucien Carr's wife, who told him it would have ruined the novel (Clark 1984, 150).

4 The Racial Otherness of Female Characters in Kerouac's Novels

Des Forges (2015) and Collopy (2016) critically analyse the relationship of the narrator protagonist from the novel *On the Road* (1957) with the Mexican woman Beatrice (or Bee) he meets in California, characterizing it as problematic since it is limited to the admiration of her racial or ethnic Otherness, with frequent allusions to her skin tone as pretty due to its dark pigmentation, entailing little beyond the widespread literary practice of reducing people of colour to their exoticism. Even worse: he equates the colour of Bee's skin with her sexuality, presupposing that non-white women possess the primitivism of uncivilized sexual urges – a thoroughly racist prejudice on its own. In his confrontation with the despondent situation of American social minorities, Kerouac constantly romanticizes their misery through his protagonists, rather than admitting – let alone examining – how the normalized American hegemony is pushing racial minorities into a dead end, engendering their downward spiral.

Similarly representative is the double (romanticized-racist) view on racial diversity in the novel *The Subterraneans*. On the one hand, the protagonists sees in Mardou "an Indian warmth", "affection not only from the Indian in you but because as part Negro somehow you are a first, the essential woman, and therefore the most, most originally most fully affectionate and maternal […], some lost American addition and mood with it", while on the other stating: "every time I see a Mexican gal or Negress I say to myself, 'hustlers, they're all the same, always trying to cheat and rob you'" (Kerouac 2018, 103).

Kerouac wrote *The Subterraneans* before the civil rights movement was in full stride, and when relations between whites and blacks were still segregated. Any support of whites for Negro organizations was viewed as indicative of communist activity; a curiously absurd outlook from the European perspective. The events in the novel *The Subterraneans* (published in 1958) take place in the summer of 1953, the work produced in three nights of frenetic typing in October that year, after Kerouac's split from the "black beauty" Alene Lee (Mardou Fox in the novel). Notably, with the exception of Bob Kaufman and Amir Baraka, the members of the Beat Generation were all white. It is thus unusual for the "subterranean" Alene Lee to have moved so freely in white circles as a young woman of colour. At any rate, Kerouac had little insight into the realities of her situation.

Hipkiss (1976, 8) claims that the novel expresses both Kerouac's enthusiasm as well as aversion to women of colour. Rexroth (1958: 23) states Kerouac's novel depicts "racism in reverse" and that "seldom has a man understood a woman less". French (1986, 47) considers Leo Percepied to be a male chauvinist, a racist and a homophobe. The first impression of Leo at the outset of the novel is that of an egocentric – he is not interested in Mardou as a sovereign person, but rather as an apparently helpless yet attention-catching "Negro" woman: "a poor subterranean beat Negro girl with no clothes on her back worth a two penny" (Kerouac 2018, 100). When he first lays eyes on Mardou, Leo describes her as "dark, you could barely see her in the dim street" (Kerouac 2018, 23), yet the sight of her "made me think, 'By God, I've got to get involved with that little woman' and maybe too because she was Negro" (Kerouac 2018, 22). The depiction of Mardou Fox is typically ethnocentric: her legs and eyes are described as dark, her face soft and brown, Leo patronizingly describes her as a "little thin brown woman disposed to wear dark clothes, poor beat subterranean clothes"

(Kerouac 2018, 30). He uses diminutive descriptors and considers her lovely, while at the same time comparing her to a snake leading him into temptation. He compares her locution to a speech "I'd never heard before except in certain rare girls of course white so strange". Her voice reminds him of "the cool sound of bop singers" (Charters 1973, 194), a trait he finds especially fascinating.

Leo's perception of Mardou is influenced by his racist prejudice; the fear of a black woman stealing his heart: "she was really a thief of some sort and therefore was out to steal my heart, my white man heart, a Negress sneaking in the world sneaking the holy white men for sacrificial rituals" (Kerouac 2018, 63). Later he says "she'd thieve my soul and eat it" (Kerouac 2018, 63). When Kerouac's alter ego, Leo Percepied, wakes up on an August morning for the first time next to the sleeping Mardou, realizing he has been sharing a bed with a "Negro Woman", he experiences "almost revulsion" and thinks: "what a beast I am for feeling anything near it, grape little sweet-body naked on the restless sheet soft the night-before excitement" (Kerouac 2018, 35). In the morning he is inclined to go home and continue his writing in solitude. The description of the just-awoken Mardou reflect his profound racial prejudice: though he finds her erotic and alluring, he wilfully exoticizes her, establishing the relation between colonizer and colonized. The narrator personally uses the dominating expressions *conquest* and *conquered*, as if he were invading/colonizing the object of his desire, with a focus on his own emotions and little regard for the humanity of the loved female as a person; he engages merely with her exterior or physical nature:

