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IAFOR Journal of Education: Language Learning in Education

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Edited by Melinda Cowart
Professor Emerita
Texas Woman's University (TWU), USA

Editorial Advice

Preparing a submission to the *IAFOR Journal of Education* is more than writing about your research study: it involves paying careful attention to our submission requirements. Different journals have different requirements in terms of format, structure and referencing style, among other things. There are also some common expectations between all journals such as the use of good academic language and lack of plagiarism. To assist you in reaching the review stage for this or any other peer-reviewed journal, we provide the following advice which you should check carefully and ensure that you adhere to.

1. Avoiding Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a practice that is not acceptable in any journal. Avoiding plagiarism is the cardinal rule of academic integrity because plagiarism, whether intentional or unintentional, is presenting someone else's work as your own. The *IAFOR Journal of Education* immediately rejects any submission with evidence of plagiarism.

There are three common forms of plagiarism, none of which are acceptable:

1. ***Plagiarism with no referencing***. This is copying the words from another source (article, book, website, etc.) without any form of referencing.
2. ***Plagiarism with incorrect referencing***. This involves using the words from another source and only putting the name of the author and/or date as a reference. Whilst not as grave as the plagiarism just mentioned, it is still not acceptable academic practice. Direct quoting requires quotation marks and a page number in the reference. This is best avoided by paraphrasing rather than copying.
3. ***Self-plagiarism***. It is not acceptable academic practice to use material that you have already had published (which includes in conference proceedings) in a new submission. You should not use your previously published words and you should not submit about the same data unless it is used in a completely new way.

2. Meeting the Journal Aims and Scope

Different journals have different aims and scope, and papers submitted should fit the specific journal. A "scattergun" approach (where you submit anywhere in the hope of being published) is not sound practice. Like in darts, your article needs to hit the journal's "bullseye", it needs to fit within the journal's interest area. For example, a submission that is about building bridges, will not be acceptable in a journal dedicated to education. Ensure that your paper is clearly about education.

3. Follow the Author Guidelines

Most journals will supply a template to be followed for formatting your paper. Often, there will also be a list of style requirements on the website (font, word length, title length, page layout, and referencing style, among other things). There may also be suggestions about the preferred structure of the paper. For the *IAFOR Journal of Education* these can all be found here:
https://iafor.org/journal/iafor-journal-of-education/author-guidelines/

4. Use Academic Language

The *IAFOR Journal of Education* only accepts papers written in correct and fluent English at a high academic standard. Any use of another language (whether in the paper or the reference list) requires the inclusion of an English translation.

The style of expression must serve to articulate the complex ideas and concepts being presented, conveying explicit, coherent, unambiguous meaning to scholarly readers. Moreover, manuscripts must have a formal tone and quality, employing third-person rather than first-person standpoint (when feasible), placing emphasis on the research and not on unsubstantiated subjective impressions.

Contributors whose command of English is not at the level outlined above are responsible for having their manuscript corrected by a native-level, English-speaking academic prior to submitting their paper for publication.

5. Literature Reviews

Any paper should have reference to the corpus of **scholarly** literature on the topic. A review of the literature should:

- Predominantly be about contemporary literature (the last 5 years) unless you are discussing a seminal piece of work.
- Make explicit international connections for relevant ideas.
- Analyse published papers in the related field rather than describe them.
- Outline the gaps in the literature.
- Highlight your contribution to the field.

Referencing

Referencing is the main way to avoid allegations of plagiarism. The *IAFOR Journal of Education* uses the APA referencing style for both in-text citations and the reference list. If you are unsure of the correct use of APA please use the Purdue Online Writing Lab (Purdue OWL), – https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/ – which has excellent examples of all forms of APA referencing. Please note APA is used for referencing not for the general format of the paper. Your reference list should be alphabetical by author surname and include DOIs whenever possible.

This short guide to getting published should assist you to move beyond the first editorial review. Failure to follow the guidelines will result in your paper being immediately rejected.

Good luck in your publishing endeavours,

Dr Yvonne Masters
Executive Editor, *IAFOR Journal of Education*

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Editor's Welcome

Greetings readers!

In the months that have passed since the last issue of the *IAFOR Journal of Education: Language Learning in Education* (IAFOR JOE: LLiE), the movement of peoples and the need for learning an additional language continues to grow. Earthquakes and other domestic tragedies as well as civil unrest and war have led to a massive uprooting of multitudes of people. There exist positive reasons for embarking on the language learning journey as well. Individuals may decide to add an additional language to their linguistic repertoire in order to advance in the fields of business, education, law or medicine. The reasons for learning another language notwithstanding, the process is complex, invigorating, enlightening about peoples, languages, and cultures, and sometimes frustrating.

Though the authors of the articles in this issue explore a wide variety of aspects within second language acquisition and second language teaching and come from a vast array of nations, they are united by the common language of researching, exploring, and discovering what is essential in the pursuit of effectual second language acquisition. The language of those engaged in the study of language learning appears to unify each person involved in that pursuit.

The articles included within address several timely topics, such as the role of Global Englishes, native speakerism, and whether the main goal of second language acquisition is to be able to imitate a native speaker of a certain language. One author investigated whether approved models of a language being learned should always be a native speaker. Another researcher explored the perspectives of teachers who were impacted by the politics of national language policy. Additional themes that were explored consisted of affective matters in second language acquisition such as intercultural sensitivity and linguistic matters including rhetorical knowledge needed by IT personnel to convey their ideas unambiguously and successfully. One author compared the relative success of a cognitive linguistic approach and a metaphor-based approach in teaching Japanese EFL students the three levels of confidence that something might happen. Even Lego Serious Play was studied as a possible method for helping language learners in the business world to engage in creative problem solving.

Multilingualism, second language acquisition, second language learning, and national language policy persist in being significant considerations for every nation. The movement of individuals from country to country and within nations has intensified. As the world of second language learners increases in size, educators, scholars, and researchers who research the multidimensional nature of second language acquisition and language learning are vital to the improvement of second language teaching and enhanced learning. Readers of the articles in this issue of the IAFOR JOE: LLiE will see commonalities that exist across nations and cross culturally where language learning is concerned.

Article 1
In the first article, "**An Analysis of Undergraduate EFL Students' Perceptions of Intercultural Sensitivity**", Huyen -Thanh Nguyen conducted a qualitative study to discover what undergraduate English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in Vietnam comprehended about intercultural sensitivity. The findings of the study revealed a lack of knowledge about understanding other cultures and people and support the recommendation that educators work to incorporate instruction about intercultural sensitivity in EFL classes.

Article 2
Dr Alruwaili and Dr Altalib, authors of “**Changing the ‘Mindset’ of Saudi MA Students: From Native-Speakerism to Global Englishes**”, implemented a qualitative study to investigate the impact of including Global English materials within a graduate class offered to Saudi graduate students. They wanted to know if embracing the assortment of English dialects in the world would also heighten the graduate students’ awareness and acceptance of their own variety of English. The findings are enlightening and may change many minds about what criteria should guide the selection of appropriate language role models for language learners.

Article 3
In “**Language and Conflict in East Jerusalem: Arab Teachers’ Perspectives on Learning Hebrew**”, Abed Al-Rahman Mar'i and Nurit Buchweitz completed a study that explored a sampling of East Jerusalem teachers’ sensitivities of and mindsets about being required to acquire and communicate in Hebrew as a second language in order to teach. The backdrop of the research project was the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and national identity. The framework of the enquiry was a multifaceted education system that held different requirements for diverse teachers. The findings of the research signal important concepts for the teachers in East Jerusalem and beyond in diverse teaching situations with similar issues.

Article 4
Charles Allen Brown, author of, “**Imagined Communities of English Use in JET Programme Teaching Materials**” writes about the findings from a study he conducted to analyze more than 5000 materials that have been developed and used in the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme. Specifically, Dr Brown wanted to know to what extent the materials helped the language students to sense a connection between the language group and related social group because the integration of language and social groups would be the most motivational for the learner. A surprising finding was that most of the materials involved only language practice and hinted at no social connection. Yet, if a language learner also sensed a connection to a group with whom there would be the opportunity to communicate meaningfully in the new language, that same learner would probably be able to self-concept or imagine oneself being successful at both types of group participation.

Article 5
In “**The Relationship between a Cognitive Linguistic Approach and the Right-Hemisphere**”, author Masahiro Takimoto considered the possible association between a metaphor-based approach to teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) and a connection to the right hemisphere of the brain. Specifically, Dr Takimoto examined learners’ grasp of three levels of certainty associated with different expressions in English – those that are *certain, probable*, and *possible* items, selected because of their frequent use by native English speakers, but problematic for Japanese EFL students. The details of the study are significant in demonstrating why Japanese EFL students encounter difficulties with the three levels of sureness and further illustrate potential language learner assistance that can be designed.

Article 6
Haniva Yunita Leo**,** author of **“A Corpus-Driven Approach on Learning Near Synonyms of Pain in Indonesian**”, conducted a study that examined individuals’ understanding of terms for pain in Indonesian. While pain is universal and human, the manner in which one communicates about pain is often culturally defined, and people may experience pain differently. The researcher offers a cross-cultural comparison of the study of the emotion of pain in Indonesian by scrutinizing the usage of two near-synonyms: *sakit* and *nyeri*. The study was intended to

impart new insights for L2 learners of Indonesian regarding the study of sensitivities and how pain may be impacted by feelings and influenced by cultural expectations. A byproduct is that educators will have a new understanding of how different peoples express and comprehend something as simple as *pain*.

Article 7
In "**Rhetorical Strategies Used by Information Technology Students in In-Class Presentations**", Eva Ellederová explored the significant role of rhetoric in assiting IT professionals to communicate effectively about their ideas and products. Dr Ellederová conducted research to understand how IT students who were also English language learners could build and cultivate persuasive arguments. Specifically, her study involved analysis of the IT students' use of rhetorical strategies in selected persuasive presentations provided in the course 'English for IT'. Two types of analysis were used to identify different sorts of rhetorical strategies students employed to influence their audiences' attitudes. The reader will finish this article with new knowledge about the importance of rhetorical strategies as well as IT tactics for persuasion.

Article 8
Eleni Meletiadou, author of "**Transforming Multilingual Students' Learning Experience Through the use of Lego Serious Play**", conducted a case study with 50 multilingual business students who were asked to participate in a Lego Serious Play (LSP) intervention for one academic semester. The goal was for students to use LSP to have a better understanding of the assessment criteria and the theories they had to use to prepare a group paper and a group oral presentation about a module on intercultural management. The findings were multifaceted and could be useful in other areas of higher education where language learners are involved.

The topics researched and discussed in the 2023 issue of the *IAFOR Journal of Education: Language Learning in Education* will enlighten and encourage the reader about the critical thinking and innovative research that is ongoing in the field of second language acquisition and second language learning.

Happy reading!

Melinda Cowart
Professor Emerita
Texas Woman's University, USA
Editor, *IAFOR Journal of Education: Language Learning in Education*

Notes on Contributors

Article 1:
An Analysis of Undergraduate EFL Students' Perceptions of Intercultural Sensitivity

Huyen-Thanh Nguyen
Huyen-Thanh Nguyen is a Vietnamese teacher of English at the English Department, and an International Officer of Hanoi University, Hanoi, Vietnam. Huyen is a trained teacher of English Language Teaching and has worked in language education for Vietnamese and international students for over ten years. She has eleven years of experience in international-based tasks to promote the internationalization policies and activities of Hanoi University. As a result, her work focuses on second language acquisition, language learning motivation, intercultural communication, internationalization of higher education, and intercultural adaptability.
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Article 2:
Changing the 'Mindset' of Saudi MA Students: From Native-Speakerism to Global Englishes

Dr Areej Radhi Alruwaili
Areej Radhi Alruwaili is an Assistant Professor in the Art college at JOUF university, Saudi Arabia. She has more than 9 years of English teaching experience in Saudi Arabia. Her research interests include the issues of Global Englishes, nonnative-English-speaking teachers, the phenomena of native-speakerism in the ESL/EFL context and teacher education.
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Aser Altalib is currently an Assistant Professor in Applied Linguistics at Jouf University, School of Arts, Saudi Arabia. His research interests include language teaching and learning in higher education and language learning motivation and foreign language anxiety. He is also interested in research of a qualitative or mixed method research design.
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Article 3:
Language and Conflict in East Jerusalem: Arab Teachers' Perspectives on Learning Hebrew

Abed al-Rahman Mar'i
Abed al-Rahman Mar'i is a Senior lecturer of Hebrew Literature at Beit Berl College, Israel. He specializes in Hebrew medieval literature and the Arab influences on it; language education, language policy and language instruction in Arab schools in Israel; the linguistic contacts between contemporary Hebrew and Arabic.

Nurit Buchweitz
Nurit Buchweitz is Professor of Hebrew and comparative literature at Beit Berl College. She specializes in postmodernism – poetics and theory; post-humanism and 21st century writing; late-modernist Israeli poetry; the poetics of Meir Wiezeltier, Michel Houellebecq and Etgar Keret. Mar'i and Buchweitz edited the book *In Others[s] Words: Studies in Hebrew and Arabic Literature* (in Hebrew and Arabic).
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Article 4:
Imagined Communities of English Use in JET Programme Teaching Materials

Charles Allen Brown
Charles Allen Brown is a lecturer in the Purdue Language and Cultural Exchange (PLaCE) program at Purdue University, USA, where he works to support international language learners in undertaking research. Prior to working at PLaCE, he served as an associate professor in the Research Faculty of International Communication, Media, and Tourism Studies at Hokkaido University, Japan, and as an associate professor in the English Department at Northern Marianas College, Saipan, USA. His work has also involved training pre-service teachers in Japan, Taiwan, and the United States. In his own research, he is concerned with the ideological underpinnings of English education in East Asia and how individual stakeholders navigate this terrain.
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Article 5:
The Relationship between a Cognitive Linguistic Approach and the Right-Hemisphere

Masahiro Takimoto
Masahiro Takimoto is a professor at College of Science and Engineering at Aoyama Gakuin University in Japan. Masahiro's research so far has been the application of cognitive linguistics in foreign language teaching. His current research interests are focused on analyzing the spatial concept-oriented metaphor approach from the perspectives of brain neural basis to confirm whether it is a neuroscientifically proven approach to improving learners' L2 language proficiency. Masahiro completed his M.Ed. at Harvard University and his second Ph.D. at the University of Tokyo.
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Article 6:
A Corpus-Driven Approach on Learning Near Synonyms of Pain in Indonesian

Haniva Yunita Leo
Haniva Yunita Leo is a postgraduate student of General and Applied Linguistics at the Australian National University. She has been granted a scholarship from the Indonesian Endowment Fund for Education (LPDP) from the Ministry of Finance, the Republic of Indonesia. Before pursuing her master's degree, she worked as an analyst of words and terminology for the Language Development and Fostering Agency, the Ministry of Education and Culture, Indonesia. She has been part of the contributor team in developing the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI). During her career, she has been interested in language documentation in East Nusa Tenggara. She is the author of "Empo Rua dan Keluarga Meller," a folktale from East Nusa Tenggara for primary school children.
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Article 7:
Rhetorical Strategies Used by Information Technology Students in In-Class Presentations

Eva Ellederová
Eva Ellederová received her PhD in foreign language pedagogy from Masaryk University in Brno, the Czech Republic. She graduated from the Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University with a degree in English Language and Literature, but her first degree in Process Engineering was earned from Brno University of Technology. She teaches English for information technology, business English, and practical English courses at Brno University of Technology. She has published several coursebooks including *English for Information Technology* (2022) which was designed as an outcome of her design-based research. Apart from several journal articles, she is the author of the monograph *Konstrukční výzkum učebnice pro výuku odborného anglického jazyka* (2022, *Design-based research of an ESP coursebook*). Currently, she focuses on the analysis of information technology students' spoken language.
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Article 8:
Transforming Multilingual Students' Learning Experience Through the Use of Lego Serious Play

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Eleni Meletiadou is a Senior Lecturer (Associate Professor) in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) and Programme Director (BA Business Management and HRM) at London Metropolitan University Guildhall School of Business and Law. She is an enthusiastic peer learning, writing, and assessment scholar and a multi award-winning researcher and adviser with over 20 years of international experience. She is the Chair of the European Association for Educational Assessment (AEA-Europe) Inclusive Assessment SIG and an Expert Member of the European Association of Language Testing and Assessment (EALTA). She is the Conference Track Chair of the British Academy of Management Knowledge & Learning SIG and the European Academy of Management (EURAM) Doctoral Accelerator Mentor.
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An Analysis of Undergraduate EFL Students' Perceptions of Intercultural Sensitivity

Huyen-Thanh Nguyen
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Abstract

Intercultural sensitivity, which is seen as an affective component of intercultural competence, is crucial to cultivating one's favorable emotions about cultural differences experienced in intercultural communication. This qualitative study was conducted to find out how undergraduate English as a foreign language (EFL) students in Vietnam perceived intercultural sensitivity. The results showed that although the majority of students had not previously heard the phrase "intercultural sensitivity" before taking part in the survey, their intuitive understanding of the term was rather close to that of the literature. The participants were well aware of the evaluation of their intercultural sensitivity level. EFL students had different strategies for improvement of intercultural sensitivity depending on their study level and intercultural awareness. All participants, especially those who were learning a second language, believed that intercultural awareness is crucial. The study findings point to the recommendation that educators strive to further integrate intercultural sensitivity instruction and learning to improve EFL students' capacity for intercultural communication.

Keywords: intercultural sensitivity, intercultural competence, intercultural communication Vietnamese EFL students

The effects of globalization have increased the need for the cultivation of intercultural communicative competence among undergraduate students, who should enter the 21st century's workforce with the 4Cs (Critical thinking, Collaboration, Creativity, and Communication) (Halvorsen, 2018). As a lingua franca, English plays a pivotal role in the promotion of the process of globalization and internationalization worldwide (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Duong & Chua, 2016), and in the field of internationalization of higher education in many parts of the world, including Vietnam (Hoang, 2013; Le, 2016). Globalization seems to make the world more connected as increasing international contact between people of distinctive cultures is encouraged and where each culture or community has its own cultural backgrounds, perspectives, and values, generalizing and representing unique norms, patterns, and beliefs (Sasu, 2016; Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2018) which are commonly transmitted and shared among generations. In response to the current trend, higher education institutions have been encouraged to demonstrate that they are able to prepare, offer, and educate graduates for the global workforce (Hénard et al., 2012) by providing culturally responsive teaching and curriculum (Cruz et al., 2019; Kieran & Anderson, 2019) as a crucial strategy. In this type of setting, the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) emerges as an important focus (Morrison et al., 2019).

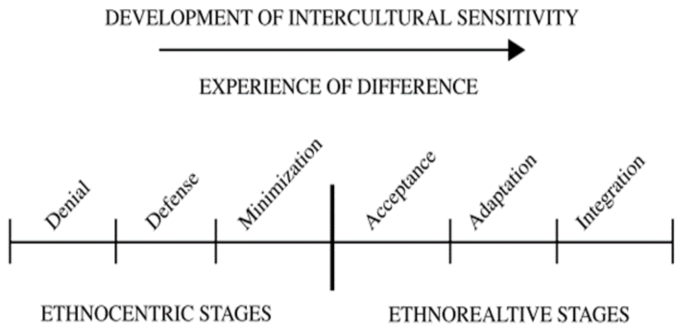
Vietnam, which has been considered one of the most dynamically emerging economies (Tung, 2018), has a rising demand for high-quality human resources (Van & Phuong, 2021), and proficiency in English is one of the necessary requirements because of its importance in promoting the country's economy (Vu & Peters, 2021). In this context, EFL graduates with a good command of English can have advantages in future employment. The main goal of English language teaching (ELT) is to assist students in improving their communication skills since exchanging ideas and information is the main purpose of language (Deveci et al., 2021; Koch & Takashima, 2021; Vieluf & Göbel, 2019). Many may believe that learning English entails mastering its grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation (Guan, 2019; Pinillos, 2021; Rost, 2013), but other aspects should also be cultivated to achieve higher levels of competence so that interlocutors can comprehend the sophistication of meanings being communicated (Bennett, 2004). Even if they are fluent in the target language, foreign language learners may be unable to communicate sensitively, effectively, and appropriately (Han, 2013). The focal point of the present study, therefore, is to qualitatively explore Vietnamese EFL students' perceptions of intercultural sensitivity, their perspectives on the importance of intercultural sensitivity and pertinent approaches EFL students have been utilizing in their language learning process.

Literature Review

As it has been demonstrated and agreed by researchers, such as Lussier (2011), Ting-Toomey and Dorjee (2018), and Yunlong (2014), the fact that the relationship between language and culture is as special as an intertwined association, it is worth noting that learning a foreign language also means acquiring its cultural aspects. Intercultural communicative competence, which is defined as crucial skills that influence and modify learners' knowledge, perceptions, and actions, has become a key issue in the globalized world (Alred & Byram, 2002). In order to be interculturally competent, a learner of a second language (L2) must possess knowledge of the foreign language (grammar, uses of the language), as well as the cultural knowledge and competence necessary to comprehend and function well in the context of highly sophisticated meaning (Celce-Murcia, 2007; Martin & Nakayama, 2010). Intercultural communicative competence is considered a broad term, serving as an umbrella concept of three areas: intercultural awareness (cognitive aspect), intercultural sensitivity (affective aspect), and intercultural communicative competence (behavioral aspect) (Chen & Starosta, 2000). Those are considered to be separate but closely related concepts (Ameli, 2012; Sarwari & Wahab, 2017). These constructs should be distinguished from one another rather than mixed together for investigation, or subsequent research findings would lack validity and reliability (Chen & Starosta, 2000). Accordingly, a variety of dimensions would be needed to validate relevant data if the cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of intercultural communicative competence were to be examined. In order to limit the scale of the current study, the dimension of intercultural sensitivity was explored as it was considered that once competence is evaluated, it could serve as a significant indicator of intercultural communicative competence. Taking intercultural sensitivity as a significant component of intercultural communicative competence, Chen (1997, p. 10); Chen and Starosta (1997, p. 10) provided a definition describing a person's capacity to "develop a positive emotion towards understanding and appreciating cultural differences that promote an appropriate and effective behavior in intercultural communication".

Bennett (1984) proposed that intercultural sensitivity is a developmental process that might aid one in changing affectively, cognitively, and behaviorally. This concept has since been implemented as an approach to global and domestic diversity within the framework of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) (Bennett & Bennett, 2004). The two stages of this intricate process are ethnocentric and ethnorelative. Each stage contains three smaller phases that discretely represent a step in an individual's transformation. Included within the ethnocentric stage are (1) **denial** - when a person refuses to acknowledge the existence of cultural differences among people; (2) **defense** - when a person tries to defend their worldview by fending off the perceived threat; and (3) **minimization** - when a person tries to protect their core worldview by hiding differences under the guise of cultural similarities. The steps that comprise the ethnorelative stage are (4) **acceptance** - when a person starts to be receptive to the existence of behavioral differences; (5) **adaption** - when a person becomes sympathetic to cultural differences and become bicultural or multicultural; and (6) **integration** - when a person can apply ethnorelativism to their own identity and see others' diversity as a necessary and enjoyable part of life. Conceptually, Bennett's model (shown in Figure 1) has been viewed as a steady adjustment in affection, cognition, and behavior to reach the level of intercultural communicative competence.

Figure 1
The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Bennett, 2004, p. 153)



Chen and Starosta (2000) developed a measure to evaluate intercultural sensitivity with six components based on such fundamental notions: self-esteem, self-monitoring, open-mindedness, empathy, interaction involvement, and non-judgment. In order to cultivate one's own positive mood, and drive to understand and appreciate any differences in cultures and circumstances, one has to "establish a sense of self-value and self-worth" (Chen & Starosta, 2000, p. 4). **Self-esteem** entails the capacity to do this. Such a perspective is underpinned by social psychologist Hofstede (2011) who noted that a person becomes more prepared to recognize and embrace another culture after becoming conscious of personal value orientations, and having been exposed to it through pleasant sensations and emotions. The self-esteem element is crucial because it serves as a cognitive foundation for **self-monitoring**, which individuals use to change their conduct to recognize any situational limits, manage their behavior, and respond properly. High self-monitor speakers, as Chen and Starosta (2000) assert, are often "more attentive, other-oriented, and more sensitive to the expressions of their culturally different counterparts" (p. 5). It seems the two elements of self-esteem and self-monitoring play a significant role in transforming an individual's cognitive aspect into interacting and understanding personal and others' values, norms, customs, and social systems so that cultural differences can be acknowledged properly (Yunlong, 2014).

The third component is **open-mindedness**, which is defined as the willingness to explain oneself and accept others' explanations (Chen & Starosta, 2000). As a result, such speakers become sensitive to the needs and differences of others and are capable of converting feelings into actions in intercultural communication. This perspective appears to be similar to the *acceptance* phase of the DMIS developed by Bennett and Bennett (2004), portraying an individual's acceptance regardless of differences in values, beliefs, and behaviors. Therefore, personal values of the individual can be exercised without "imposing on the equally valid viewpoints of others" (p. 155). The fourth component is **empathy**, which involves care for other people's feelings and behaviors. It is generally believed the concept of empathy is "a core component" because empathic people are concerned about others' feelings and reactions and tend to show "affect displays, active listening" (Chen & Starosta, 2000, p. 5). Reynolds and Valentine (2004) also suggested that it is important to understand how the culture uses emotion in intercultural communication.

The two final components, namely **interaction involvement** and **non-judgment**, seem to be related to one another. One concerns the speaker's interaction with others (e.g., whether they like or dislike the communication of people from different cultures), while the other concerns the unique quality of a speaker who can listen sincerely to those from different cultures. According to Johnson (2001), a person's communication preferences might reveal whether or not they feel valued or welcomed. It is likely that when two people first meet and discuss a subject they both find interesting, they will discover an attraction in speaking and get actively involved in contact. On the other hand, if there is no mutual delight between the two speakers, one may leave the communication activity (Samovar & Porter, 1991), which may also result in judgment (the act of jumping to any conclusions without sufficient details) (Chen & Starosta, 2000). Knowing the value of not passing judgment on others enables one to engage and form relationships with people from various cultural backgrounds (Chen & Starosta, 2000); i.e. interlocutors are able to integrate in the intercultural contexts (Bennett & Bennett, 2004), and success in intercultural communication is achieved (Yunlong, 2014).

The fact that there are hundreds of languages spoken around the world makes cross-cultural communication essential in the twenty-first century. Since intercultural communication skill is often seen as being significant in this context, studies have been undertaken by researchers over decades, such as Bennett (1984), Byram and Zarate (1994), Chen and Starosta (1996), Hammer et al. (2003), Ting-Toomey and Chung (2012). In this light, exploring EFL students' perceptions of intercultural sensitivity is considered a significant contribution to the literature, diagnosis of intercultural competencies can be investigated, and the necessity to further education can be constructed (Baños, 2006).

The context of English learning in Vietnam might be different from others to some extent, yet learners' attitudes and awareness of intercultural communicative competence have been of interest among Vietnamese scholars, resulting in a range of studies carried out by researchers, such as Dao and Do (2019), Tran and Seepho (2016), Thieu (2019), Trinh (2016), Vu (2013), Vu (2020), and Vu and Dinh (2021). Nonetheless, the review of the literature seems to show that there are not many qualitative studies focusing on the affective aspect of Vietnamese EFL students in the context of higher education institutions, how they perceive the meaning and importance of intercultural sensitivity, and how they strategize the learning process to improve intercultural sensitivity, aiming to become competent interactants not only in Vietnam but outside of the national (cultural) border as well. The findings of the present study may make meaningful contributions towards the teaching methods in the field of English language teaching or English as a foreign language (EFL) in Vietnam, especially in the context of higher education institutions, and in other nations of the expanding circle of English[1] (Al-Mutairi, 2020; Kachru, 1992). The recommendations of the study may be useful for the development of English language teaching curriculum to equip EFL students with linguistic knowledge and intercultural backgrounds. Based on the research aims, this study sought answers to the following research questions:

> Research question 1: How is intercultural sensitivity defined by Vietnamese EFL students?
> Research question 2: At what level do students evaluate their intercultural sensitivity? Why?
> Research question 3: What do EFL students think about the importance of intercultural sensitivity?
> Research question 4: How does EFL students' intercultural sensitivity develop?

Methods

The methodology section of the study includes the focus of the study, the participants, the instruments, and the data collection and data analysis procedure.

Focus of Study

According to Golafshani (2003), qualitative research adopts a naturalistic approach that can help researchers understand specific phenomena in context-specific settings. Researchers can focus on the research problem and use necessary approaches available to understand it (Creswell, 2009), so that essential methods that work best can be employed to address particular research concerns (Paltridge & Phakiti, 2015). This study aimed to qualitatively explore Vietnamese EFL students' perceptions of intercultural sensitivity (research questions 1 and 3), their personal evaluation of intercultural sensitivity level (research question 2), and

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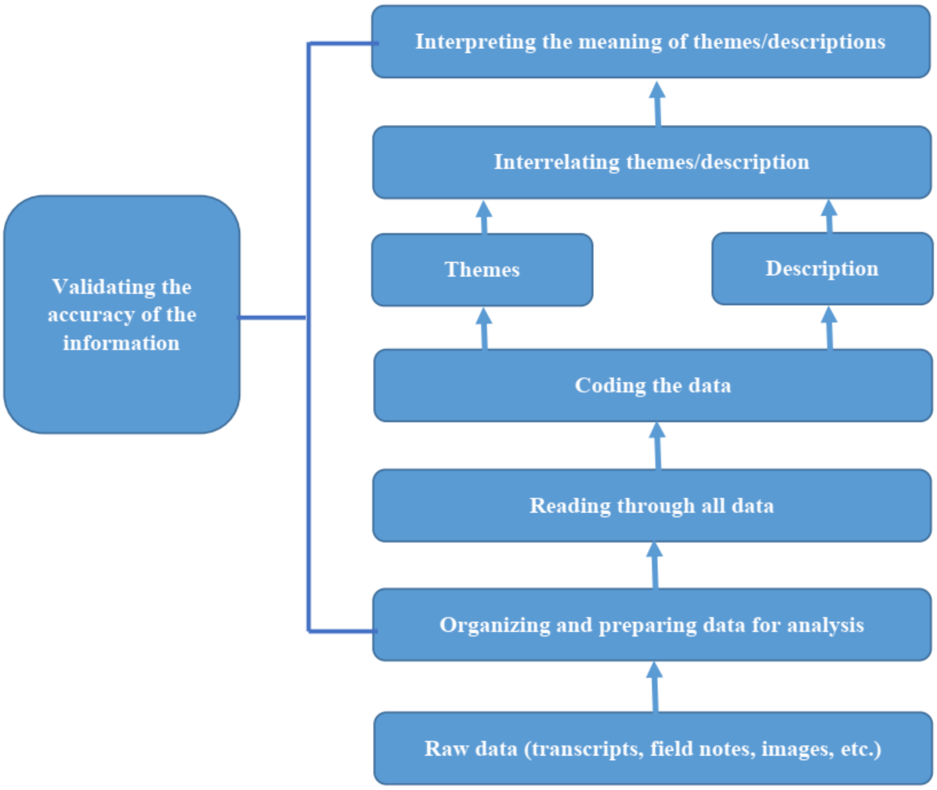
[1] The term "World Englishes" was firstly used by Kachru in the early 1960s to describe the spreading use of English throughout the world. There are three concentric circles: the Inner circle (English as the mother tongue), the Outer circle (English as an additional language), and the Expanding circle (English as a foreign language).

personal strategies to develop intercultural sensitivity (research question 4) while studying at a public institution of higher education in Vietnam. Among multiple approaches of qualitative research, phenomenological research (Creswell, 2009) was employed to identify the background and experiences of EFL students in the field of intercultural sensitivity because patterns and relationships of participants' perspectives could be engaged and developed through the collected data. According to Dörnyei (2007, p. 37), qualitative researchers can "enter the research process with a completely open mind and without setting out to test preconceived hypotheses". Meanwhile, qualitative interviews can be conducted, involving "unstructured and generally open-ended questions" (Creswell, 2009, p. 181) so as to purposefully elicit views and opinions from the participants. The semi-structured interview, in this light, was employed with a detailed protocol (see Appendix 1) so that EFL students' perspectives could be elicited, recorded, and transcribed prior to data analysis (shown in Figure 2).

Figure 2
Data Analysis of Qualitative Research (Cresswell, 2009, p. 185)



Source: Creswell (2009, p. 185)

The data analysis in qualitative research (in Figure 1) offers a linear, hierarchical approach building from the bottom to the top to guarantee validation of the information accuracy (Creswell, 2009) because the quality of the research results relies on it (Trullols et al., 2004). To ensure reliability in qualitative research, trustworthiness is very important (Golafshani, 2003). In this case, cross-check codes (Creswell, 2009) were made by at least two researchers by comparing results independently derived by each.

Participants

This study used qualitative research, which included verbal data from nine participants who were invited to join in an interview. Following the Dean of the English Department's approval, the researcher reached out to EFL students enrolled in the second, third, and fourth years and extended an invitation for them to take part in the study. As the random sample could make generalizations, a probability sample (also known as a random sample) was applied as it could randomly draw from the wider population (Cohen et al., 2007). Upon the main goal of the study, undergraduate students from a public higher education institution in Hanoi, Vietnam were selected via convenience sampling. This type of sampling involves those who happened to be available, and accessible at the time of conducting the study (Cohen et al., 2007). Based on the actual registration of the EFL students, direct contacts were created between the researcher and EFL students, aiming to receive their confirmation for participation and the mutually-agreed date of the interviews. As a result, only nine students could join the study as shown in the following table:

Table 1
Participants of the Interview

No.	Participants (Pseudonym)	Abbreviation of names	Gender	Year of study
1	Lien	L	Female	3rd
2	Thanh	T	Female	3rd
3	Mai	M	Female	4th
4	Nhan	N	Female	4th
5	Phuong	P	Female	3rd
6	An	A	Female	2nd
7	Binh	B	Female	2nd
8	Khanh	K	Female	2nd
9	Oanh	O	Female	3rd

Instrument

Because it best helps the researcher to understand the problem studied and the research question (Creswell, 2009), this qualitative research employed interviews as the data collection type, and the one-on-one interview was conducted. According to Cohen et al. (2007), the interview is considered a powerful, flexible tool for a researcher in the process of data collection since the interview gives a researcher access to a person's thinking, making it possible to measure what an individual knows about a subject (their knowledge), what a person prefers (values and preferences), and what one thinks (attitudes and beliefs). In terms of format, the semi-structured interview is suitable for the present study because it allows flexibility in adapting the wording and re-arranging the order of the questions in the interview to suit the situation and the interviewees beside a list of planned questions. Accordingly, five open-ended questions (see Annex 1) were designed to collect the qualitative data.

The interview questions were first piloted with the voluntary participation of two EFL students in order to discover any difficulties encountered. After this pilot phase, the interview questions were reviewed by an expert, who possesses a doctoral qualification in the field of EFL and teaches as a senior lecturer at a public higher education institution. Upon essential comments, the interview questions were finalized prior to the actual interviews.

Data Collection and Analysis

Each student was given information about the study's goals, rationale, anticipated interview length, and a request for permission to record the interview. Approximately 10 minutes were allotted for each interview. The interview was conducted totally in English because the participants were proficient English speakers. All interviewees were given pseudo names in the transcript to maintain their anonymity.

As suggested as a foundational method for qualitative analysis, this study employed a thematic analysis approach, which is defined as an approach to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) within interview data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The qualitative data of the current study were, therefore, analyzed and categorized into themes, and answers of participants to the research questions were formed in accordance with thematic analysis. Additionally, thematic analysis can be categorized into two types, namely deductive approach, or top-down, and inductive approach or bottom-up (Braun & Clark 2006). The former approach is theory-driven, or it allows themes to be preconceived based on initial themes suggested by the theoretical frame. The latter, meanwhile, is data-driven, which allows new themes to emerge during the data refinement process and it is not necessary to fit into the codes in existing theory. The responses of the participants to the research questions were then generated in line with the thematic analysis of the qualitative data of the current study, which was then examined and grouped into themes. The original topics were coded and defined in accordance with the deductive methodology. In order to examine EFL students' perceptions of intercultural sensitivity, the researcher reviewed the interview transcripts numerous times and categorized responses within the topic of the research accordingly.

Summary of Findings

Students' Definitions of Intercultural Sensitivity

The majority of students who took part in the interview acknowledged that, prior to the current study, they had never heard the term "intercultural sensitivity." Only two of them were aware of the phrase although they both admitted that they were unfamiliar with the subject. As a result, when asked what they thought the term "intercultural sensitivity" meant, several appeared a bit perplexed and hesitated to offer ideas.

A prominent definition proposed was that intercultural sensitivity could help one react appropriately to foreigners. Particularly, Thanh (T2) said "Intercultural sensitivity is your ability to adapt to an unfamiliar culture, so when you talk with foreigners, no matter where they come from, you can still communicate with them" (T2/8). Similarly, Mai (M6), who was also concerned about the reaction when meeting foreigners, stated that it is "the way we receive and understand other different cultures… The way we react to a new and strange culture for the first time" (M3/6). Nhan (N4) also thought, "It is how we react or behave when we are in an international context" (N4/4).

Others highlighted the words "respect" and "understand" as the necessities of intercultural sensitivity. Typically, Lien (L1) said that meeting someone from another culture "might be weird at the beginning", but "it may be their culture, and you should respect the difference"

(L1/10). Similarly, An (A6) offered the idea that "intercultural sensitivity can be understood as the ability to respect and adapt with new cultures, and to respect other's cultures, too" (A6/6). Sharing the same opinion, Binh (B7) supposed that intercultural sensitivity was about the feeling when we first met people from other nations, and "how we react to their behaviors and appearance when we realize there are differences between us and them" (B7/4). A comprehensive-sounding opinion was proposed by Khanh (K8) that intercultural sensitivity was the way in which a person who learned a second language could understand other cultures and expressions communicated by foreigners; more importantly, with intercultural sensitivity, language learners can "dive into the communication situation even if they are in another country" (K8/4).

The results reveal that definitions of intercultural sensitivity varied among students. Some viewed intercultural sensitivity as a result of effective reaction and communication when meeting foreigners, while others emphasized understanding, accepting, and respecting culturally distinct people. The most common opinion among all respondents was that the most remarkable outcome of intercultural sensitivity is to help language learners gain appropriate understanding, acceptance, and reaction, be able to conduct suitable behaviors, and confidently adapt and integrate into the communication contexts regardless of any differences among foreigners and them.

Students' Self-Evaluation of their Intercultural Sensitivity

The analysis of the interview showed the findings of students' self-evaluation of their own intercultural sensitivity. As the ten-point scoring is the most popular in Vietnam, many students, at their discretion, apply it to evaluate their own intercultural sensitivity. One participant named An (A6), scored herself four as she admitted that she had not interacted with many people from other cultures. In addition, she stated she was a quite conservative person, who was not good at adapting to a new environment and was a bit shy as well. Therefore, she feared that she could not get along well with the new culture. An (A6/14) stated, "I love my country… sometimes in my mind, I think my country, my nationality, and my culture is the best. So sometimes, I view other cultures as a bit inferior. But that's just my feeling at certain moments, not always; I still respect the other culture" (A6/14). Interestingly, in contrast, only one participant, Binh (B7), scored her sensitivity nine with the reason that she was quite open-minded about differences between people or countries; despite her first-time exposure to any alien (e.g. her foreign teacher of English) and probably getting shocked, she could still get used to differences and easily accepted those.

Some students evaluated their intercultural sensitivity at five or six out of ten, basically because they were aware that they did not have much background on other cultures, leading to their hesitation, even avoidance, to get involved with intercultural communication contexts. Particularly, both Nhan (N4) and Oanh (O9) gave themselves a score of five. When asked about the reasons, Nhan disclosed that she had some bias or prejudice towards foreigners when communicating with them. Oanh (O9) confessed several reasons for the score, including the fact that she did not have much knowledge about other cultures or had few opportunities to meet or work with them. Furthermore, her friendship network was domestic based only. Similarly, Khanh (K8), with a self-score of six, stated she did not have many opportunities to meet or talk to foreigners. In another case, Phuong (P5), who scored herself six, had opportunities to meet people from England, Scotland, Laos, and China, but she tended to avoid those communication situations. Phuong (P5) confessed that it was because "I do not understand… there is something like a cultural barrier between me and others. But I tried to remain really friendly in communication with them, so I think I have a score of six for that" (P5/12).

Only two participants, Thanh (T2) and Mai (M3) scored eight. Thanh (T2) said that she was an outgoing person, who could easily adapt to a new culture, and she also believed that she could talk to foreigners without much difficulty. Her personal experience seemed to be varied as she stated that she had many friends from Japan, China, India, and Thailand. Mai (M3) shared that she often had positive thoughts when encountering different cultures and showed her respect to culturally distinct people, because of her awareness of the fact that "every country has its own belief" (M3/9).

In brief, though the scores of self-evaluation of intercultural sensitivity among students varied, including four (one participant), five (three participants), six (two participants), eight (two participants), and nine (one participant), most participants of the study affirmed that they were more sensitive since they had studied at their current university than when they were high school students. Apparently, students were quite well-aware of their own characteristics and personal experience when producing self-evaluations. The most common fact of students whose scores were from four to six is that they do not have many opportunities to meet and communicate with foreigners, leading to their perspectives of viewing their own culture as the best, having a prejudice towards foreigners from some cultures, or avoiding intercultural communication contexts. However, the high-score group (of eight and nine) portrayed themselves as "outgoing" or "open-minded" people, who are willing to embrace any intercultural communication chances, get used to, and accept cultural differences. Therefore, they seemed to be quite comfortable and delighted at meeting and communicating with others. Another common feature of the two groups is that the lower-score group had a limited network with foreign friends, whereas the higher-score students had various international relationships.