> I got up and begun to dress, apologize, she lay like a little mummy in the sheet and cast the serious brown eyes on me, like eyes of Indian watchfulness in a wood, like with the brown lashes suddenly rising with black lashes to reveal sudden fantastic whites of eye with the brown glittering iris centre, the seriousness of her face accentuated by the slightly Mongoloid as if of a boxer nose and the cheeks puffed a little from sleep, like the face on a beautiful porphyry mask found long ago and Aztecan. […]. The adolescent cocksman having made his conquest barely broods at home the loss of the love of the conquered lass, the black-lash lovely […]. (Kerouac 2018, 36)

As an emancipated woman, Mardou tells Leo at the start of their relationship that she wishes to be independent. Leo at first mythologizes their romantic involvement, characterizing them as an Adam and Eve, while she states "don't call me Eve" (Kerouac 2018, 116). Leo imagines appearing in public with her might protect Mardou from the "Negro fear of American society" (Kerouac 2018, 80), to which she replies he "understands nothing". Evidently that is correct, since Leo characterizes her fear of potential racist violence as "her little-girl fear so cute, so edible" (Kerouac 2018, 81). Later he admits that the love relationship with Mardou is to him a secondary matter, since the only thing he considers vital is work (writing): "at the time work, work was my dominant thought, not love", in which he even entertains himself a victim, continuing with these words: "not the pain which impels me to write this even while I don't want to, the pain which won't be eased by the writing but heightened" (Kerouac 2018, 36).

Explicitly, he mentions his racist doubts in relation to his unease over living with a woman of colour: "Mardou's a Negro, naturally not only my mother but my sister whom I may have to live with some day and her husband a Southerner and everybody concerned, would be

mortified to hell" (Kerouac 2018, 60). He contemplates life in some kind of Faulknerian home in the American south, worried about "what would they say if my mansion lady wife was a black Cherokee" (Kerouac 2018, 60). Further, he even writes of his "white ambition thoughts or white ambition daydreams" and confesses he felt like he "saw some kind of black thing I've never seen before hanging, like it *scared* me" (Kerouac 2018, 60). Apprehensively, he examines her body, establishing "it wasn't anything pernicious and pizen juices but just blue dark as in all kinds of women and I was really and truly reassured to actually see and make the study with her" (Kerouac 2018, 60). Leo's racism is most directly expressed in his sentiments while making love to Mardou, when he makes the following commentary:

> fearing secretly the few times I had come into contact with the rough stubble-like quality of the pubic, which was Negroid and therefore a little rougher, tho not enough to make any difference, and the insides itself I should say the best, the richest, most fecund moist warm and full of hidden soft slidy mountains, also the pull and force of the muscles being so powerful she unknowing often vice-like closes over and makes a dam-up and hurt. (Kerouac 2018, 87)

Alongside Mardou's dark skin, Kerouac's alter ego is fascinated by her partly Native American heritage. He believes that Mardou's father, an Iroquois Native American of the Cherokee lineage, had gone through far worse experiences than she did, and that her "psychoanalytic-induced anxieties" (Kerouac 2018, 37) cannot compare with the great calamities of her father's life. According to Ann Charters (1973, 42), Alene Lee reminded Kerouac of Neal Cassady: both had very difficult childhoods, though Kerouac chauvinistically believes her mental anguish cannot compare to Cassady's, dispossessing her from the capacity to experience psychological suffering to the same extent felt by a man.