Students' Perception of the Importance of Intercultural Sensitivity

All participants of the study agreed that intercultural sensitivity is important because of several reasons. To describe the degree of it, many of them emphasized the points with the two most commonly used adverbs "very" and "extremely". Prominently, Thanh (T2) shared an idea from the perspective of becoming a global citizen, she supposed that intercultural sensitivity helps people a great deal to learn further knowledge through communication with foreigners, then their ability could be shaped, turning them into global citizens. Similarly, Mai (M3) stated that intercultural sensitivity is key to leading people to success through interaction and communication with culturally distinct people. Besides, Nhan (N4) added that someone's knowledge could be extended thanks to such communication contexts, so intercultural sensitivity is essential in this case, especially if an individual would like to expand her/his background.

Not only being able to communicate with others, according to Phuong (P5), intercultural sensitivity was considered a key to the establishment of a long-term relationship between an individual and others from other cultural backgrounds as mutual respect could exist thanks to good sensitivity. Similarly, Khanh (K8) said "Intercultural sensitivity plays an important role in the way people can widen their relationships, especially with foreigners… they may have a lot of friends and so have more chances to get knowledge and learn about the cultures of those" (K8/15). Viewing the topic from a global aspect, An (A6) thought that intercultural sensitivity was very important within the globalization era, which creates intercultural communication with people who can speak English. Hence, An (A6) supposed people from other cultures can work together, speak the lingua franca, and their sensitivity to cultures can help them communicate effectively.

Binh (B7), a second-year student who scored nine for self-evaluation of intercultural sensitivity, seemed to have a sensitive opinion on the importance of this as she stated that it was a part of people's lives. Some may not accept differences whereas others may, but obviously, intercultural sensitivity might help individuals gain insights into others' feelings, which helps communicators avoid embarrassing, unexpected situations. Finally, Oanh (O9) considered intercultural sensitivity indispensable in the new industrial revolution. When the network of people had become bigger, they could work with foreign people. So the higher their sensitivity was, the more effective their intercultural communication could be. Surprisingly, concerning the peace of human beings, Lien (L1) said, "Intercultural sensitivity helps you get along well with other people from other countries… unrespect of other cultures may lead to war" (L1/18).

To sum up, all participants of the interview entirely agreed that intercultural sensitivity is important because it is one of the necessary qualifications for someone who would like to become a global citizen. Furthermore, the competence of intercultural sensitivity could help one enrich their knowledge of various cultures and build up a network with others thanks to mutual understanding and respect. This also leads to another success for people who can communicate effectively in intercultural communication contexts and work well with culturally distinct people. As a part of human life, people can have an insightful understanding of others' feelings, and this will help them avoid unexpected or awkward situations. Finally, thanks to intercultural sensitivity, mutual understanding, and respect could be consolidated, leading to the avoidance of the possibility of war.

Students' Development of their Intercultural Sensitivity

This section explores the approaches and means that EFL students chose to enhance and develop their intercultural sensitivity. The most common tendency of second-year students is that they often used the mass media and participated in real communication contexts at their discretion. For example, An (A6) said that she usually watched movies or read books to learn more about different cultures; sometimes, she joined festivals or ceremonies organized within the university, where she could meet foreign friends, experience some differences, and get used to such intercultural contexts. Similarly, Khanh (K8) was fond of meeting and communicating with foreigners, especially during the period of her stay in the dormitory, leading to her personal experiences and understanding of Spanish and Thai friends' cultures and behaviors. Additionally, Khanh (K8) watched a series of TV channels, especially foreign-based programs as an effective approach to enrich her background on native cultures, and languages, and accordingly develop her intercultural sensitivity. Another second-year student, Binh (B7), besides her searching for information on the Internet, tended to enjoy herself in real communication contexts, where she could put herself in foreigners' situations to feel and comprehend the reasons and meanings of foreigners' behaviors and drew her own lessons in such specific intercultural communication contexts.

The third-year students seem to make use of the media as well, when Lien (L1), Thanh (T2), and Oanh (O9) admitted that it was necessary to watch a variety of channels (such as the news, videos, and movies) to widen knowledge and improve intercultural sensitivity. Especially, Thanh (T2) stated that books could be a source rich in culture, especially literature since life could be vividly reflected through stories, resulting in her keenness on a variety of literature from the US, UK, or China.

On the other hand, the fourth-year students appear to be a bit more different because of their emphasis on real communication contexts, which could be crucial to the development of their intercultural sensitivity. For instance, Mai (M3) said, "Because of globalization, intercultural sensitivity becomes more and more important, so people will need intercultural sensitivity to raise their awareness, show their respect to different cultures in the world… The most effective way to improve intercultural sensitivity is to communicate with different people from other cultures" (M3/14). Phuong (P5) also shared a similar point on this by stating that "…the more you meet people from other cultures, the more diversity you could experience... The first time I met a foreigner, I was so shy and avoided communication. But then from the second time or the third, I knew that I couldn't keep avoiding it. Hence, I tried to communicate and interact with them..." (P5/22). Nhan (N4) even admitted she could have more opportunities to meet and communicate with culturally distinct people since her study at the university, resulting in her remarkable growth of intercultural sensitivity.

Overall, all participants of the study seemed to be active in reaching and learning from various sources of cultures. The most three common types, in this case, consisted of media, books, and real communication contexts. The second- and third-year students considered all these sources useful to enhance their intercultural sensitivity, whereas the fourth-year students preferred the real communication contexts. Specifically, the study environment of the university seems to play a significant factor in students' development of intercultural sensitivity because it is a place for them to meet local and international friends, building up their confidence, and shaping and boosting the participants' sensitivity in intercultural communication contexts.

Discussion and Recommendation

First, most students in the current study were aware of their level of intercultural sensitivity. This was basically built on the student's personal characteristics. Participants who portrayed themselves as "outgoing, friendly" individuals tended to find it easier to meet and converse with people from other cultures, whereas the others often felt hesitant and wanted to avoid such intercultural communication contexts. As a result, the main difference between the two groups was that the former had a good network of foreign fellows and easily accepted differences in cultures, but the latter had a limited network, resulting in scant interaction.

Moreover, a perception of a "culture barrier" existing within the situation lead them to low interaction confidence. Associating this with the literature, the latter can be labeled "ethnocentrism" as Bennett (1984) described since they perceptually considered there is a clear structure of categorization between "us and them" and viewed others' cultures through their personal cultural worldview. The former, however, can be labeled the "ethorelativism" as this group of participants seemed to embrace differences in cultures (*acceptance*) and become bi-cultural or multicultural in the communication context. They can have new international friends and enjoy conversing with them (*adaptation*). The results of labeling the two groups of students can be underpinned by the theory of six elements accounting for intercultural sensitivity offered by Chen and Starosta (2000), including self-esteem, self-monitoring, open-mindedness, empathy, interaction involvement, and non-judgment. It is obvious to see that the "ethnocentrism" of the current study had quite low levels of "open-mindedness" and "non-judgment" when occasional prejudices about others' unique qualities were generated. This occurred probably because of their few opportunities to meet and converse with people from other cultures, resulting in limited experiences and avoidance of such communication contexts, (labeled the low level of “interaction involvement”). On the contrary, the “ethorelativism” group seemed to have most of the elements and could become interculturally sensitive interactants.

Second, all participants in the study agreed on the significance of intercultural sensitivity since it allows for the growth and development of global networks that may be advantageous for future professional endeavors. They believed that intercultural sensitivity is crucial competence that can build up their communication ability, help them enjoy conversations with others, and foster understanding between various social groupings, and so resulting in prospective success. This finding provides a more solid foundation for the importance of intercultural communication skills for EFL learners, particularly in facilitating effective communication and engagement in a multicultural context (Han, 2013; Marrone, 2005; Sarwari & Wahab, 2017).

Third, the students in the current study tend to have the propensity to adopt more practical approaches for the cultivation of intercultural sensitivity as they mature. In other words, senior learners preferred realistic communication contexts as the most efficient approach to engaging in real-world experiences and developing intercultural communicative competence. One of the participants interviewed, for instance, admitted that her remarkable growth of intercultural sensitivity could be achieved thanks to active engagement in a series of events, where she could meet and converse with culturally distinct people. Meanwhile, second and third-year students often made use of abundant, free-of-charge, and easy-to-get-access mass media to comprehend cultural knowledge through the second language they are learning. The finding is in line with a variety of recommendations offered by scholars stating that the cultivation of cultural knowledge is on par with learning the language of that culture; once one has acquired cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity, one can effectively communicate and collaborate across cultural boundaries (Byram & Zarate, 1997; Diller & Moule, 2005; Kirmayer, 2012; Purnell, 2005; Yunlong, 2014).

Fourth, the students in the current study were more sensitive since they have studied at Hanoi University than when they were high school students. There are two main reasons contributing to the higher level of intercultural sensitivity among EFL students, including the expansion of personal networks and a more international environment within the campus. The opportunity to study at the University brings students more chances to meet new Vietnamese and international friends, enlighten their cultural background, enrich cultural understanding, and build up their confidence at interacting with others. Moreover, the campus filled with students from various cultures and nationalities motivates students to converse with new fellows and lecturers, resulting in students’ diverse experiences in communicating and understanding culturally distinctive friends, and further promoting their intercultural sensitivity level. This finding implies two important facts. One of them is that it consolidates students’ strategies and approaches in actively enhancing personal competence upon their emphasis on the importance of intercultural sensitivity discussed earlier. Another fact relates to the university’s endeavors in internationalizing the campus’s landscape, which stimulates students’ desire and positive attitudes in connecting and improving their competence, resulting in their better performance in intercultural communication contexts. It seems that the more interaction students have within their own institution, the higher level they may possess for interaction involvement, which may then increase their open-mindedness, empathy and other relevant qualifications necessary to become interculturally sensitive interactants (Deardorff, 2004).

Fifth, the study's qualitative findings reveal that the modern training programs delivered to EFL students have been quite effective and successful because they are able to establish intuitive perception of intercultural sensitivity and strategize their own ways to improve personal sensitivity to cross-cultural communication throughout the language learning process. It is worth noting that intercultural sensitivity is not an in-born ability but requires training programs that could equip L2 learners with the necessary skills and competence (Byram, 2009). However, most participants had neither heard the term "intercultural sensitivity" prior to their participation in the current study nor possessed basic theoretical background about the subject. It is, therefore, suggested that EFL teachers should formally communicate with their students the importance of intercultural communicative competence and intercultural sensitivity, which hopefully could enhance their awareness, needs, and performance (Lysiuchenko et al., 2021; Tian & Lu, 2018) both during and after the training program. In addition, more life-based practices should be offered so that students may acquire them through experiential lessons. Students, particularly those in the "ethnocentrism" group, may be motivated to increase their abilities and competence under the pressure of formal assignments. This suggestion aligns with a recommendation made by Deardorff (2014), who asserts that curriculum and experiential learning should purposefully target intercultural competence. In this light, intercultural sensitivity should be embedded in the teaching and learning programs, aiming to promote students' motivation to learn English [see *Mirzaei and Forouzandeh (2013) or Badrkoohi (2018)*], boost their intercultural communicative competence (Hoff, 2020), and enhance students' confidence in intercultural communication contexts.

Sixth, it is important to take into account the department's and university's crucial role in assisting students' academic efforts to raise levels of intercultural sensitivity through the planning of culturally responsive curriculum and extracurricular events as one of several significant strategies to impact the internationalization of higher education (Cruz et al., 2019; Deardorff, 2004; Hénard et al., 2012; Kieran & Anderson, 2019). In this case, being proficient in intercultural sensitivity can be one of the evaluation criteria for EFL students' graduation eligibility. In other words, intercultural communicative competence should be one of the compulsory subjects within the training program as a requirement of the effectiveness of intercultural communication, rather than only the linguistic background. Besides, the study tour might be developed and arranged annually as an extra-curriculum activity, aiming to provide L2 learners with a real-world setting, in which students may mix and acquire experiential knowledge and embrace more chances to interact with foreign fellows and broaden their network in this way.

Finally, it is worth noting that the attainment of intercultural competence is such a lifelong process that no one can be boldly sure to have reached full intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2014). For this reason, EFL students are strongly advised to take intercultural sensitivity training courses as seriously as language instruction.

Conclusion

This study explored and analyzed EFL students' perceptions of intercultural sensitivity at a public institution of higher education in Hanoi, Vietnam. Through the qualitative data collected, the study reveals that EFL students' intuitive perception of intercultural sensitivity was rather close to that of the literature. From that perceptive foundation, EFL students are aware of their own level of intercultural sensitivity, realizing personal characteristics and achievements of relevant competence because of sensitivity to multicultural contexts. The findings categorize the two EFL student groups: the "ethnocentrism" group who perceptually think the "culture barrier" exists, leading them to a lower level of interaction confidence, whereas the "ethnorelativism" group who are willing to accept differences and even perceptually believe those differences are necessary as they convey peculiar identities among people. Upon their perceptions of the importance of intercultural sensitivity, especially in the contexts of intercultural communication, EFL students embrace various approaches to the improvement of their competence.

On the one hand, the qualitative findings of the study suggest that the training programs delivered to EFL students have been effective and successful since EFL students have been acquiring intercultural sensitivity through their second language learning process, resulting in their intuitive perception of the term. Some cultural events offered to EFL students to expand their networks seemingly have been conducted well, along with the curriculum of the department and the endeavors in campus internationalization of the university. On the other hand, the fact that EFL students have not known the term intercultural sensitivity until their participation in the present study should be a concern at the departmental and institutional levels. The main findings of the study are considered useful to the university's managers because the principle of the training program with the inclusion of intercultural communication and intercultural sensitivity can help produce highly qualified graduates for society, especially in the globalization context. Furthermore, the findings are supposedly helpful to the department's leaders in the design of the curriculum purposefully dedicated to boosting EFL students' intercultural competence. Finally, as a result of the present study, it is hoped that EFL students can have more motivation to acquire and strategize their learning process to enhance intercultural sensitivity to become intercultural interactants in the new era. More studies on these with the employment of other data collection instruments such as class observation may answer more questions and yield further information to the literature.

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Appendix 1 - Interview Protocol

Time of interview: from eight to ten minutes

Date: ………. Place: …………

Interviewer: Huyen-Thanh Nguyen

Interviewee: ………… Interview number: ………..

Good morning/afternoon.

Thank you for your participation today. I am Huyen-Thanh Nguyen, a researcher who is conducting a study on EFL Students' Perception of Intercultural Sensitivity, the English Department, Hanoi University. The goal of this project is to explore and analyze students' understanding and perspectives on intercultural sensitivity relating to the language learning process.

You were selected through a voluntary response to a previously administered mail survey, at which you were offered to participate in an interview and share your contact information if you had agreed to join. Prior to today's interview, you were sent an introductory letter and a consent form via email, then your reply was sent accordingly to confirm today's participation.

The interview takes from eight to ten minutes and will follow a designed interview protocol. If you have no further comments, let's get started with the first question.

[Note: the researcher will use phrases such as "Tell me more", "Could you give me an example?", "Could you explain that?" as prompts to solicit more detailed information when needed.]

No	Questions
1	In your opinion, how can intercultural sensitivity be defined/understood?
2	What level do you evaluate your intercultural sensitivity? Why?
3	What do you think about the importance of intercultural sensitivity? Explain in detail.
4	How does your intercultural sensitivity develop?
5	Are you more or less sensitive in intercultural communication than when you were a high school student? Why?

Thank you for your cooperation!

Appendix 2: Sample of Interview Transcript

Interview IL1

Date: 9 December 2022

Total length: 10.31 minutes

Interviewer: Huyen-Thanh Nguyen

Student: Lien

1	I	Good afternoon.
2	L	Good afternoon.
3	I	Thank you for your participation into this project. Actually, this is the research study that I have been conducting about intercultural sensitivity and language learning motivation. So before we get started, may I ask Are you willing to join with me today for the interview?
4	L	Yeah… I’m very glad to join this project.
5	I	Thank you. Let me just start by asking if you have ever heard of the term intercultural sensitivity?
6	L	This is the first time I’ve ever heard of this phrase.
7	I	Okay, may I ask: How do you think about the definition of intercultural sensitivity? In other words, in your opinion, what can cultural sensitivity be defined?
8	L	Actually I made opinion… Intercultural communicative competence is mean…the communication among different culture or language. And it tries to convey cultural…like that.
9	I	Right. How about you intercultural sensitivity? What do you think about the definition of it?
10	L	As for me, intercultural sensitivity is when you meet a foreigner, and then something that…really strange. And that you…it a little bit weird, but it may be their culture and you know you respect it.
11	I	Thank you. Let's move on to the second question: What level do you evaluate your intercultural sensitivity?
12	L	Actually, I don’t have many chances to communicate with foreigners, so I think my level is about 5 out of 10.
13	I	Okay can you please explain why you score yourself 5 out of 10?
14	L	Well, in my free time, I always watch anime, which is animation. It’s about different culture and I try to explore the character and the culture through characters and actions. Even so, it’s too difficult for me to understand sometimes.

Changing the "Mindset" of Saudi MA Students: From Native-Speakerism to Global Englishes

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Abstract

English is an international language with diverse varieties around the world that are referred to as Global Englishes (GE). Numerous studies demonstrate the importance and effectiveness of integrating GE-informed materials in English Language Teaching (ELT) practices but in the context of the Gulf countries, particularly in Saudi Arabia, such studies are relatively rare. Furthermore, ELT in the Saudi setting is heavily predicated on native-speakerism, with few courses adopting materials informed by GE, which in any case are also limited. This study addresses this gap by exploring the impact of a course delivered on English as a World Language to Saudi postgraduate students using a critical pedagogical approach. The study assesses how such a course can contribute to students' awareness of their own English as well as GE in general. This qualitative research study investigated the perceptions of Saudi students taking the optional course as part of their Master's English degree at Jouf University in Saudi Arabia. Data collection methods included semi-structured interviews and reflective journals. The findings revealed positive attitudes towards incorporating GE into English learning and teaching and an improved understanding of linguistic diversity after taking the course. The pedagogical implications of the findings are discussed, and recommendations are given for integrating GE into current ELT practices. The study explores whether incorporating a critical pedagogical approach can not only enhance students' awareness of English varieties, but also improve their attitudes towards such diverse forms of English as well as their own English variety.

Keywords: critical pedagogical approach, Global Englishes, native-speakerism, qualitative approach, student perceptions, World Englishes

There is no doubt that the use of English has spread widely in the current globalized world and that knowledge of the language is perceived as an asset (Elyas, Alzahrani, & Widodo, 2021). Its status and value have made English the main means of communication at a global level and a primary language of instruction in numerous fields (Elyas & Picard, 2018). Consequently, the learning and teaching of this global and dominant language has become indispensable and invaluable. The status of English and its frequent use among speakers who speak other languages and come from different cultural backgrounds have contributed to the emergence of diverse varieties of English worldwide, referred to as World Englishes (WEs) or Global Englishes (GEs) (Boonsuk, Ambele, & McKinley, 2021). These diverse forms of English include different accents, vocabulary and grammar, and reflect different identities and cultures. The complexity and range of differences indicate that English is not only used beyond its linguistic and geographic boundaries but is creatively changed by its users (Jenkins, 2015). This also indicates that English is no longer attached to a particular culture or standard. In other words, English is no longer owned by groups of "native" speakers.

Despite the fact that non-native English speakers (NNESs) vastly outnumber native speakers, current ELT principles and practices are still closely focused on native-speaker ideologies (Fang & Ren, 2018). In response to this and to accommodate the current dynamics and diverse forms of the English language, the GE literature advocates the need for critically revisiting and reevaluating current ELT principles and practices that are predicated on native-speakerism[1] (Holliday, 2006), the belief that ELT should aim to teach the language produced by English native speakers (Rajprasit, 2021). A central argument is that current ELT principles and practices do not reflect the current linguistic landscape (Jenkins, 2015; Seidlhofer, 2011). Therefore, there has been a call for the provision of more practical ELT experiences, not only by incorporating GE but also by adopting GE-oriented pedagogies into current teaching practices. Furthermore, because awareness of GEs is lacking in current ELT practices (Fang & Ren, 2018; Galloway & Rose, 2018), awareness needs to be raised of the current diverse forms of English in order to develop more positive attitudes among learners of English towards its diverse varieties worldwide (Rajprasit, 2021). In this regard, there are increasing requests to further investigate learners' attitudes towards GE concepts (for a review, see Rose, McKinley, & Galloway, 2021). This is the context for this study which attempts to fill the knowledge gap by investigating the impact of a GE course on Saudi university students. It assesses how such a course might shape students' awareness of their own English and GEs in general and discusses several pedagogical implications that will be of interest to educators in both the Saudi Arabian and other environments.

The findings and insights gained in this study are of considerable importance to instructors and curriculum designers in Saudi Arabia as well as being useful for instructors and academics in other contexts. The recommendations formulated based on the research findings are geared towards taking steps in developing the content for postgraduate English department curricula and reviewing pedagogical issues in terms of WE/GE and teaching methods. While these changes largely depend on the will of individual universities, a strategic dissemination of the findings and formulated recommendations will help raise stakeholders' awareness of aspects that may need to be addressed to enhance the effectiveness of students' learning, and the effectiveness of teachers' teaching practices in recruiting English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers. The inquiry generated in the study will also be useful in explaining GE instruction

[1] The term *native-speakerism* refers to a widespread ideology in ELT whereby native speaker English teachers are believed to be better teachers than any other teachers because native English teachers "represent a Western culture from which springs the ideals both of the English language and of English language teaching methodology" (Holliday, 2006, p.6).

and how it has been a useful approach to improve the linguistic proficiency of students, especially when they are in contact with international people who speak English as non-native English speakers. In the same vein, this study will be useful for English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as a second language (ESL) courses, which would benefit from a syllabus that focuses on raising students' awareness of English diversity and improving the visibility of linguistic and cultural aspects.

To bridge the gap between theory and practice, the aim of this paper is to examine the impact on EFL student perceptions of participating in a World Englishes/GE course and to assess the possibility of integrating the GE concept into English classes in the Saudi context. Thus, it addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of Saudi MA students at Jouf University towards their own English after taking part in the course World Englishes/GE?
2. What are the perceptions of Saudi MA students at Jouf University towards the concept of World Englishes/GE after taking part in the course?

Literature Review

Global Englishes in the World

With the growth of globalization, the English language has become the common language among people who speak other languages (Fang, 2016; Wang & Fang, 2020). The international spread of English usage has also led to the diversification of the English language and to the development of new paradigms highlighting the different varieties of English, as well as challenging the superiority of native speaker (NS) and standard English. These paradigms include "World Englishes" (WEs) (Kachru, 2011), "English as an International Language" (EIL) (Matsuda, 2012; McKay, 2018; Sharifian, 2009, 2013) and "English as a Lingua Franca" (ELF) (Jenkins, 2015).

The term lingua franca refers to a common second language used in fields such as science, technology and international business. When people in different parts of the world make contact with each other, they will usually choose a language that everyone knows – at least to some extent. In this sense, English is spoken and written as a lingua franca more than any other language (Crystal, 2012). The traditional NS norms in English Language Teaching (ELT) have been developed from different English varieties and ELF (Cogo, 2012). ELF can be defined as the use of English language as a common language and as a medium of communication among individuals of different native languages (Seidlhofer, 2011, p.7). By contrast, Global Englishes (GE) is a broader term that reconsiders English language in all its forms and varieties and also includes English as a lingua franca (Jenkins, 2015), indicating the spread and the frequent use of English in different settings and contexts. It is also used as an umbrella term to cover research in the fields of World Englishes, translanguaging and plurilingualism, ELF, and EIL (Galloway & Numajiri, 2019).

Some studies have been conducted to explore the influence of teaching WE and EIL to students. For example, a study of Fang and Ren (2018), conducted in China, investigated the influence of a WE course on English language students' views towards their own English. The study also aimed to explore attitudes towards GE more generally after students had taken the course. The data not only revealed that students' awareness of English varieties had improved after taking the WE course, but also their confidence in their own English was enriched. The results also showed that students were able to critically reflect on such different varieties and forms of English and that they gained an awareness of flexibility for non-standard English, with the most important issue being the use of English in an intelligible way.

Rajprasit's study (2021) aimed to raise WE awareness among a group of 75 Thai university first-year students registered on a general English course by using innovative WE-oriented language learning activities. The study suggests that adding these activities to the English course increased students' awareness of English as a global language and highlighted the "diverse cultures and identities often encountered during inter-cultural exchanges" (Rajprasit, 2021, p.7). In addition, the written reflections provided by these students indicated that they gained a clearer understanding and stronger awareness of the different varieties and forms of English and became more open-minded to such diversity.

Teixeira and Pozzi (2014) investigated the influences of teaching a course on WEs to a group of seven international students with different L1 backgrounds. In their study, quantitative and qualitative data were collected by using pre- and post- accent-recognition quizzes, a questionnaire, students' reflective writing, recordings of group discussions, an exit questionnaire and course evaluations. The results showed that students became more aware of the different varieties and forms of English language and, more importantly, were able to rethink the local and global English language use.

The GE movement also encompasses ELT pedagogy. Based on post-method pedagogy, Fang (2016) presented a new paradigm for intercultural communication teaching pronunciation which asked teachers to reject the native-oriented approach that is upheld as the standard in several ELT contexts. In this post-method era, Kumaravadivelu (2005) , describes how "the post-method condition is a sustainable state of affairs that compels us to fundamentally restructure our view of language teaching and teacher education" (p.173). This perspective not only emphasizes the central importance of considering the content of what is taught to students but also the situation in which the learning process occurs. Specifically, how English is used in the local setting and the sociocultural conditions in which the learners shape their personal identities needs to be central (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). While Kumaravadivelu's (2003) approach does not use the term GE explicitly, the study is related in terms of how it locates ELT within an analytical viewpoint that encounters the teaching paradigm that underpins EFL's traditional pedagogy.

Galloway and Rose's study (2018) explores a Global Englishes approach – Global English Language Teaching (GELT) – that influences learners' attitudes to English and ELT. The participant students were invited to present and choose an English variety. The study's findings showed that students had more optimistic attitudes towards English varieties as a result of their participation. The intervention not only raised awareness of the phonological differences in each variety, but also helped them to explore "the linguistic history of a nation" and to comprehend the process that enabled "the variety of English spoken there" (Galloway & Rose, 2018, p.10). According to the GELT approach, learners' L1 and cultures are considered as a resource instead of a source of interference. In keeping with a critical pedagogy approach, the norms of English are more flexible and ownership of English is questioned (Fang & Ren, 2018). Therefore, GELT is viewed as "a more appropriate approach, in line with the current emphasis on multilingualism, in contrast to traditional ELT practices which continue to be overwhelmingly monolingual" (Fang & Ren, 2018, p.386). Similarly, Sifakis (2017) offers an ELF awareness frame for integrating ELF research in teacher education and ELT pedagogy. This frame promotes an understanding of ELF among learners, stakeholders and teachers, and also enhances awareness of learning and of instructional practice. This approach accentuates the "dynamic, recurrent interplay of *negotiations* involving purpose, syllabus, method, and evaluation within a milieu of attitudes and expectations of everyone involved" (Sifakis, 2017, p.9).

Despite the studies referenced above, assessment practices in ELT continue to reflect traditional performances and do not yet appear to reveal GE-informed practices. In EFL contexts, particularly in the Gulf countries, EFL education is still very influenced by native-speakerism as are the students (Alruwaili, 2021). Therefore, this study explores the attitudes of Saudi MA students at Jouf University towards a GE course, with the intention of equipping students with an awareness of the diverse forms of English and an adequate understanding of the current linguistic landscape of the English language.

Methodology

Setting and Participants

An in-depth qualitative inquiry was conducted with 18 MA students (Table 1), aged 20–23, at Jouf University in the north of Saudi Arabia. There are approximately 100 postgraduate students in this university. In order to study in the English department, students are required to pass a certain level of English throughout their study, such as general English which places emphasis on four English skills. Study participants included students who had completed an intermediate English level, obtained a high grade, and finished their second academic year. All of these participants passed a placement test which was conducted by the college with a band 5 score, as some of them wanted to study abroad, for which they needed the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) 4.5–5. They chose this GE course as an elective course, regarding it as essential for their further studies. The course was taught in the second semester in year 2 of the MA course with 21 students enrolled in total from the 2021–2022 academic year.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristic of Students

Item	Students	Frequency
Gender	Male	8
	Female	10
Origin	Local students	18
	International students (i.e., Italian, Spanish, etc.)	0
Level of English	Intermediate level	18

Research Procedures

In this research, two qualitative methods were utilized for data gathering: semi-structured interviews and reflective journals. Data were collected over approximately two months, from early May 2022 until the end of June 2022. The process of data collection is illustrated in Table 2, followed by a further explanation of how these instruments were utilized.

Table 2
Stages of Data Collection Methods and How They Were Conducted

Stage	Data collection method	How was this method conducted?
First	Semi-structured interview	-interviews of between 30 to 40 minutes with 18 students. Thirteen interviews were included in the final thematic analysis.
Second	Reflective journals	-the same group of 18 students write reflective journals as one of the requirements of the course portfolio. Ten journals were collected for review.

Since the focus of the research was to develop the quality of the course and to comprehend students' initial perceptions and any changing attitudes in relation to GE, students were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews at the end of the course. According to Braun and Clarke (2013), the qualitative researcher should "treat interviews as a flexible tool, which are partly planned and partly spontaneous" (p.95). Designing an interview guide, a "series of questions that will guide [the researcher] 'conversation' with the participants, is considered key to the successful use of the interview in qualitative research" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p.81). Therefore, a question guide was designed ahead of time (see Appendix A). The interview questions were developed by the researchers and based on their findings from the literature review. Then, the researchers piloted these questions using a separate group. After the questions were successfully piloted, they were sent to several professors in applied linguistics in the English department at Jouf University to conduct a final check of the appropriateness of the questions and their validity.

Based on the professional experience of the researchers undertaking this study, it was understood that the timing of the interviews was important. For example, students' perceptions throughout the semester might have been influenced by the studying conditions that the participants faced. The researchers understood that scheduling interviews mid-way through the semester might have led to data that reflected the participants' first impressions of the course and might have been less reliable than collecting data towards the end of the semester. Therefore, the interviews were conducted at the end of the second semester. During the interviews (n=13), students were invited to share what they had learned from the course.

Interviewing was relatively informal and took place face-to-face in a room on the campus of Jouf University. A digital recorder was used to capture the interviews in their entirety and notes were taken to illuminate any potential ambiguity in the transcript. A copy of the interview questions was provided to each interviewee at least two days before the interview date. This gave the interviewees an overall idea about the nature of these questions and the time to think about their responses, contributing towards the "richness, depth of response, comprehensiveness and honesty that [are] some of the hallmarks of successful interviewing" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011, p.278). Questions related to their understanding of the concept of GE; their experiences and motivation in learning English; their perceptions of their own English before and after taking the course; and their suggestions for improving the course. Open-ended questions were used in the interviews and were followed up by more questions and prompts. Since all of the participants were proficient in English, the English language was used in the interviews. Regarding ethical considerations and minimizing the influence of the researchers on the research, the students were told that all their perceptions and views shared in the interviews would not influence their results in the course. Reflective journals were also used as a data source. Ten reflective journals were collected, which had been prepared by the same groups of students as a requirement of their course portfolio (see Appendix B for the instructions for the reflective journal). These reflective journals were originally written in English.

For ethical considerations, the researchers acquired ethical authorization from the University of Jouf's Faculty Research Ethical Committee. Three teachers who taught the participants were known to the researchers of this study. With the teachers' assistance, the researchers contacted the participants via email, whereby the researchers illustrated the main focus of the study, specifically, that there were no inconveniences and the students could refuse to answer any question or withdraw any time they want. Participants were informed about the aims of the research and its outcomes and the researchers obtained informed consent before conducting the research. The participants were reassured again that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time up until the data had been analyzed and written up (Cohen et al., 2018). Furthermore, they were informed that their names would not be revealed anywhere and their recorded voices and any collected data from their lessons would be kept completely confidential and anonymous. Pseudonyms were adopted for all participants prior to transcribing the interviews.

Data Analysis

Before analyzing the interview recordings, each recording was listened to twice in order to gain an overall understanding and also to be fully immersed in each interview. With regards to the actual analysis, thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012) was used to analyze and identify emerging themes within the qualitative data. Qualitative data sets (interviews and reflective journal responses) were analyzed separately, and the data coded and analyzed inductively to develop thematic frameworks before cross comparisons were produced. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality of the participants of the study, each participant was assigned a code that was associated with the corresponding reflective journal response as well as the interview transcript.

Qualitative analysis was conducted using MAXQDA software because it is one of the Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) digital programs that allows the importing of non-English text (see Appendix C). Therefore, all data sources, such as the transcriptions of audio recordings of interviews and reflective journal responses, were imported into MAXQDA. This software helped in the management of all the data sources as they were kept in one place, making the triangulation of the two sources much easier. In addition, as Creswell (2016) highlights, digital analysis programs, in the process of creating codes and constructing themes, are more effective than coding manually because it helps when coding data by reading line by line and in a more systematic manner. Therefore, using MAXQDA provided an opportunity for a third reading, which yielded another look at the sample of the manually applied codes and those in the previous reading and the ability to contrast these codes with those produced from the third reading in order to ascertain if they could be enhanced and expressed more exactly.

Discussion and Findings

Perceptions of Students towards Their Own English after Course on WE/GE

The analysis found a tendency among students to be fairly negative towards their own English language skills and their EFL experience before taking the course. For instance, one student

(S) shared in the interview (Inter) that her experience of learning English was very negative, especially when she talked with a native speaker (NS). She reported “In fact, I rarely use English to start a conversation because I am very confused when I speak with native speakers of English because they cannot understand my accent and at the same time, I cannot understand the other’s accents” (Inter.S8). Another student said “I hated to learn English from the teachers who are from the Philippines and Egypt because of their accents” (Inter.S5). Two students (Inter.S3 and Inter.S10) also complained about their non-Saudi teachers for making English harder due to their unintelligible pronunciation. For example, one stated that “it was difficult to understand my teacher’s accents because she was from Egypt and was pronouncing ‘something’ like ‘somesing’”(Inter.S10). Another participant openly declared “my English is poor” (Inter.S6).

Mimicking other people’s accents either in an unconscious or conscious way was also seen as a strategy before taking the course. Eight students revealed that they always tried to mimic their teachers’ accents or specific native accents from social media or movies. For instance, a participant commented that she preferred to listen and learn English from native English speakers because they “speak English fluently” (Inter.S4). The majority of students (7) generally thought they were clearly encouraged to mimic American, British or Australian English accents.

Based on the participants’ responses, their experience of taking the GE course was very positive. When expressing positive perceptions about their experience of the course, students used adjectives such as “perfect”, “amazing”, “highly motivated”, “interesting” and “wonderful”. For example, one participant stated that “in fact, my experience in taking this course was very effective and motivated me because I have learned a lot in this course such as how the English language spread, the reasons behind the spread of English language (e.g., political, economic, personal, historical, intellectual, and entertainment reasons), the meaning of creole and pidgin language” (Inter.S9). According to two students, this course helped them to recognize “why people speak differently in different social contexts” (Inter.S11) and appreciate “the varieties of English around the world and the differences in the English language itself that are used in various contexts across the world” (Inter.S2). In a similar way, some students stated in their reflective journals (Jour) that their experiences were very motivating:

> I was so excited in understanding the different Englishes in the world and how English can be changed or modified in the way that people can understand easily. This course offers a great amount of knowledge and information about the processes of developing English in different contexts so that people who are not native speakers can understand and achieve a successful process of communication. I chose this course also to deepen my knowledge about the different Englishes all over the world and understand the true nature of that universal language. I was interested in learning different forms of English beside the standard form that we have been learning from our primary stage. (Jour.S12)

> The course was as I expected, full of very interesting information and facts about how the English language developed and how it changed to fulfil the needs of communication of people. (Jour.S10)

> This course was one of the courses that I enjoyed studying as I was learning desirable information and knowledge about the English language which I am interested in so much. (Jour.S7)

Regarding student perceptions after taking the course, the majority of participants demonstrated more awareness about the multiplicity of Englishes and expressed that they were less embarrassed about their local English as a result of participating in the course. For instance, S1 expressed his view by saying that "I don't feel shame if I speak with my home accent" (Inter.S1). Another student commented "it is very essential to not judge whether someone speaks standardly but the most important thing is how you speak and articulate clearly during communication" (Inter.S8). Similarly, another participant remarked that "from this moment I considered myself as an English user who can express myself without feeling afraid of making any grammar mistakes in speaking or writing" (Inter.S5). Similarly, another student stated that after the course, "I recognize that all English varieties are acceptable even though they are different in terms of vocabulary, pronunciation, phonology, morphology, syntax. English speakers can communicate with each other around the world even though there are occasional gaps in understanding" (Inter.S4). Other students stated that they were aware after the course that there is no single accurate English accent, but the important thing is the pronunciation of words and that the use of language is correct (Inter.S2 and Inter.S9). One student articulated in the interview that this course taught her about "all forms of English language and its different varieties that exist which are used by different people and are similar when it comes to the linguistic features and functions" (Inter.S6). Another student added that he learned from this course that "all English teachers whether they were native or non-native teachers can be effective in teaching English, and each of them has his/her strengths and weaknesses" (Inter.S11).

In their reflective journals, many students indicated that this course had been very useful for them and expanded their knowledge. For example:

> The course has given us a very different perspective and also understanding of English in terms of teaching and learning and we also have different views of English as non-native speakers and learners. The course was so useful in expanding our knowledge in that field. We also became more aware of English and its nature and how it can be modified in different contexts and the development of it with different people. (Jour.S14)
>
> After finishing the course, I do feel that I have more powerful information about the nature of English that makes me more confident about my knowledge and strategies of dealing with this language as a teacher or even as a learner. (Jour.S12) The course informed us about the history of the English language and how English developed and changed and in particular how it can be modified according to the participants and contexts and also how to be a good teacher and how to be a good learner. (Jour.S2)
>
> I found the course full of information that helped me to better understand the different forms of English that are used by individuals who come from different cultural backgrounds and more importantly this course helped me to understand how English developed and is used in different contexts and settings. (Jour.S7)

The above quotes from the students' reflective journals demonstrate that the course changed their perception about their own English and that using variations of English was no longer seen as a source of embarrassment. They were able to recognize that the important thing was "shared lucidness" and to be less judgmental about local accent and use. It is important to emphasize that the GE approach does not disregard the need for precision; rather, it promotes the idea of shared lucidness via discussion as a significance for verbal exchange.

For instance, a participant wrote in his journal: "before the course…. I thought I have to talk in English like a native speaker…. But after the course I am aware it does not matter…I only need to demonstrate myself in an understandable and obvious way" (Jour.S15). Another student wrote in her journal about her experience after the course that "non-native speakers of English can achieve a successful process of communication in an unconscious or conscious way" (Jour.S13).

The students' reflective journals also demonstrated more critical awareness of English. For example, a student stated that:

> the course has changed my views on how English is taught and learned. Before taking the course, I thought that English is taught to students all around the world in order to reach a native speaker model and to become like them. However, I realized that there are other varieties of English which are already used for communication and are approved by a lot of linguists and communities. These varieties are acceptable and can be developed into a lingua franca model to be applied in English as Second Language and English as a Foreign Language to create a mutual understanding among people from different cultures. (Jour.S16)

Another participant (S10) articulated in the interview that her attitude had changed. Before participating in the course, she had feelings of inferiority because she could not speak English in a fluent way. Her teacher had previously told her that her "Saudi English accent should be changed, and it is better to imitate an English native accent such as an American accent…but she could not reach that level and [that] made learning the language a real challenge for her". Strangely, her teacher assessed her performance as weak and gave her a low grade in terms of participation and in the final exam. She completed her story saying: "At that moment, I could not speak standard English for that reason I felt very confused". In her reflective journal, she stated that after the course, she changed her view and "felt more relieved about practicing the so-called standard accent" (Jour.S10).

Perceptions of Students towards Concept of World and Global English after Course

Participants' perspectives regarding the title of the course generated some interesting findings. For example, one student (S4) stated in the interview that "I did not know what 'World Englishes' means, and I expected that it would talk about English as a world-famous language, and not about the linguistic varieties that we studied". Another student explained that she "felt very uncomfortable because I thought it to be a difficult one". Another student reported in his interview that

> when I first read the course's title "World Englishes", I wondered why it was written in the plural form. When I started the course, I realized that the title was intended to refer to different varieties of English. These are the varieties spoken by native speakers as well as non-native speakers of English. (Inter.S12)

Generally, students' awareness of GE was raised and the integration of GE in ELT was considered essential. Despite deep-rooted language ideologies, the students learned how to challenge these ideas and examine English beyond that perspective. For instance, one student expressed that "I gained a new understanding of GE, I corrected my perspectives about English, and it has several varieties" (Inter, S6). The students also showed in their reflective journals how participation in the course had led to them thinking about different aspects of GE, such as cultural and linguistic diversity. In the same vein, one student highlighted in his reflective journal how he had come to understand the importance of being "a good teacher and even a good learner; it is very useful to know the nature of English and how to use it for several aims" (Jour.S9).

After being introduced to the concept of GE, the students also became more tolerant and flexible about other English accents. For instance, one student reported that "now, I can accept other individuals when they use English because my linguistic awareness was improved after my knowledge of GE" (Inter.S6). Another student stated that his knowledge of GE has developed his awareness of varieties of English originating from other countries, such as New Zealand English, South African English and Indian English.

The students' reflective journals revealed a generally positive attitude towards GE and the course overall, and an enhanced comprehension of English had an influence on their mindsets, behaviours and identities. Four students developed a more critical position towards EFL through participating in the course. They stated that native-speakerism has "caused several problems in ELT and there's a need to reevaluate and think again about it" (Jour.S2). In addition, they stated the belief that it is essential to argue several language thoughts from a GE perspective (Jour.S6). To sum up, a deeper understanding of English and more awareness of GE enabled the students to challenge some of their own beliefs about English as well as be more critical of traditional ELT approaches.