According to William Russel (1962, 62), Kerouac failed to transcend white chauvinism and considered black inferiority as a specific kind of contemporary noble savagery. The narrator of *The Subterraneans* admits he treated Mardou unfairly, since her love then meant to him "no more than that I had a nice convenient dog chasing after me" (Kerouac 2018, 66), envisaging her as a Native American woman following him around the slums of Mexico City, where he imagined the two might coexist: "my real secretive Mexican vision of her following me down dark dobe streets of slums of Mexico City not walking with me but following, like Indian women" (Kerouac 2018, 66). Kerouac's discourse, in short, reveals itself as consistently dominating and colonizing, macho and racist. To him, Mardou is not foreign and inferior merely on account of being a woman, but something to be compared to other races, or even an animal.

Tristessa from the second novel is far more profoundly idealized by Jack Duluoz. The morphine addicted Mexican woman is considered by the writer's alter ego to be spiritually profound, even genuinely idiosyncratically Buddhist, which he attributes to her suffering as the source of "holiness". Here, too, we witness Kerouac's typical projection of personal ideas. He describes her as the "Azteca, Indian girl with mysterious lidded Billy Holliday eyes and […] great melancholic voice" (Kerouac 1992, 8), framing her native heritage as Other by stating: "This just made her more exotic" (Kerouac 1992, 9).

5   Conclusion

From the perspective of the post-colonially oriented New Historicist reading, the novels under scrutiny in this article offer an extraordinary source of meanings and with that ever-new interpretations arising from contrasting the past with the present. The two novels offer plentiful evidence to support the thesis that Kerouac's discourse is monologic or undifferentiated. The analysis of the novels reveals that colonialist discourse fails to be confronted with an opposite pole, a true expression of the voice of the Other (ethnic minorities and women), which would generate a dialogical process within the author's discourse and result in truly subversive art. Kerouac's capacity to empathize with the experience of the Other is naive and conceited in the sense that he wishes to simply further confirm his own counter-cultural status with his contrived understanding of what is, in truth, a thoroughly colonised subject, revealing his underlying dominating and colonialist position.

Kerouac's textual and contextual discourse reveal an entrenched undercurrent of misogyny, alongside traditional sexist conceptions of his time. The two women in the novels may indeed be the central objects of desire of their male protagonists, but they are characterized in a markedly subjective manner, through the instrumentalizing gaze of the male, objectifying narrator, the author's alter ego, who exploits the women for his own self-discovery, experimentation, experience, projection of ideas or simply the satisfaction of his needs. Kerouac's objectifying, patriarchal narrative is reflected in his one-dimensional presentation of the female characters, who are not explored from the point of inner idiosyncratic experiential or spiritual life, but reduced instead largely to the curious or alluring physical, with disregard to their inner experiential states or the surrounding systemic social conditions. In short, it would be correct to state that the women in Kerouac's novels is thoroughly objectivized. The male narrator treats "his" women as if they were prestigious trophies to be desired and possessed, and then characteristically discards them "after use" like redundant objects.

Kerouac's ideal is a self-sacrificing woman, a metaphoric embodiment of the Virgin Mary, who feels boundless love and compassion for the troubled male. The ideal Beat Generation female figure was one fostering an atmosphere in which the men might dedicate themselves exclusively to their art, while she demands nothing for herself and does not interfere in their social lives, being at the same time a passionate lover and yet perpetually innocent. The discourse of Kerouac's autobiographical protagonists proves he granted himself not only personal freedom, but also irresponsibility, naiveté, even childishness. He was afraid not just of being tied down to a woman's "nest" (which he, on the other hand, willingly accepted in his relationship with his mother), but also of being charmed and dominated by a female. He expected from his women a maternally instinctive relationship: they were supposed to understand his wishes, needs and expectations. He pursued women that did not demand responsibility from him, and did not interfere with his drinking buddies and their male-oriented spaces. These conditions are met, partly and only at the start of their romantic relationships, by both the black Mardou Fox from *The Subterraneans* (1958), as well as the Native American Tristessa from *Tristessa* (1960). When the two women no longer fulfil the whims of the protagonist narrators, Kerouac's two alter egos, Leo Percepied and Jack Duluoz, both return to the Kerouac female "ideal": his own mother Gabrielle waiting for him in the

safe haven of the family home. Upon his final breakup with Mardou, Jack leaves for the train station, crying, and has a vision of his mother's countenance and voice speaking out: "'Pauvre ti Leo, pauvre ti Leo, tu souffri, les hommes souffri tant, […] j'va't prendre soin, j'aim'ra beaucoup t'prendre soin tous tes jour mon ange.'" (Kerouac 2018, 111)

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