Pedagogical Implications and Recommendations

The findings of this study show that the students developed more positive attitudes as a result of the course, not only towards GE in general but also their own English. The findings also show that the students gained a deeper appreciation of English varieties and felt more confident about their local English form. After taking the course, the students not only became more tolerant of English diversity but also gained a broader understanding of other English varieties. Furthermore, the findings show that after being introduced to the concept of GE, the students developed greater awareness and positive attitudes towards English diversity and varieties. A more important finding is that the students recognized the value of their own English variety, felt less embarrassed about their own English, thus changing their perceptions about concepts that are deeply rooted in traditional ELT approaches. The findings of the current study are consistent with those of Fang and Ren (2018), Rajprasit (2021), Teixeira and Pozzi (2014), and Galloway and Rose (2018). Smith and Jones (2001) suggested that students became more aware of the several differences in the English language. The course also assisted the students in raising their WE/GE awareness of English as a global language and became more open-minded towards their diversities.

Although the current study was conducted in the Saudi context, the findings and implications can also be relevant for other ELT communities, specifically for a Bachelor's degree programme with a large class size. The direct benefit of this study is the feedback, with just one of the many end products being the students' attitudinal change in their understanding of

WE/GE and their English learning. Overall, the findings of this study have a number of important implications for future practice.

One pedagogical implication of this study is that current ELT practices should incorporate and adopt GE-oriented syllabuses into the current teaching model. In other words, when designing ELT curricula and policies, it is recommended that policymakers and curriculum designers should minimize the use of native-oriented monolingual English approaches and, instead, actively ensure the integration of GE-informed materials. Adopting GE-informed materials in ELT will help language learners develop not only a better understanding of linguistic diversity but also a greater awareness of the hybrid nature of English, which in turn will help learners acknowledge the legitimacy of their own English. A possible suggestion for these materials and content is to provide learners with GE-oriented learning activities and materials in courses aimed at developing listening-speaking skills that are based on learners' needs and are relevant to their interests and goals. For instance, curriculum designers and English language instructors can provide their learners with listening logs and activities aimed at helping them explore different English varieties. In turn, exposing learners to different English varieties will help them gain a deeper understanding of the language spoken by speakers of various linguacultural backgrounds and select the English variety that sounds most relevant to them. Furthermore, exposing learners to diverse Englishes can challenge traditional ELT practices and learners' attitudes to native-speakerism. Such exposure will help learners appreciate real-life English in their local environment and the English used in their current communicative encounters, which have become increasingly international and multicultural in nature.

Another key recommendation is that GE-informed materials should be locally and individually designed by taking into consideration factors such as learners' goals and needs, instructors' backgrounds, learners' local attitudes and perceptions towards English learning, and their expectations. Local language instructors and curriculum designers should be engaged in designing such materials because they are more able to reflect and adapt materials that suit the local context. They are in the best position to incorporate local and familiar cultural contents that can actively engage learners in the learning process.

At the same time, such GE-informed materials cannot be achieved without incorporating and adding GE concepts in teachers' training and teachers' professional development programmes. Therefore, language instructors and teachers should be trained to design GE-informed materials so that they can adopt them in their teaching practices. Doing so will help not only language instructors and teachers incorporate GE concepts in their teaching practices and raise their awareness but will also enable learners to gain an updated knowledge and understanding of the current status of English in a relevant and meaningful way.

In this vein, the establishment of courses on Global English Language Teaching (GELT) (see e.g., Galloway and Rose, 2018) would help teachers and students to rethink their views towards correct pronunciation and replace the somewhat outmoded view of culture residing in a particular country within a particular group of people. In addition, this course would help to enhance students' and teachers' understanding and recognition of the varieties of English and to challenge the traditional ELT approach.

Conclusion

This paper explored the perceptions of EFL students participating in a WE/GE course and assessed the possibility of integrating the GE concept into the English classes in the Saudi context. With regards to changing the "mindset" of Saudi MA students, a positive outcome was observed: participants felt more confident about their own English learning, and embraced the concept of World English, which enabled them to recognize the value of their own English variety. There are, nevertheless, some limitations that need to be addressed, although it should be stressed that these do not necessarily negatively impact the results. Rather, they are presented as suggestions for future research. Firstly, the study participants were from a single university. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies include participants from different geographical settings by recruiting students from different universities. In addition, because the focus of the study was to comprehend students' initial perceptions and any changing attitudes in relation to GE, it would be more interesting if the study had adapted a pretest-posttest design. Therefore, future studies could employ a pretest-posttest research approach in their experimental design, potentially generating more detailed insights into the change of attitudes in relation to GEs. Finally, as the study relies on data from semi-structured interviews with students, future studies could examine the teaching of World Englishes/GE in similar contexts from teacher perspectives or concentrate on particular activities within the course, using mixed methods.

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Appendix A

Semi-structured interview

1. Can you tell me about your experience of learning English to date?
2. Could you please share your opinion about what you think of your own English in (pronunciation learning, attitudes towards own English before/after taking the course, etc.)?
3. In your experience from studying the course, can you explain what does GE/WE mean (how we can incorporate WE/GE in ELT, what are the current and future uses of English?)
4. In your view, what are the parts of the course that you like? Can you give any suggestions for improving the course?

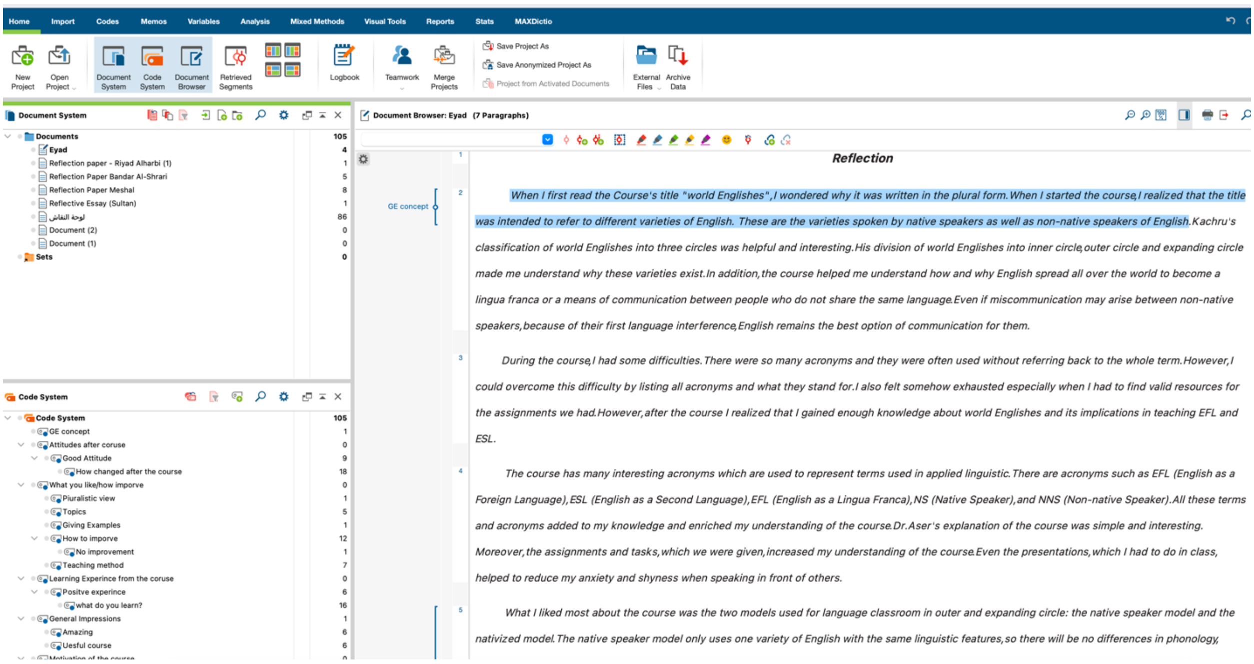
   Thank you very much for taking your time to give me this interview.

Appendix B

Guidelines for reflective journals

1. What is your motivation for choosing the course?
2. What are your views about the course WE/GE during and after the semester?
3. Can you tell me what you are learning from the course WE/GE?
4. In your view, what are the parts of the course that you like? Can you give any suggestions for improving?
5. Do you change your perceptions towards learning and teaching English after taking the course?

Appendix C: Screenshot of MAXQDA Software



Language and Conflict in East Jerusalem: Arab Teachers' Perspectives on Learning Hebrew

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Erratum: This manuscript was reuploaded on July 26, 2023, after an error in the ordering of the authors on p. 49 by the Publications Office came to light. Previously, Nurit Buchweitz was listed at lead author in error, not Abed Al-Rahman Mar'i. This order is now corrected.

Abstract

This study examines East Jerusalem teachers' perceptions of and attitudes toward acquiring and communicating in Hebrew as a second language. The context of the study is a complex education system dominated by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. East Jerusalem's education system is divided between schools supervised by Israel's Ministry of Education and those supervised by its Palestinian Authority counterpart. Israel's Ministry of Education requires that teachers in its East Jerusalem public schools learn basic Hebrew language and communication at an Israeli institute of higher education. This research seeks to examine a sampling of East Jerusalem teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward acquiring Hebrew as a second language and communicating in it with the majority Jewish society. Study participants, all Arab teachers from East Jerusalem who had studied Hebrew at an Israeli college, were asked about their command and usage of Hebrew in several open-ended questions provided on a structured questionnaire that offered the respondents the ability to elaborate on their thoughts. The responses were subsequently assessed qualitatively. The study found that the participants' willingness to learn Hebrew for daily communication purposes was motivated primarily by instrumental and pragmatic considerations. According to the findings, the participants' communication in Hebrew was accompanied by feelings that in the process of acquiring and using the language, they were jeopardizing their sense of Palestinian identity as Palestinian citizens under Israeli rule. These perceptions arose in the context of the precarious status of East Jerusalem. The finding that national identification appears to impede second language acquisition has important implications for national language policy in similar regions.

Keywords: Arab second-language teacher, East Jerusalem, Hebrew, language education

Over recent years, there has been a growing interest in learning Hebrew among the Arab population of East Jerusalem. While Israel governs there, that part of the city remains predominantly Arab-speaking. In this context, the present study, that examines the perceptions of Arab teachers in East Jerusalem about learning and communicating in Hebrew, differs from studies conducted on the acquisition of Hebrew as a second language in Israel. The study focuses on the unique citizenship status of Arabs living in East Jerusalem as well as on the fact that two adversarial nations, Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA), compete for control over the education system in that part of the city (Mar'i & Buchweitz, 2021).

The Arab residents of East Jerusalem are a sub-community of the larger Arab minority in Israel, but with a distinct status. Unlike other Arab communities in Israel, they are not full-fledged citizens. However, they do have permanent Israeli residency status, meaning they can vote in local elections, receive the same social security and health benefits as Israeli citizens, and may work throughout Israel. They may also apply for Israeli citizenship under certain conditions, among which is demonstrating a basic knowledge of Hebrew (Ghanim, 2017).

As noted, East Jerusalem's education system is divided between institutions supervised by Israel's Ministry of Education and those supervised by the Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Education. The Israeli Ministry of Education requires teachers in those schools in the East Jerusalem public school system it controls to complete Hebrew studies at an Israeli academic institution. Two competing motivations drive the East Jerusalem Arab population: a desire to participate in the Israeli economy on the one hand and a sense of not belonging to/or hostility toward Israeli society on the other (Koren & Abrahami, 2017).

The present study contributes to the knowledge regarding how minorities in conflict with the hegemonic culture perceive the issue of national languages. It focuses particularly on the acquisition of the hegemonic language by a minority that does not identify with that hegemonic power. In places divided into majorities and minorities along national, ethnic, and indigenous lines, educational provision generally and language education provision particularly tends to favor majority groups (Dunbar, 2001; May, 2017). In these contexts, minorities are apt to be required to learn the language and adapt to the culture of the majority (Ben-David, 2017).

Israel's Ministry of Education and the Jerusalem Municipality's Education Board (*Manhi*) for the Arab sector are responsible for the educational infrastructure in East Jerusalem. This infrastructure is based on three tracks, each representing a different type of school with different targets in terms of Hebrew language acquisition (Alayan, 2021). The first track involves Ministry of Education-recognized schools under Jerusalem Municipality supervision that teach the Israeli curriculum, representing a minority of schools (8%). They have Hebrew lessons four to five days a week starting in the third grade and prepare high school students for the Israeli matriculation exam (*te'udat begrut*). Most of the teachers, administrators, and supervisors at these schools are Israeli Arabs. Unlike the PA's curriculum, this program prepares students to access the Israeli higher education system and job market.

The second track consists of recognized but unofficial schools which are private schools formally acknowledged by the state but act without the Israeli Ministry of Education's supervision. They are run mainly by Arab non-profit organizations under the PA that teach the Palestinian Authority's curriculum along with only part of the Israeli program. Students ultimately take the Jordanian-Palestinian matriculation exam (*tawjihi*), as is the norm in the West Bank and Gaza (Yair & Alayan, 2009). These institutions comprise 47% of the schools in East Jerusalem. The number of students in these schools has increased by a factor of almost 14 over the last decade. Of those studying in schools studying the PA's curriculum, 92% receive only a basic level of Hebrew language instruction (State Comptroller, 2019).

In the third track are private schools run by churches, Muslim charity (*waqf*) organizations, and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). They comprise 35% of the schools in the East city. Funded by a variety of bodies, these schools educate around 20,000 Palestinian students in East Jerusalem, approximately one-quarter of the total. They generally teach very little Hebrew and prepare students for the *tawjihi*, with only two of them teaching the Hebrew curriculum in preparation for the *te'udat begrut* (Alayan, 2021).

In light of this background, studying teachers' attitudes can make a vital contribution to understanding how national language policy affects second language (L2) educators' teaching, applying theories of L2 acquisition that regard the level of social integration as key to determining how successfully learners achieve command of the language (Schumann, 2012). Furthermore, analyzing teachers' perceptions can also enhance policy development, given their significant experience and knowledge of the complexities of language policy and practice (Levy-Gazenfrantz & Shapira-Lischinsky, 2017, p. 232).

Literature Review

Hebrew is the principal medium for conducting public life in Jerusalem, with access to public services, government institutions, employment, healthcare, higher education, and recreational facilities reserved mostly for Hebrew speakers. The level of Hebrew-language skills among East Jerusalem residents is low, even though they acknowledge that proficiency in Hebrew is essential (Alayan, 2019). Provision of Hebrew teaching in East Jerusalem schools is scarce, due mainly to the paucity of professional Hebrew teachers willing to work in East Jerusalem, and educators report that only 17% of their students can converse in Hebrew at a high level (Ratner et al., 2019).

East Jerusalem residents' use of Hebrew tends to be limited to necessary communication with governmental and administrative services. Lehrs (2012) found that 31% of East Jerusalem Arabs surveyed reported understanding Hebrew at a good-to-very good level, 39% at a low-to-medium level, and 30% not at all; 37% reported using Hebrew in their workplace and 64% attested to finding completing forms and writing official letters in Hebrew difficult. However, 83% of those surveyed responded that they would like their children to acquire proficiency in Hebrew, confirming the findings of Hasson (2015) and Stern (2015) that, despite the low level of command of Hebrew, motivation to learn the language is high.

Several studies have demonstrated that Arabic speakers in Israel attribute great importance to proficiency in Hebrew because of its many social and economic advantages (Abu Asbanh et al., 2011; Amara & Mar'i, 2002, Atily, 2004, p. 342; Ministry of Education, 2015). Ilaiyan and Abu Hussain's (2012) study of attitudes of Arab students in East Jerusalem toward Hebrew found positive perceptions toward the study of Hebrew as a second language and a willingness to communicate in the language outside of the classroom. Some of the parents encouraged their children's Hebrew language studies, due largely to the instrumental-pragmatic advantages the language offers for their children's future (Ilaiyan, 2012).

A low level of fluency in Hebrew impedes access to jobs and social rights in Israel (Bassul, 2016). With poor fluency in Hebrew also affecting the level of jobs obtainable, it is not uncommon for otherwise experienced and well-qualified individuals to work as waiters or cleaners, for example, only because their level of Hebrew is inadequate (Jaber, 2020). Fluency in Hebrew is more common among young men than among young women and among young men than among older adults of both sexes (Ronen, 2018). Young Arabs in Jerusalem have a higher level of Hebrew proficiency than adults due to their more frequent contact with Hebrew speakers in their daily lives. They also enjoy a greater likelihood of access to expedited courses at private institutions and dedicated Hebrew-language schools (*ulpanim;* sing., *ulpan*) (Ha'aretz, 2013).

In recent years, many *ulpanim* have opened in Jerusalem's Palestinian neighborhoods and the number of attendees has grown significantly, although their high cost is a limiting factor (Ha'aretz, 2016: 6). A key motivation for acquiring the Hebrew language and studying the Israeli curriculum is that both are prerequisites for obtaining the Israeli matriculation certificate (*bagrut*) recognized by Israeli institutes of higher education (Alayan, 2017).

Government and municipal authorities have identified the extent of demand, and the former's program for East Jerusalem includes a large budget for encouraging the study of Hebrew. The Government Decision 3790 of May 2018 aims to reduce socioeconomic disparities and boost economic development in East Jerusalem, and a large part of the budget allocated for it is earmarked for Hebrew language instruction (Lavi et al., 2018).

As already indicated, most East Jerusalem students follow the PA-mandated curriculum. The main reason for this can be attributed to the political conflict and the parental fear that students will acquire knowledge that might undermine their Palestinian identity (Ronen, 2020). Social and cultural factors also influence willingness to learn an L2 when the second language is perceived as a threat to the learners' identity, while motivation and positive perceptions toward the second language contribute significantly to its acquisition (Ushida, 2005).

The cultural and political distance between minority groups and the target-language-speaking population influences language learning: the greater the divide, the lower the L2 acquisition success rate (Bechor, 1992). Peoples living under foreign regimes tend to seek to preserve their mother tongue because it represents an important locus of their identity (Obeidat, 2005; Taylor, 1994). While these factors clearly have a powerful influence among East Jerusalem Arabs in the context of Hebrew acquisition, the economic advantages of learning Hebrew complicate decision-making (Lavi et al., 2018). As Schumann contends, learners from socially and psychologically alienated groups find it harder to acquire an L2 but employ specific strategies and techniques to bridge the social and psychological divide (Schumann, 2013).

Having stated that, a significant percentage of the Arab population studies the Israeli curriculum, despite receiving threats from political elements in the community (Ronen, 2018). According to a 2017 Jerusalem Municipality survey, 48% of East Jerusalem students' parents would prefer their children to study the Israeli curriculum. Nevertheless, some in the Arab community still see the Israeli curriculum as a political threat and, following the 2017 survey, a Muslim ruling (fatwa) was issued that the Israeli curriculum must not be taught in East Jerusalem (Yelon, 2017).

Masry-Harzallah et al. (2011) point out that many students in East Jerusalem learn Hebrew as a third or fourth language, after Arabic, English, and French or German (2011, p. 92). It is not surprising, then, that the overall proficiency in Hebrew in East Jerusalem is generally at so low a level that many East Jerusalemites cannot work in the western part of the city or even hold a basic conversation in the language. Despite the need for Hebrew-language education, as noted above, there is a shortage of qualified Hebrew teachers working in East Jerusalem (State Comptroller, 2018) as well as a lack of suitable textbooks. Many Hebrew teachers in East Jerusalem schools are untrained non-professionals and the few Hebrew textbooks available are primarily designed for Jewish immigrants and contain overtly unpalatable political messages for Palestinian students.

East Jerusalemite high school graduates who pursue higher education studies tend to attend Al-Quds University, universities in the West Bank, or academic institutions in other Arab countries because they find it difficult to get accepted into Israeli universities, even with an Israeli *bagrut*. After completing their studies, several still find it hard to enter the Israeli job market as doing so often requires obtaining further credentials that are officially recognized in Israel. Numerous individuals therefore invest significant financial resources in spending one year or more learning Hebrew and attaining their *bagrut* in the Hebrew University's or other privately-run preparatory programs in East Jerusalem to be able to enter Israeli academic institutions (Hasson, 2015).

The Ministry of Education and the Jerusalem Municipality allot students in Palestinian school programs only a relatively reduced budget, whereas those studying in Israeli school programs are allotted a priority budget, as well as a development budget. These measures are designed to encourage them to switch to the Israeli programs (Ronen, 2018). According to the 2018 government program "Reducing Social Gaps and Economic Development in East Jerusalem," more than 43% of the Israeli government budgeting allotted to education in East Jerusalem (approximately NIS 193m out of NIS 445m) is contingent upon pupils switching to study the Israeli curriculum (Ir Amim, 2020). As a result, East Jerusalem pupils studying the Palestinian curriculum are thus particularly challenged by the language barrier.

Methodology

The study adopts a primarily qualitative and interpretative, rather than quantitative statistical approach. The analysis relies partially on the researchers' intuitions with the goal of obtaining insights that may lead to a wider understanding of the relevant issues (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). This type of research encourages creativity within the analytical process, while recognizing the relevant limitations. The analysis is inherently limited by the context in which it is conducted. The choice to employ the interpretative approach (Spector-Mersel, 2011) stems from a focus on issues that include a narrative aspect and that are subjects of political and social contention.

The study was conducted with 29 teachers, all residents of East Jerusalem who had participated in a "Hebrew language and expression" course at an Arab college in Israel's central region. They were recruited using the convenience sampling method. Of the 33 people who received questionnaires, four did not respond, leaving 29 respondents. The participants taught various subjects at East Jerusalem schools, from primary- to high-school level. The overwhelming majority of the 33 people to whom questionnaires were distributed were women (91 per cent) and those who responded were women only. The average age of the participants was 31.78 (SD = 5.86). One (4%) was employed by the Israeli Ministry of Education, 4 (23%) by the Jerusalem Municipality, 3 (14%) by the PA, and the remaining 11 (59%) by private institutions. Their years of teaching experience ranged from 4 to 25.

The participants' proficiency in Hebrew was generally basic, consisting of letter recognition and familiarity with a few words. Most found it difficult to construct a simple sentence or conduct a short conversation in Hebrew. As Ilaiyan (2012, 219) elucidates, the Israeli-Palestinian political divide hinders third language acquisition. The participants had previously learned Hebrew in the following institutions: public schools under the supervision of the Jerusalem Municipality and the Israeli Ministry of Education, where few hours are dedicated to teaching Hebrew learning, and instruction levels are rudimentary; private institutions in East Jerusalem, at the "first steps toward Hebrew acquisition" level; elective courses at Palestinian universities and colleges; and through informal channels resulting from work or other contact with Jewish Israelis in West Jerusalem.

The open-ended questionnaire was composed in Arabic by the authors and distributed at the end of the 2018-2019 school year after the teachers had completed their Hebrew course. The 10 questions (see Appendix) addressed key aspects of the teachers' willingness or lack thereof to acquire Hebrew, their perceptions on the issues involved, and the factors that have an influence on their studies. The questionnaire was based on a previous one designed for a May 2018 study by Israel's National Authority for Measurement and Evaluation in Education (RAMA). The RAMA study included an attitude survey distributed to educators (Ratner et al., 2019, pp. 20–27) in the wake of a government decision to reduce socioeconomic disparities and enhance economic development in East Jerusalem that emphasized promoting teaching Hebrew there as one of its four key goals. The design of the current study's questionnaire also drew on the authors' cumulative experience in Hebrew language and literature teaching and was devised after in-depth consultation with two qualitative research experts to ensure the validity of the methods and findings.

The questionnaire was distributed with the college's permission and participants were assured that their privacy and anonymity would be protected and that they could opt out of answering any part of the questionnaire at any point without explanation. The respondents were given 90 minutes to complete the survey, which was considered sufficient time for experienced teachers. No word limit was imposed, and everyone was encouraged to freely write down their thoughts.

The data was transcribed by the authors and inspected for reliable transcription by a qualitative research expert and a quantitative research expert. The coding of the data and the identification of valid themes were determined in conjunction with the qualitative and quantitative experts.

Analysis of the answers identified four themes for the data processing stage: the contexts in which Hebrew language acquisition occurred (Q1, Q2, Q6); the involvement of the Israeli Ministry of Education in the Hebrew instruction process (Q3, Q8); the benefit of learning Hebrew based on instrumental considerations (Q4, Q5); the political and identity aspects of Hebrew acquisition (Q7, Q9, Q10).

Results

Hebrew Acquisition Contexts

Only half of the teachers in the study had studied Hebrew before enrolling at the college. Addressing the contribution of language institutions to Hebrew acquisition (Q6), the respondents frequently responded that it was minimal, with answers including: "Most institutions serve commercial and economic goals"; "What matters is the money, not the teaching"; and "They do not focus on teaching and stay at the basic level of learning the alphabet." Some respondents complained that a significant portion of the instruction had limited practical value: As one respondent put it, "I can read a text in Hebrew, but I cannot conduct a short conversation."

A few mentioned that they were exposed to and/or had acquired Hebrew through working with and/or other contact with Jewish speakers of the language and that they, therefore, did not feel the need to study Hebrew in the college. These respondents either learn Hebrew at the *ulpanim* for immigrants in West Jerusalem in order to get accepted into Israeli higher education institutions or do voluntary service where they learn Hebrew at *ulpanim* specifically established to help young people in East Jerusalem participate in academic and professional arenas (Piotrkowski, 2013).

A few participants referred to the positive contribution made by the institutions, with comments including: "They teach very well and it depends on the degree of willingness and motivation of the learner to invest in acquiring the language"; "The instruction is at a very high level and helps the applicants enter Israeli colleges and universities and work in the Israeli job market"; and "There are a few reputable institutes in the city that have Jewish teachers." Some of these respondents also noted, however, that the institutions were expensive, and that the government should provide free Hebrew courses.

Responses among participants who had not studied Hebrew previously (see Q1), representative responses included: "I went to a private school where there were no Hebrew lessons"; "I do not have the time to learn Hebrew at a private institute"; and "My parents do not care about me learning the language." One teacher remarked that she "does not like learning Hebrew."

Israeli Education Ministry Involvement in Hebrew Instruction

Reasons cited for why the Ministry is interested in teaching the language (Q3) included: "To strengthen Hebrew education and weaken the status of the Arabic language in the city"; "To foster contact between the two peoples"; "To give Hebrew the status of exclusive, official language in institutions run by the Ministry of Education and make it a given [requirement]"; and "To prepare learners for participation in the Israeli job market." Some also acknowledged that Hebrew is a basic requirement for obtaining public sector jobs in Israel.

A significant number of respondents maintained that the Israeli Ministry of Education claimed to be supportive of Hebrew acquisition, but in practice, did little to encourage it, given the lack of teachers and time and other resources devoted to it. Prominent explanations for why this may be the case included: "So that the residents of East Jerusalem do not learn their social rights"; "To deepen the discrimination between Jews and Arabs in the city"; "So that the Jerusalem Arabs can't stand up to the enemy"; and "To implement the policy of marginalizing Arab schools."

Only a few respondents expressed satisfaction with the professional level of Hebrew teachers in East Jerusalem schools and their nationality (Q8). The overwhelming majority were unequivocally dissatisfied in this regard. Frequent responses included claims that East Jerusalem teachers were "not proficient in Hebrew," "can hardly read or write," and "spend most of their time teaching the alphabet." Arab Israeli teachers, most of whom are students at academic institutions in Jerusalem, were seen as "having proficiency in Hebrew, but lacking pedagogical knowledge" or "having a hard time controlling the students and teaching the course material." The following responses are also noteworthy: "The passing grade in Hebrew is 50"; "The tests focus on knowledge of the alphabet and a few vocabulary words"; and "They pass everyone so that they do not have a ‘fail’ on their grade card”. Likewise, most respondents who had studied Hebrew at school claimed that the lesson content was repetitive, mostly focused on the alphabet, and did not help them learn the language properly.

Instrumental Benefits of Learning Hebrew

Most respondents maintained that Hebrew use had been imposed on residents of East Jerusalem (Q4) following Israeli authorities’ seizure of control of the area in 1967 and the ensuing transfer of responsibility for municipal services to the Jerusalem Municipality. They also cited their dependence on the Israeli economy as contributing to their need for Hebrew. Participants emphasized the importance of Hebrew in daily life: “Knowing Hebrew gives me more opportunities to work in government facilities in Israel as well as private institutions”; “Knowing Hebrew makes it easier for Arabs in East Jerusalem to know their rights and obligations”; “Hebrew gives me the ability to fill out forms”; “Hebrew helps me manage my personal affairs, read letters, talk to Hebrew-speaking officials, etc.”; “Knowing Hebrew helps me get service at the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Health, Social Security, etc.”; and “Hebrew helps me communicate with Jews in the public sphere.” A few atypical participants presented different reasons for learning Hebrew: “According to Islam you must learn the language of your enemy”; and “Knowing Hebrew arms me with tools that make it possible for me to deal with the enemy and understand him.” One teacher claimed that “under the current conditions, they can’t force their curriculum on us. The Israelis want to integrate East Jerusalem into Israeli society, but discrimination in terms of services prevents this from happening.”

The fragile security situation in East Jerusalem, the Israeli West Bank barrier, and the Israeli security checkpoints contribute to the feeling of constant fear and affect the residents’ self-confidence (Q5). A large part of respondents gave serious weight to the link between the language and the security situation, as evidenced by the following examples: “Knowing Hebrew boosts your confidence when you are at a checkpoint or you see soldiers walking around the Old City alleys”; “Proficiency in Hebrew gives me the strength and the courage to defend myself, so I won’t find myself mute, embarrassed, and tense when facing a Jew”; “Knowing Hebrew breaks down the barrier of fear toward the other”; “The checkpoint is a big problem for young people, so I am studying Hebrew because of the security situation in order to communicate with the military or the border police at checkpoints”; and “Knowing Hebrew gives me inner confidence for when I go to the Jewish neighborhood to take care of personal matters.” Only a few respondents saw the matter in a different light: “Fear and confidence are psychological matters, but it is important to learn the language”; “We live in Jerusalem together, the fear is created by security incidents”; and “The kids are scared of the soldiers anyway”.

Political and Identity-Related Aspects of Hebrew Acquisition

To examine the influence language had on learners’ sense of identity, both directly and indirectly, this study elicited participants’ perceptions by having them compare themselves to West Bank Palestinian Arabs (Q7). Most respondents agreed that there is a fundamental difference in the perception of Hebrew between the two groups: “In the West Bank, they disregard the language due to their nationalist outlook, because they are under the occupation, and we, the Jerusalemites, are less so”; “Some of the young people in East Jerusalem are proficient in Hebrew and proud of it, whereas in the West Bank being proficient in Hebrew is seen as collaborationism and giving up your Palestinian nationality”; “In East Jerusalem, Hebrew is a necessary part of reality and, in the West Bank, it is considered the language of the enemy that is not required”; “In East Jerusalem people know more Hebrew than the West Bank due to the economic and political realities"; and "In East Jerusalem, knowing Hebrew is necessary to know your social rights while, in the West Bank, Hebrew helps them get work in Israel." A small minority of teachers perceived no difference between the two populations, one teacher emphasizing that: "the two groups are equally interested in learning Hebrew so they can know the enemy from up close".

The participants were also asked to assess how being offered full Israeli citizenship, like that of Israeli Arabs, might affect their attitude toward the Hebrew language (Q9). The majority of respondents answered that they were willing to learn Hebrew regardless of citizenship issues, for reasons including: "Knowing the enemy's language"; "We are under occupation and want to know what the enemy thinks of us"; "To broaden my education"; "To communicate with the other, like people do in English"; and "It is an important local language and you cannot communicate with the Jews without it." A few participants expressed a willingness to learn Hebrew for the sake of citizenship, citing the following reasons: "It makes it easier for me to integrate into life in the State of Israel"; "I am willing to invest in learning the language and make contact with the Jews, which contributes to proficiency"; and "It is an opportunity to be proficient in the language and to meet Jews." On the other hand, about a quarter of the participants noted that they would refuse Israeli citizenship under all circumstances for the following reasons: "I am unwilling to give up my Palestinian identity"; "Hebrew is the language of occupation, and acquiring it is for the sake of resistance"; and "If I had citizenship, it would have a negative effect on me."

The participants were also asked to express their opinion about whether learning Hebrew impairs their national identity (Q10). Most participants responded that it did not weaken or impair their Palestinian identity, as evidenced in the following examples: "Hebrew is the colonial language designated for conducting the lives of citizens and distancing them from the Palestinian people"; "We are under exploitation and oppression because of the Israeli occupation and the language is part of that system"; "Better proficiency in Hebrew is not an indication of giving up Palestinian nationality"; and "Proficiency in Hebrew was designed to hurt the city of Al-Quds and weaken the Arabic language from the start, and I am aware of it." Only a few teachers felt that learning Hebrew could undermine their identity, as evidenced in the following examples: "Knowing Hebrew at a higher level may bolster Israelization"; and "It might affect young people more, in that they will worry about their own personal welfare and drift away from the Palestinian people."

Discussion

Respondents' answers indicate that improving the level of Hebrew-language instruction would boost the motivation for Hebrew acquisition among students. It should be noted that the Israel Ministry of Education and the Jerusalem Municipality subsidize tuition for Hebrew programs only partially, if at all. As a result, East Jerusalem Arabs without the means to obtain Hebrew-language instruction have no choice but to deal with a language barrier. They do not speak Hebrew with those around them and some, viewing it as the language of the enemy, prefer to study English instead.

Instrumental considerations, rather than integration, play a significant role in acquiring the language of "the other", especially for a minority (Ben-David, 2017; Dubiner, 2012). Most study participants agreed that acquiring Hebrew is valuable in a social space in which it is the dominant language. The motivation to learn Hebrew is, therefore, driven by pragmatic considerations, such as being able to communicate with authorities, obtain state services, and enter the Israeli labor force and study in academic institutions in Israel.

Whether driven by instrumental or integrative motivation, the degree of language acquisition has social implications, as it serves as the first step toward integration into a society and its culture (Gardner, 2000; Macintyre et al., 2003). One of the respondents observed that Hebrew was a bridge toward better familiarity with Jewish culture and that learning a new language and being exposed to the culture of the other expands the learner's personal knowledge. Others, however, refrained from addressing cultural elements due to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which prevents the learners from accepting the Other and assimilating their culture; similarly, Israeli Hebrew speakers are reluctant to learning Arabic (Elazari-Halevy, 2009). Still other respondents saw Hebrew acquisition as a religious duty since Islam obliges worshippers to know the language of those with whom they come into contact.

A significant percentage of respondents said that while Hebrew is useful for communicating with Israeli Jews, they still considered it the language of the enemy and forced upon them by the occupation. Some teachers therefore prefer not to pursue their Hebrew studies too far as proficiency in Hebrew is viewed by some as damaging to Palestinian nationalism and a step toward Israeli citizenship. Ostensibly, the complex political reality around them, their ambiguous civic-political status, the divisions between Palestinian and Israeli educational institutions in the education system, and discrimination against citizens of East Jerusalem all reinforce their Palestinian identity; they see themselves as part of West Bank Palestinian society and committed to the Palestinian nationalist ambition (Yair & Ilaiayn, 2009). The Hebrew language is perceived by some of the respondents as part of the occupation and hostilities between the communities impede the building of trust and relationships. Consequently, East Jerusalem's Arabs are disinclined to follow the process of Israelization that some Arab citizens of Israel more undergone, which has included increased levels of Hebrew learning and the adoption of aspects of Israeli culture (Amara & Mar'i, 2002; Mar'i, 2013).

Conclusion

The study found that while there is an inclination among Arabs in East Jerusalem to learn Hebrew, the decision to do so stems predominantly from instrumental considerations to enhance practical communication and economic advancement. In contrast, there is a national-identity-related resistance in this community to normalizing relations with Israel, making identification with the Palestinian nationalist cause an inhibiting factor in Hebrew-language acquisition. The study likewise shows how knowledge of Hebrew facilitates unmediated communication with institutions and individuals in Israel that could eventually lead to a change of attitude toward Hebrew speakers as a whole.

The limitations of the study includes it being a preliminary one and that the 29 respondents participating in the survey may not constitute a representative sample. Follow-up studies using systematic sampling of all the Palestinian teachers in East Jerusalem would, therefore, be useful in order to evaluate how representative the findings here are and to assess any other factors involved. Notwithstanding these limitations, the study is a significant starting point for further research on the influence of national language policy on second-language teachers and on those engaged in teaching languages other than their native tongue.

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Appendix

Survey Questions

Question 1: Why have you not studied Hebrew until now? (If you have, please skip to the next question).
Question 2: Have you studied Hebrew before? In what context and at what level?
Question 3: In your opinion, is the Israeli Ministry of Education interested in teaching the Arabs in East Jerusalem Hebrew? Why?
Question 4: What do you think about the following statement: "Hebrew has been imposed on the Arabs in East Jerusalem as a means of handling routine practical matters."
Question 5: Do you agree with the claim that teaching Hebrew to children in East Jerusalem bolsters their confidence and makes them less afraid when they see Jews or encounter them?
Question 6: There are private Hebrew language schools in East Jerusalem. Do these institutions contribute to Hebrew language acquisition and fluency?
Question 7: In your opinion, are there differences in perceptions and attitudes toward the Hebrew language among Arabs in East Jerusalem and Arabs in the West Bank? Why?
Question 8: Are you happy with the level of Hebrew teachers at the schools in East Jerusalem? What are these teachers' nationalities? Who funds them?
Question 9: If you were given full citizenship, like the Israeli Arabs, would you change your mind about the Hebrew language? Why?
Question 10: How has Hebrew acquisition affected your national identity?

Imagined Communities of English Use in JET Programme Teaching Materials

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Abstract

Visualizing oneself joining imagined communities of target language (TL) use represents a potent motivation for language study. Given that rationales for the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme include fostering internationalization, a student-centered classroom, and communicative skills, teaching to promote learners envisioning themselves gaining access to different imagined social groups via the TL is further warranted in this program. Yet no research has examined the actual role of imagined TL communities in JET teaching. This project responded by investigating how JET participants foster imagined communities of English use among learners. Materials produced by JET teachers from across Japan were collected with a content analysis being undertaken to determine how they portrayed connections between the language and social group participation. Results of this analysis of 5079 teaching materials indicated that most (2783) involved language practice divorced from social connections. The remainder ran the gamut from lessons in which social group information was tangential and not connected to particular language to a smaller number in which connections between language and potential future social group participation were strong. These results suggest that the possibility of leveraging connections between language and social group participation to promote imagined communities of TL use among learners is possible within the JET paradigm and that this avenue for learner motivation could be further exploited. Given the importance of these findings for motivation coupled with the adoption of initiatives similar to JET across Asia, these results have implications both within and outside of the JET Programme.

Keywords: English language teaching (ELT), JET Programme, hidden curriculum, identity, imagined community, motivation

Picturing oneself participating in imagined communities via target language (TL) use can be a strong motivation for exerting the effort needed in language study. The research presented here investigated the role of this important phenomenon in the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme. Despite parallels between JET Programme goals and the benefits in fostering connections between TL study and future social group participation among learners, no research has investigated the role of imagined communities of TL use within this program. The research discussed here addresses this gap. In this study JET teaching materials were collected from official JET websites and were subjected to a content analysis to ascertain how they promoted imagined communities of language use. This approach is valuable since these materials have actually been used in the classroom by JET participants and because they have been subsequently posted as examples of best practices for others to follow. This study is also important because initiatives similar to JET are now popular across Asia. In presenting this study, this paper introduces the notion of the imagined community, discusses its importance in language education, presents the background of the JET Programme, details the research questions and methodology used, and presents the results. The paper concludes by considering the implications of these results within the JET Programme and beyond.

Literature Review

Imagined Communities

An *Imagined community* is defined as a social group with which one identifies but having an extensive population of members most of whom one will never actually meet (Winer, 2020). Future selfhood represents an important aspect of imagined communities. The potential for imagined community participation at some later time provides an impetus for individuals to pursue various fields of endeavor that take time to master. For example, in engineering, imagined communities can represent an attraction for female engineers and engineering aspirants who seek to be included by a heavily masculine imagined community (Foor & Walden, 2009). In a study of immigrants to Britain, a future self-aligned with imagined communities of the working professional figured as a motivation (Li & Simpson, 2013). In research about graduate students of psychology, perceptions of a future self in an imagined community of practitioners served as motivation for overcoming various challenges associated with doctoral study (Park & Schallert, 2020). The potency of the imagined professional community is perhaps most aptly demonstrated by the history of science in which an international imagined community, a "republic of letters," transcending national borders formed the cornerstone of the scientific ideal of the late Enlightenment (Mayhew, 2005). Such perceptions of the imagined community continue to hold sway in science (Johnson, 2007).

Language learners invariably envision an imagined community of TL users, making the concept important in language education. Choi (2018) notes that imagination "makes learners determine what kinds of practices are worth struggling for and urges them to put forth efforts to achieve their desired or anticipated visions of community life in the future" (p. 808). Perceptions of gaining membership in such imagined communities via the target language as a dimension of future selfhood can provide important motivation for language learners (Norton & Pavlenko, 2019). There are numerous examples of the links between imagined communities and language learning. One study found that integration into an imagined community of Mandarin speakers represented an important factor prompting study of the language for heritage language learners (Leeman, 2015). Work with multilingual speakers of African languages indicated that a classroom embracing translanguaging capitalized upon learners' future hopes of participation in an imagined multilingual community (Makalela, 2015).

Involvement in imagined virtual communities online represents an especially salient attraction for many language learners since online communities are more accessible to the EFL learner than foreign countries and because such communities are exciting (Reinhardt, 2019). For example, one project documented how English learners in Hong Kong used the target language to participate in an imagined community of Wikipedia authors with increased motivation and acquisition of relevant language skills (King, 2015). Among a group of university-level Japanese learners, English study articulated with their goal of attaining entry into an imagined community of engineers (Yashima, 2013). In a study of Korean immigrants to the United States, the role of English in facilitating entry into an imagined cosmopolitan social space represented a strong motivation for learning the language (Song, 2010). The role of imagined communities is so powerful in language learning that it is now considered by some scholars to represent one critical dimension of second language acquisition theory (The Douglas Fir Group, 2016). It is clear that language learner identification with an imagined community of target language users can represent a powerful force impacting learner investment in language study.

Taking communities in which learners may desire participation into account is thus one potent way that the language teacher can capitalize upon this phenomenon. This was demonstrated in one approach in which teachers asked learners about their future hoped-for academic writing community membership with instruction then being tailored for the language use associated with the communities in question; increased motivation and language proficiency resulted (Andrew & Romova, 2012). One study with Japanese university learners demonstrated the value to learning and motivation in having them visualize themselves as future English users participating in communities such as scientists or policy makers while setting specific goals for their language use (Munezane, 2015). When English classes fail to provide instruction grounded in the language and cultural practices of communities into which learners desire entry, not only can motivation suffer but learners can experience tremendous stress if they do ultimately find themselves immersed in such communities, but are unprepared (Lee, 2014). Problematic imagined community teaching can result in barriers as well. An imagined community of English centered on the idealized native speaker can stand in the way of learners adopting a stance more in line with reality in which most speakers are language learners, an imagined community into which they can more easily fit (Wang, 2015). Importantly, the teaching of particular genres of language use such as giving formal speeches or authoring academic essays, while common, should also link these language forms to the specific audiences with which they are most commonly seen in order to take advantage of the language-imagined community link (Andrew & Romova, 2012). Such an approach supports communicative language education given the importance of the sociolinguistic dimension of overall communicative competence (Savignon, 2017).

Besides intentional teaching, it is also important to consider the potential role of the hidden curriculum in fostering imagined communities among learners. The hidden curriculum involves all that is taught in formal schooling, whether intended or not (Azimpour & Khalilzade, 2015). Research has illustrated the connections between the hidden curriculum and imagined communities in language education. For example, one study of ELT texts used in Taiwan found that US culture was not only emphasized at the expense of other cultures, but that texts presented an idealized and sanitized version of this culture (Chao, 2011). Another study found that ELT texts used in Iranian high schools depicted males as more active and worthwhile than females (Gharbavi & Mousavi, 2012). Research has also documented a hidden curriculum of such gender biases in Japanese ELT texts (Lee, 2014).

The JET Programme and its Goals

This study considered the role of teaching materials from the Japanese Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme in promoting connections between English language use and imagined community participation among learners. Begun in 1987, JET currently involves 5277 language teachers from 50 countries (JET Programme, 2022). These are short-term positions: JET participants are hired on one-year contracts with the possibility of extension typically up to a maximum of three years (JET Program USA, 2019). Participants teach elementary through high school learners along with some adults across Japan. One goal of JET is to promote improved language acquisition via communicative methods (Nakao, Oga-Baldwin, & Fryer, 2019). Another objective is to make the traditional teacher-centered classroom in Japan more student centered. An official government publication for JET participants states that they should "[k]eep the class student-centered at all times" (CLAIR, 2013, p. 18). Fostering language "authenticity" is another central JET Programme goal. The program recruits native speakers on this grounds, especially to promote authentic pronunciation and grammar. A JET publication states "[y]our accent and pronunciation are authentic, and will improve students' ability to understand native speakers when they are speaking" (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2013, p. 53). The other important goals of JET are internationalization and the promotion of an intercultural stance among learners (JET Programme, 2020; Sponseller, 2016). JET has proven influential with similar programs being adopted across Asia. These include the English Programme in Korea (EPIK), the English Program Sichuan (EPS) in China, the Native English-speaking Teacher (NET) scheme in Hong Kong, and the Foreign English Teachers (FET) program in Taiwan (Turnbill, 2018).

Although the JET Programme does not explicitly invoke the notion of imagined communities of language use in its design, its objectives align with and could be furthered by their promotion. Equipping learners to interact in different social situations is, as noted, critical for communicative competence which *is* an explicit JET goal. Likewise, understanding learners' own hoped for future imagined community participation fits impeccably with the JET objective of promoting student-centeredness. Undertaken from the 1950s, Paulo Freire's (2018) approach for the empowerment of learners – a cornerstone of student-centered philosophies - rests upon fashioning a pedagogy responsive to their goals rather than those of teacher or institution. Such goals indicate the value in JET of understanding learners' own hoped for social group membership via TL use as an imagined community and responding with instruction tailored to fostering the corresponding language competencies. The internationalization and interculturalism mission of JET also has implications for promoting imagined communities of target language use. JET explicitly instructs teachers to include a cultural dimension in their classroom materials. The program especially speaks of the role of the participant as a "cultural ambassador" for the learners (Turnbill, 2018). Yet little is known about how rank and file JET participants construe these instructions in their teaching.

It might seem preferable to prepare these learners for interaction with real here and now groups rather than for future TL-contingent imagined community participation. Yet, until any such preparation is complete, the groups with which one is preparing to interact remain imagined with hoped for future participation bearing an important motivational load (Choi, 2018). Most of the learners with whom JET participants work are far from possessing the language competency for actual TL interaction since they are in their first few years of language study. Indeed, a fundamental rationale for JET is to provide willing and level-appropriate interlocutors in the form of the assistant language teacher (ALT), especially given the move in Japan to initiate English study in the elementary years and to focus more heavily on oral communication practice during this initial phase of language study (Nakao et al., 2019). Until they gain sufficient language competency, the hoped for future self as imagined community participant thus represents a critical sustaining force for language learners such as those served by JET.

Despite the power of imagined communities in language learning, the ostensible alignment of JET Programme goals with promoting TL-based imagined community visualization, and the potential for JET materials to include information about a wide variety of imagined communities as part of the teaching of culture, the literature is silent on the role of JET in fostering imagined communities of target language use among learners. Such research is important in promoting best practices. It can do so by documenting how JET materials may couple participation in imagined communities with English language competency. It can point out any important shortcomings along these lines as well. It can also support a more mature theorization of the relationship between language teaching materials and imagined communities of target language use. In light of the foregoing discussion, this study focuses upon the following research questions.

Overall Question: What is the role of JET Programme materials in promoting connections between English language use and imagined community membership?

1. What assessments of learners' hoped for imagined community membership are provided in JET teaching materials to guide language instruction?
2. How do JET materials provide instruction in specific language skills tailored to interaction with particular social groups?
3. What are the implications of portrayals of culture - whether incidental or explicit - in these materials for promoting imagined communities of English use among learners?

Method

Data was sourced from official JET Programme online venues for sharing best practices in the form of teaching plans and accompanying materials. This project collected 5079 materials accessible during 2021-2022 from the various such prefectural venues across Japan. There was no sampling scheme used; instead, all available materials were collected. This strengthened the results by allowing the project to determine the prevalence of phenomena within this important corpus. For example, the attention to language skills associated with particular social groups (Question 2) could thus be characterized in terms of its frequency within all shared JET Programme materials across Japan. Harvesting all available materials also lent itself to an inductive analysis, one in which results emerge from the data. Such an approach provides strong results because important findings are less likely to be missed (Veers & Gillam, 2020). For example, had the research taken a more deductive perspective by collecting only materials explicitly claiming to be about culture, incidental depictions of culture such as images of currency from specific countries included in shopping role plays would have been missed. This inductive approach is especially warranted in shedding light on the hidden curriculum given its unstated nature. Analyzing a large corpus such as this one also increases the possibility of harvesting noteworthy exceptions to general trends. Considering materials used across Japan also provides insight into their impact upon an entire generation of learners across the country.

The materials themselves included lesson plans, handouts, PowerPoints, video and audio files, flashcards, and similar resources intended for JET Programme teaching at the elementary through high school levels with some lessons for adults as well. These materials also represent an apt resource for this study since they had actually been used in the classroom. This differs from official texts which may be transformed or ignored at the actual classroom level. Additionally, the creators posted these materials as exemplars for other JET teachers. Disseminating such materials is important given the relatively short tenure of the typical JET coupled with the fact that most have no training as teachers (Morita, 2017). Thus, other JET participants use these materials, further enhancing their impact. Also, there has been an increase in non-JET ALTs in Japan in recent years. Like their JET counterparts, they also typically lack training as teachers and need teaching materials like these tailored to learners of English (Haye-Matsui, 2018).

A content analysis of these materials was conducted based upon the research questions. This took place from late 2021 and was completed in 2022. For Question 1, examples of guidance in assessing learners' interest in social group participation via English to tailor instruction appropriately were sought. Such assessments could take various forms. For example, educators have used interviews with learners to understand TL-using groups with which they identify (Norton, 2015). Since the ALT may not be fluent in Japanese, the corpus was also examined for evidence that hoped for community participation had been elicited in the L1, especially by the Japanese teachers of English with whom ALTs always work. Specifically, a search for any reference to the use of such assessment results in the instructions accompanying the materials represented part of the analysis.

For Question 2, analysis strove to identify instances of language instruction tailored for specific social groups, for particular social situations, or representing specific genres of language use. Successful fostering of an imagined community-language link in this case would involve both practice in the language form in question coupled with a means to promote learners' association of that form with a particular socially situated usage.

For Question 3, materials were examined for portrayals of culture. These not only included cultural items typical in language education materials such as depictions of the arts, foods, and celebrations but also aspects of "little c" culture such as everyday cultural items and behaviors (Kovács, 2017). The research especially drew upon the notion of "banal culture" or the culture of the commonplace such as which nation's currency units might be used in discussing prices (Morsli & Riche, 2019). The analysis was also sensitive to all scales of culture from supra-national culture to sub-cultural groups within countries. Analysis considered images used in these materials in addition to text because of their ability to convey important social information (Aillo, 2006) and to have a more powerful emotional impact than text (Ademilokun & Olateju, 2015).

Results and Discussion

Use of Assessments of Learners' Hoped For Social Group Participation

Research Question 1 pertained to the use of assessments designed to understand learners' hoped for future social group participation in order to tailor language instruction accordingly. The analysis of the 5079 materials revealed no such assessments being used by the teachers. Indeed, few assessments of any form created to better understand learners such as assessments of vocabulary knowledge, grammatical skill, and listening/pronunciation ability were included. The plans also did not make reference to any such assessments conducted by other parties such as the Japanese teachers of English. This suggests that assessment-guided instruction does not represent an important feature of JET.

Instruction in Language Skills Connected with Participation in Particular Social Groups

Research Question 2 concerned the teaching of language skills connected with participation in particular social groups, situations, or genres. Analysis of the materials corpus indicated that the most prevalent type of materials was those promoting language skills but having no such connections. Such activities comprised 55% of this corpus (2783 of the 5079 materials). Examples included vocabulary bingo games in which the teacher read words aloud, an activity in which learners drew pictures to convey the meanings of prepositions such as *under* and *on*, an activity in which learners unscrambled sentences, phonics activities in which the learners decoded letters of the alphabet, and a classroom grammar game in which learners filled blanks with the correct word forms such as *hard* vs. *hardly*.

The remaining 2296 materials did include various types of social group information. Table 1 enumerates these results. In 803 of these 2296 materials (35%), instruction in language genres that could be associated with particular social groups or specific social situations *was* provided, but groups or situations in which they could be used were not made explicit (Table 1, #1). For example, in one lesson learners were taught how to write a “cause and effect essay.” These materials included a lesson plan for other teachers to follow, presentation slides for classroom use, a handout for learners, and a rubric for evaluation. The lesson provided many details, including vocabulary and structure of this discourse form. It instructed learners to begin such a piece of writing with general statements followed by a thesis statement for the introduction, two subsequent paragraphs starting with the words *first* and *second*, and a conclusion paragraph beginning with the phrase *in conclusion*. They were instructed how to use words including *as a result, not only, therefore*, and *furthermore*. While the lesson thus taught learners the *mechanics* of this form of writing, it provided them with no sense of the social situations in which such a writing genre would be appropriate.

Table 1
The Four Types of Materials with Imagined Community Implications Found in the Corpus

Type of Material/Percentage within materials having social group information	**Example**	**Language Skills Taught**	**Associated Social Group**	**Why Example Fits Type**
1. Instruction in Language Genres with no Social Group Connections Provided/35%	Writing a Cause and Effect Essay	Academic Essay Writing	Used in Academia	Essay form taught with no target social group
2. Imagining TL-Based Group Participation with no Language Taught/1%	Imagined Interaction with "Foreigners" in Japan	None	"Foreigners"	Target social group provided with no specific language form
3. Language Taught *with* Explicit Social Group Connections/17%	Writing a Business Letter	Business Letter Language	Business People	Connection made between language form and target social group
4. Cultural Information Only Provided with no Language Connection/47%	Passing Mention of France and Eiffel Tower	None	French People and/or Tourists Implied	Cultural information about France provided, but with no link to language use

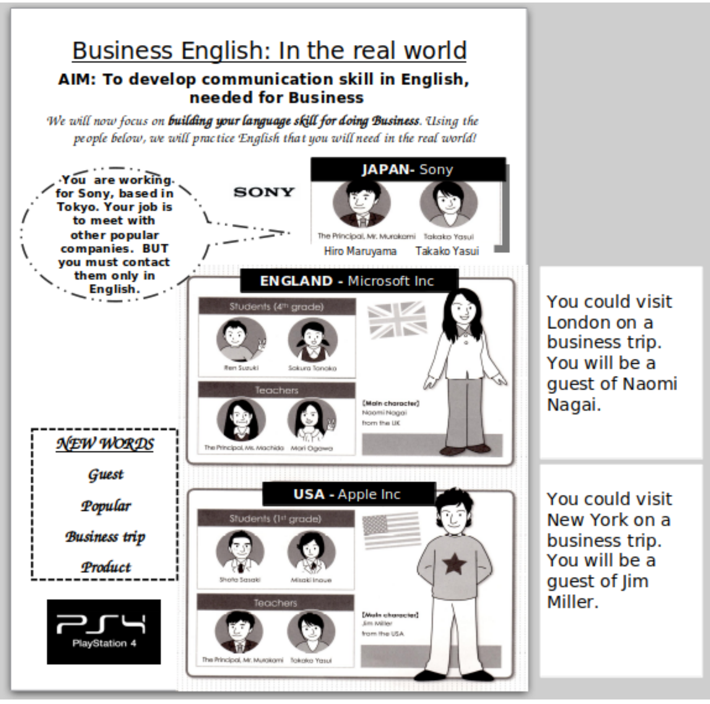
Another lesson taught the basics of debate. Given a prompt such as *Which Food is Healthier, Western or Eastern?* It instructed learners to brainstorm a set of pros and cons for the topic. It provided an organizational framework into which learners could place the resulting material prior to presenting it. In this case, the lesson instructed them to convince their classmates of a position. It did not tell them how these skills might be used with people outside of the classroom. Other examples included how to give directions around a town, but no indication of when a person in Japan would use these English skills: Was the idea to speak with visitors to Japan, to be ready for travel abroad, or something else? Likewise, there were numerous lessons pertaining to shopping with learners practicing playing the roles of customers and clerks. Again, though, no explicit connection was made between the language and socially situated use.

A final type of language genre with potential imagined community implications was that pertaining to science. Some of these lessons were associated with the so-called "Super Science" schools in Japan. In these schools, STEM classes form a focus with technical and scientific topics being used to make connections across the curriculum, including the English class. These activities included making research reports as well as conducting science experiments and reporting the results in English, either in written or oral form. Yet, in the English lessons about science there was no attention to providing learners with connections to future social group participation. Instead, as with the materials discussed above, the focus was simply upon language form, especially vocabulary and the format of reports. Such lessons thus involved the "hows" of language, but not the "whens" and "whys." Given the potency of the imagined community of language learning, providing some information about possible future avenues to use the language in question, or, perhaps better yet, asking learners to brainstorm them in a discussion could have potent motivational implications. Perhaps some learners might have neighbors or family members who use English in such capacities, and they could share these stories. Such moves would take little time away from addressing other instructional goals and would help to cement the student-centered mission of JET while promoting the link between imagined communities and the TL.

In contrast to these lessons providing language instruction without supplying possible avenues of future social use, a few materials involved the opposite situation: Such materials asked the learner to imagine communicating with members of particular social groups using English, but with no specific language norms being provided beyond the idea of employing the TL itself (Table 1, #2). These materials comprised only 24 of the 2296 materials with social group information (1%). Most of these materials were activities asking learners to imagine talking to "foreigners" within Japan. Some of these asked learners to explain elements of Japanese culture. For example, one material required learners to present the use of the traditional *furoshiki* wrapping cloth. Another such lesson asked the learners to present "strange Japanese foods" to foreigners in Japan. Such scenarios constructed the imagined foreigner in Japan as a short-term visitor knowing little about Japan, not speaking Japanese, and proficient in English. This could be a bit unrealistic: For example, one of these lessons assumed that the foreign visitor to Japan did not know about sushi. In fact, one teacher recommended in their plan that the teacher should feign confusion about Japan in order to create such situations in the classroom. In another example of such materials, the teacher discussed an effort to have English club students within Japan communicate with each other using English.

Within the overall corpus, 390 of the 2296 materials (17%) bearing social group information did provide instruction in language connected to participation in explicit social situations (Table 1, #3). A good example was a collection of materials for a class in business English. Included in the materials was a PowerPoint presentation for the teacher's use. This presentation stressed that learners would be encountering English for the real world. In this lesson, learners role played workers in Sony Japan, Microsoft in England, or Apple in the US (Figure 1). The activities included making presentations to a specific audience and writing business letters to people from these companies. The lesson supplied appropriate language for these social situations. In this way, the lesson empowered learners with connections between specific language/language genres (such as the business letter) and possible future social group participation in which to deploy it. Such an approach would bolster the imagined community of target language use among learners.

Figure 1
Promoting an Imagined Community of Business English Use



Other examples of strong language/social group connections included one set of materials centering upon writing letters to pen pals abroad. The lesson provided learners with a letter template and instructed them to present topics possibly of interest to their audience such as details about their school lives. Another example taught language important for a home stay in an English-speaking context. One lesson provided language used for “speed dating” in which learners created a profile page with entries for their personal information. Several examples provided instruction in language associated with specific social groups within the larger English-speaking world. These included one lesson about New Zealand English with lexical items including *bloke, knackered*, and *lollies*. Another lesson presented differences between American and British English lexicon with examples such as *apartment* vs. *flat* and *elevator* vs. *lift*. A final example pertaining to language variety was a lesson on Hawaiian English. In this case, the lesson made connections between the Japanese language and Hawaiian creole by presenting uses of Japanese words like *tako* (octopus) and *hana* (nose) in Hawaii in a strong example of instructional scaffolding. Yet, varieties of English from outside of the traditional English-speaking countries – such as that spoken in the Philippines – were not presented in any of these materials. It was also notable that few (about 2%) of the 2296 materials linking specific language and social groups/situations were from elementary school materials.

Some materials in this category – though they did link language and putative social group participation – invoked situations unlikely for learners’ future participation. One involved a situation in which learners role played making presentations to the UN as ambassadors to various countries. Another presented the scenario of writing English messages in high school yearbooks, something not part of the Japanese high school experience. In another case, learners used language to write a plan for people to escape a zombie attack. A final example presented a scenario in which the learners role played deceased individuals tasked with convincing God of their merit for entering heaven. Vocabulary in this case included deeds and misdeeds and various examples that could fall under each such as killing, stealing, lying, rescuing a person, and engaging in illegal content downloading. While such lessons failed to promote the target language as a resource for participation with members of accessible imagined communities, they may have added interest and levity to the classes. Language skills acquired via these activities could also transfer to broader situations. Yet, again, simply asking the learners to brainstorm real-world situations in which these skills could also be used would have been beneficial; Conducted in the L1, such a discussion could forge connections between language studied and imagined social group participation. Conducted in the TL, it could also promote communication and additional learning of lexis.

Cultural Information and the World of English

Question 3 concerned the role of portrayals of culture in promoting imagined communities of language use. This study provides evidence that this phenomenon is widespread. Materials with cultural components – but not included in the previous analyses – comprised 1079 of the 2296 materials (Table 1, #4), making them the most common type of materials with social group information (47%). This cultural information was often "background" or "tangential" with lessons not asking learners to make any connection between this information and their language production. In some cases, learners talked *about* certain places and cultural groups, but did not practice using language to imagine interacting with people from these places. Examples included a lesson in which the teacher gave cards with the names of countries to learners. They then asked/answered two questions posed by a partner based upon the specific country card held. The lesson provided the following model:

> Learner A: What country would you like to visit?
> Learner B: I would like to visit France.
> Learner A: Why do you want to visit France?
> Learner B: I want to see the Eiffel Tower.

Images played an especially prominent role in this category of materials. For example, a handout about the months of the year included an image of the flag of Ireland and children in Halloween costumes for the month of October and a flag of the US with a family having Thanksgiving dinner for the month of November. In this case, learners were simply asked the month of their birthdays with these images taking on no explicit function beyond the decorative. This was the case for many of the images included. While it is possible that such materials could foster imagined communities of language use in a general sense, the lack of strong connections between specific language and engagement with individuals from particular groups indicates that many opportunities to promote such connections were missed.

More problematic is the fact that these cultural materials were biased. Beyond a strong focus on Japanese culture, most of the cultural materials pertained to the traditional English-speaking countries, especially the UK and US. In a lesson in which learners discussed movie genres, all the examples were from UK or US movies such as James Bond films or Titanic with the only exception being one Japanese movie. In this way, the cultural information presented in these materials failed to represent the breadth of English speakers.

These findings are significant for several reasons. Overall, they demonstrate a lack of attention to fostering connections between language study and imagined communities of language use in the JET Programme. Scholarship in language education indicates that doing so would increase learner motivation, ownership of the language, and preparation for real-world language use. Shortcomings with each of these are endemic to Japanese ELT (e.g., Knodell, 2017). The failure to provide any assessments regarding groups with whom learners would like to use the language is especially glaring since tapping into the TL/imagined community connection is a cogent motivational scheme.

This study is also significant in providing evidence that JET currently is missing important opportunities to meet its own goals. Making greater efforts to forge connections between language and social group participation would advance the JET objectives of promoting communicate language teaching, bringing culture into the classroom, and making classes more student centered. The decoupling of language and social situations manifest in these results is important to note: Over half of the materials collected provided no information about social use of the language at all. Scholars have widely attributed such shortcomings in social language use practice to the high-stakes exam system used in Japan (Mitchell, 2017). Thus, these results may offer one more critique of this system applicable both within and beyond Japan. This study is also significant in providing evidence that in consistently aligning English-speaking imagined communities with the native speaker, the imagined communities promoted in these materials do not best reflect those with whom the typical Japanese learner is most likely to interact using English. This is at odds with current thought in teaching English as an international language (EIL). Finally, these results are significant in pointing up the potential for issues such as those detailed here to arise in programs similar to JET across Asia. They certainly suggest that adding NS teachers to the classroom does not represent a panacea for Asian ELT.

Recommendations

This study suggests some important recommendations for ELT practice. Notable among these findings was the lack of attention to learner input in determining possible social situations and groups upon which to focus in classes. In light of the ostensible commitment to a student-centered classroom in JET, such actions would represent one additional avenue for meeting this objective by tailoring instruction to the groups with whom learners would eventually like to use the language. This is also true beyond JET in any initiative with such a commitment to the learner-centered approach.

Another area for improvement pertains to the language skills evidenced in these materials. Even though applied linguists recognize sociolinguistic competence as a core component of communicative competence, these materials reflected little attention to connecting language with participation in specific social groups and events. The role of imagined communities of language use was especially weak in elementary school lessons. This would seem to particularly represent a missed opportunity to tap into the imagination, lower inhibition, and propensity for language play to explore relationships between language and social group participation characteristic of the youngest cohort of learners (Hà, 2022). It is not difficult to imagine activities capitalizing upon these tendencies such as role plays in which learners take on identities of people from particular locales and use English lexis or pronunciation common to those groups. This analysis also demonstrates the tendency to teach language form divorced from its social functions. Many lessons taught learners the "hows" of language such as how to make an argument but failed to present the "whens" and "whys" of actual socially situated use: The lack of attention to when, why, and with whom one would use such language represented a glaring oversight in such lessons.

Another lost opportunity was a lack of lessons about language use in virtual communities. Despite the fact that the materials collected were all posted within the last few years, no lessons made connections between language and such online uses as social media, email, and discussion groups. This is especially baffling since such communities would seem to represent the most likely venue for TL use among these learners. EFL programs such as those in Japan are taught in locales in which English is not a language of wider communication, making the inclusion of attention to language use for imagined virtual communities especially worthwhile as a ready avenue for learner TL use.

Programs like JET should more carefully prepare learners for interaction with likely interlocutors. For the person from Asia, the most likely interlocutors are not native speakers of English. Besides providing better training and materials for teachers, one way to address the issue is to broaden the recruitment of JET participants to encompass more countries. Because JET instructs participants that their role includes that of "cultural ambassador," they often taught about the country where they held citizenship: Many materials in this corpus included instructions to "talk about your country" as a means for the teacher to present culture. Recruitment beyond the traditional English-speaking countries would thus naturally go far to address this shortcoming in JET and similar "foreign teacher" programs. Greater representation of sub-cultures within countries is also important. The Hawaiian English material in this corpus represents one example. More such efforts are needed and would benefit learners by exposing them to interesting groups while also disabusing them of the counterproductive notion that language (and culture) are – or should be - uniform within national boundaries.

This study yields implications for assessment as well. High-stakes English tests in Japan tend to focus on explicit grammatical knowledge or formulaic writing and speaking tasks with little attention to adapting language use to a variety of social situations (e.g., Brown, 2017). The present study provides evidence that this is still the case. The tendency must be rectified, especially given the ostensible and longstanding commitment of Japanese ELT to "communicative" teaching.

Conclusion

Given the importance of imagined communities of language use in motivating language study, a corpus of 5079 JET Programme teaching materials was collected and subjected to a content analysis for this study. Results indicated that most of the materials collected included no social group information promoting imagined communities associated with the TL. Instead, activities such as vocabulary and grammar drills as well as games with language divorced from social situatedness represented the majority. Among the remaining materials, although some forms of social group information were included, few provided a clear link between specific language instruction and access to particular social situations. Such materials represented only a bit less than 8% of the entire corpus. About 1000 of the materials contained tangential cultural information such as images of international places but with no specific connections to language. Most of these cultural materials featured depictions of the traditional English-speaking countries. Notably, materials promoting connections between specific forms of language and potential social group participation were especially rare in elementary school materials.

Missed opportunities formed a theme in these results. Connections between language being studied and possible social groups in which this language could be used which would set the stage for learners to imagine themselves as group participants using the TL were few. Although lessons lacking social group connections may have other value, the impact of such lessons could be enhanced by promoting a (stronger) connection between the lessons and imagined communities of future participation. Given the zero-sum nature of classroom time and finite reservoirs of learner effort, maximizing the value of any lesson in such a way is critical.

The results of this study suggest an untapped potential of JET and similar programs in which teachers from abroad are recruited to promote communicative language use among learners. Fostering the possibility of participation in imagined communities of target language use as part of learners' future, hoped for selves represents a natural outgrowth of the JET paradigm. This study shows that JET teachers are heavily involved not simply in instruction, but in creating lesson plans and associated materials. This study also shows that JET lessons typically involve opportunities for the learner to use the target language actively. These two aspects of JET open the door for the incorporation of language practice coupled with imagined social group participation such as by leveraging role plays designed to raise learners' consciousness about matching language to people. In doing so, the teacher would not only motivate the learner by promoting a future hoped for social self but would incorporate a sociolinguistic dimension into instruction thus ensuring that learners' language competencies extend beyond strictly asocial language form. Naturally, these possibilities are not limited to work within JET, but apply to any situations in which teachers of any language wish to heighten learner motivation, increase instructional relevance, add variety and excitement to the classroom, and promote the sociolinguistic dimension of language acquisition.

There were several important limitations to this study. This study sought to empirically determine a *de facto* curriculum in JET pertaining to promotion of imagined communities of English use through portrayals of connections between English and various social groups. This study did not focus on how these materials impacted learners. In other words, the focus was on what was taught, but not on what was learned. Likewise, this study did not explicitly address the role of teacher beliefs in the creation of these materials. These two areas represent apt choices for future research. Finally, this study focused solely on Japan. Considering the role of language teaching outside of Japan in promoting connections between the TL and imagined communities is also warranted.

Promoting imagined communities of target language use can represent a potent motivational force in the language classroom. In light of present-day mobility and the ubiquity of the Internet, the likelihood that language learners will have opportunities to interact with individuals using the language of study is greater than ever. It is thus even more incumbent upon teachers than hitherto to tap into the hoped for self as participant in imagined communities of TL use as wellspring of learner motivation and preparation for real world language use. A failure to do so represents opportunity squandered.

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The Relationship between a Cognitive Linguistic Approach and the Right-Hemisphere

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between a metaphor-based approach to teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) and involvement of the brain's right hemisphere. Specifically, it examined learners' understanding of three levels of sureness associated with different expressions in English – those that are *certain, probable*, and *possible* items. The three target items were chosen because they are frequently used by native English speakers although Japanese EFL learners often fail to distinguish between them. The metaphor-based learners and the control group engaged in computer-based explicit learning based on the meaning of the target expressions with three-dimensional (3D) animated illustrations. The images were based on the spatial concept of distance for the metaphor-based learners and a list of target items for the control group. At post-test, it was found that the metaphor-based learners performed better than the control group in both comparison and speaking tests. Obviously, the participants better understood the degrees of certainty in relation to distance. This shows that teaching the degrees of certainty by applying the spatial concept of distance could help in second-language (L2) learning. The metaphor approach allowed participants to link the spatial concept of distance to the degree of certainty associated with expressions of certitude. In addition, recordings of lip movements showed that participants remembered the target items better by opening the left side of their mouths more than the right side. This indicates that the brain's right hemisphere is involved in deep processing of expressions that reflect different levels of certitude and creating stronger memory traces.

Keywords: cognitive linguistics approach, mouth-asymmetry, proximal-distal metaphor, relationship, right-hemisphere, left-hemisphere

Learning a language is one of the most complex of human accomplishments. Among the various approaches to language learning, the cognitive linguistic approach emphasizes that humans use their embodied experiences in a source domain to understand abstract concepts in a target domain. The source domain is an embodied conceptual field from which humans draw metaphorical expressions to comprehend abstract concepts in the target domain. The target domain is a conceptual field that humans attempt to understand via source domains. Lakoff and Johnson (1999) argued that embodied concepts based on personified experiences in a source domain can be extended to a target domain to understand a concept in the target domain. This process, called conceptual projection, is the basis of conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). For example, in the case of the metaphor *more is up* and *less is down* (Evan & Green, 2014), *quantity* is understood metaphorically in terms of *verticality* – when books are piled up on a desk, the more books are piled up, the higher the pile becomes. Here, humans transfer their understanding of *verticality* (*up, down*) in the source domain to the target domain to comprehend *quantity* (*more, less*) in the target domain. This study considers the concept projection as the metaphor-based approach.

This study is motivated by theoretical considerations of conceptual metaphor theory in cognitive linguistics applying the concept projection called the proximal-distal metaphor to develop Japanese learners' knowledge of the different degrees of certainty attached to *certain*, *probable*, and *possible* items of expression in English. The proximal-distal metaphor involves the use of *certain i*tems placed closer to the writer to indicate the highest degree of certainty in contrast to the use of *probable* items and *possible* items placed further from the writer at different distances to show lower degrees of sureness. Learners are guided to understand different degrees of certainty in terms of near-far relationships of *certain, probable,* and *possible* items.

Lakoff and Johnson (2003) and Littlemore (2004) suggested that understanding accumulated experiences in terms of metaphors based on spatial concepts leads to mapping embodied concepts onto non-embodied concepts and maintaining long-term memory, which may be associated with right hemisphere involvement. The brain can be described as divided into left and right hemispheres (LH and RH). The left side of the brain controls the right side of the body and is considered the superior verbal and analytical processor. The right hemisphere controls the left side of the body and is said to excel in non-verbal visual-spatial skills.

Although previous studies demonstrated that the metaphor-based approach proved more effective than the non-metaphor-based approach; however, whether the efficacy of the spatial concept-oriented metaphor-based approach has some connection to the RH involvement was not explored, and the question remains understudied. Therefore, this study considers it important to shed light on the causes of the effectiveness of the approach and examine it from the LH and RH involvement perspective. The purpose of the study is to discover the connection between metaphorical concept projection and RH dominance using measurement of mouth asymmetry.

Literature Review

Application of the Metaphor Awareness-Raising Approach in L2 Teaching

It is in the area of L2 vocabulary learning that much of the empirical work on the effects of application of the metaphor awareness-raising approach has been done so far. To date, many metaphor awareness-raising approaches have generated positive effects on language learning

(Berendi, Csábi, & Kövecses, 2008; Csábi, 2004; Tyler, Mueller, & Ho, 2010, 2012).

Boers (2000) conducted experiments to determine the effects of the metaphor awareness-raising approach in teaching EFL learners with different native language backgrounds English expressions related to *anger* and *upward* and *downward economic trends* using metaphors such as *more is up* and *less is down*. The results revealed that the metaphor awareness-raising groups outperformed the control groups. Similarly, Csábi (2004) and Berendi, Csábi, and Kövecses (2008) examined the relative effects of a metaphor awareness approach with and without explicit conceptual instruction on EFL learners' acquiring of idiomatic English expressions that include the words *hold* and *keep*. They demonstrated that the metaphor awareness-raising approach that included explicit conceptual information helped the learners not only in learning the idiomatic English expressions but also in maintaining long-term retention of those target expressions.

Comparing the metaphor awareness-raising approach with the traditional teaching approach, Tyler, Mueller, and Ho (2010, 2012) investigated the efficacy of the metaphor awareness-raising approach with EFL learners in teaching English modals (2010) and teaching the English prepositions *to*, *for*, and *at* (2012) and found more improvement in the metaphor awareness-raising approach group than in the traditional group. However, most of the previous studies utilized metaphors embedded in the target expressions or included in the concrete meanings of the target expressions in order to observe the effectiveness of metaphor awareness-raising in memory enhancement. Conversely, Takimoto (2020) used metaphors that are not embedded in the target expressions and attempted to examine the real efficacy of the metaphor awareness-raising approach. He applied the proximal-distal metaphor to teaching different certainty-level expressions such as *certain, probable,* and *possible* items. The results demonstrated that the metaphor awareness-raising approach proved more effective than the non-metaphor awareness-raising approach.

Despite the general support for the metaphor approach based on the spatial concept, no previous study has explained its effectiveness. Considering the possibility of RH involvement behind its efficacy, it needs to be examined from a neurobiological perspective.

Left- and Right-Hemisphere Involvement in Metaphor Processing

Many cognitive neuroscience studies have adopted neuroimaging and electrophysiological techniques and investigated the relationship between metaphor processing and hemispheric lateralization. A number of studies support the contention that the RH is more involved in metaphor comprehension (Ahrens et al., 2007; Cardillo et al., 2012; Faust & Mashal, 2007; Schmidt, DeBuse, & Seger, 2007). However, other studies failed to show preferential RH metaphor processing (Benedek et al., 2014; Rapp et al., 2007; Stringaris et al., 2007).

As cognitive neuroscience studies differ methodologically in terms of data-gathering, task selection, and stimulus selection, care interpreting the results of previous studies is necessary. First, regarding data-collection methods, some studies used the divided visual field paradigm methodology (Faust & Mashal, 2007; Schmidt et al., 2007), others functional magnetic resonance imaging (Ahrens et al., 2007; Cardillo et al., 2012; Rapp et al., 2007; Stringaris et al., 2007). Second, concerning task selection, all studies except one (Benedek et al., 2014), the only metaphor production study) investigated metaphor comprehension. Most studies that examined metaphor comprehension asked participants to make plausible decisions (Faust & Mashal, 2007; Stringaris et al., 2007). Rapp et al. (2007) asked participants to make positive or negative connotation decisions; Ahrens and colleagues (2007), another exception, asked participants to read anomalous metaphorical sentences. Finally, concerning stimulus selection, less researchers examined metaphor comprehension at the word level (Ahrens et al., 2007; Faust & Mashal, 2007) than at the sentence level (Cardillo et al., 2012; Rapp et al., 2007; Schmidt et al., 2007; Stringaris et al., 2007), with the degree of saliency or novelty of the linguistic expressions controlled except in one study (i.e., Stringaris et al., 2007).

In sum, methodological differences in data-gathering and task and stimulus selection may have led to the mixed results when testing RH metaphor processing hypotheses. For example, participants in the Rapp et al. study could have treated the task of determining positive or negative connotation as a test of category knowledge rather than of ability to interpret metaphors. Moreover, in the Stringaris and colleagues' study, the degree of saliency or novelty was not controlled sufficiently and familiar metaphoric expressions may have been used. According to Beeman's (1998) coarse coding model, metaphoric meanings within familiar metaphors can become closely correlated through repeated use and as a result can be activated within a small semantic field in the LH. Thus, due to the given task in the Repp et al. study and to the possibility that familiar metaphors were used in the Stringaris and colleagues' study, their participants might have failed to display RH preference and might have recruited LH resources in metaphor processing.

Review of the aforementioned studies that used the divided visual field paradigm method and neuroimaging and electrophysiological techniques reveals that the involvement of the LH and RH in metaphor processing remains a controversial subject that yields mixed research results. Additionally, most studies examined the role of LH and RH in metaphor comprehension processing rather than in metaphor production processing and whether LH and RH are involved in metaphor production needs to be further explored. In order to analyze the relative involvement of each hemisphere in metaphoric production, real-time inspection during actual speech production is imperative and, to that end, measurement of mouth asymmetry may be suitable.

Mouth asymmetry measurement is being exploited based on evidence that speech articulation controlled mainly by one side of the normal brain results in the muscles on the opposite side of the mouth moving more during speech production (Graves & Landis, 1990). Typically, a healthy right-handed person opens more widely the right side of the mouth during verbal and analytical processing and the left side of the mouth during non-verbal visual-spatial processing (Graves & Landis, 1990; Lindell, 2006).

Few recent studies (Argyriou & Kita, 2013; Argyriou, Byfield, & Kita, 2015) have employed the mouth asymmetry technique to explore metaphor production in the first language (L1). The studies by Argyriou and Kita (2013) and Argyriou et al. (2015) measured mouth asymmetry to delve into the relation between real-time speech production and LH and RH contributions. Their studies demonstrated that mouth asymmetry technique allows the researcher to find each hemisphere's relative involvement from participants' less restrained movements, compared with neuroimaging and electrophysiological techniques that confine participants to small spaces wherein they are restrained from moving freely. Additionally, the mouth asymmetry technique is a non-invasive, inexpensive, and relatively quick means of inferring different hemispheric involvement in real-time during actual speech production.

Nonetheless, this technique has not been put into practice to explore relative hemispheric involvement in second language (L2) metaphorical speech production, and hemispheric involvement in L2 speech production is still an under-researched area. Therefore, it is vital that this study delves deeper into whether the spatial concept-based metaphor awareness-raising approach to visualization of the instructional content can enhance RH involvement and thus facilitate acquisition of L2 expressions of certainty-levels.

Methodology

Research Design

To date, although the efficacy of the metaphor-based approach has been supported, which may be connected with RH involvement, no studies have examined the effects of the metaphor-based approach in teaching the L2 markers of *certain, probable,* and *possible* items on RH involvement. To address this gap, the following research question was investigated in this study.

> What effect does a metaphor-based approach have on RH involvement in developing EFL learners' knowledge of the different degrees of sureness attached to *certain, probable*, and *possible* items?

Participants of the Study

A total of 57 right-handed university students from two large classes at a private university in Japan participated in this study. The participants were science majors with an average age of 20. The participants' first language was Japanese, and they were learning English as a foreign language. All the participants had studied English for eight years at schools in Japan and had roughly intermediate level English proficiency, as defined by the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC). The participants from the two classes were randomly assigned to the metaphor-based approach (MA; n=28: women=4, men=24) and the control group (n=29: women=3, men=26). The researcher gave each participant a clear statement on the purpose of the study and explained to participants how their confidentiality would be protected.

Target Expressions

Table 1 shows the classification of three different degrees of sureness (e.g., very high, high, and low); the classification was acknowledged as reasonable by native speakers of English. This study used the proximal-distal metaphor as a mnemonic device involving three different types of items, *certain, probable*, and *possible* items of expression, to indicate three different degrees of certainty in terms of three different degrees of distance (see Table 1).

Table 1
Target Expressions in This Study

	Certain items (very high)	Probable items (high)	Possible items (low)
Adjectives	certain clear obvious	likely presumable probable	conceivable possible potential
Adverbs	certainly clearly obviously	likely presumably probably	conceivably possibly potentially

Learning Treatments

Each 30-minute learning session for the metaphor-based approach and the control groups was conducted on Zoom by the same instructor once a week for two weeks in two intact classes at a university in Japan. During each learning session, the instructor had primary control of the online computer program, gave no feedback to the participants, and adhered to the information available in the online computer program.

The metaphor-based approach and control groups were guided to engage in instructor-directed computer-based explicit learning on the meanings of the target expressions for 10 minutes, with 3D image content based on the proximal-distal metaphor for the metaphor-based approach group and a list of target items for the control group. Afterwards, the metaphor-based approach and control groups worked on the same acceptability judgement and listening tasks for 20 minutes.

The acceptability judgement and listening tasks provided an equal amount of exposure to each of the three types of target items. The acceptability judgement task asked the participants to read three passages (each about 145 words long) on everyday topics. Each passage included an underlined part with three options, (a), (b), and (c). Participants were to select the most appropriate form from the three underlined options by selecting (a), (b), or (c). Then, for the listening task, the instructor guided the participants to listen to recordings of each passage and to select the actual word used in each underlined part. Some sample items from the acceptability judgment and listening tasks are presented below:

When we talk face to face, regardless of 1. (a) presumable (b) potential (c) certain cultural differences, we communicate with more than words. We communicate with our eyes and our hands. We communicate with our entire bodies.

Acceptability judgement task: Suppose that the writer's certainty-level is high in their opinion and select the most appropriate word out of the three offered in each underlined part.
Listening task: Listen to a recording of the passage and select the actual word used in each underlined part.

The metaphor-based approach adopted 3D image content to make it easier for the participants to grasp spatial relationships between *certain*, *probable*, and *possible* items and to assist the participants in comprehending the degrees of certainty according to their knowledge of the spatial concept of distance. The online computer program required participants to watch and assess the differences in distance between the three items objectively in the first scene reproduced below (see Figure 1). The control group viewed the list of target expressions in several scenes on a computer (see Figure 2). The list the computer program showed participants was created to promote their memorization of the forms and meanings of the *certain, probable,* and *possible* items.

Figure 1
First Scene of the 3D Image Content Watched by the MA Group

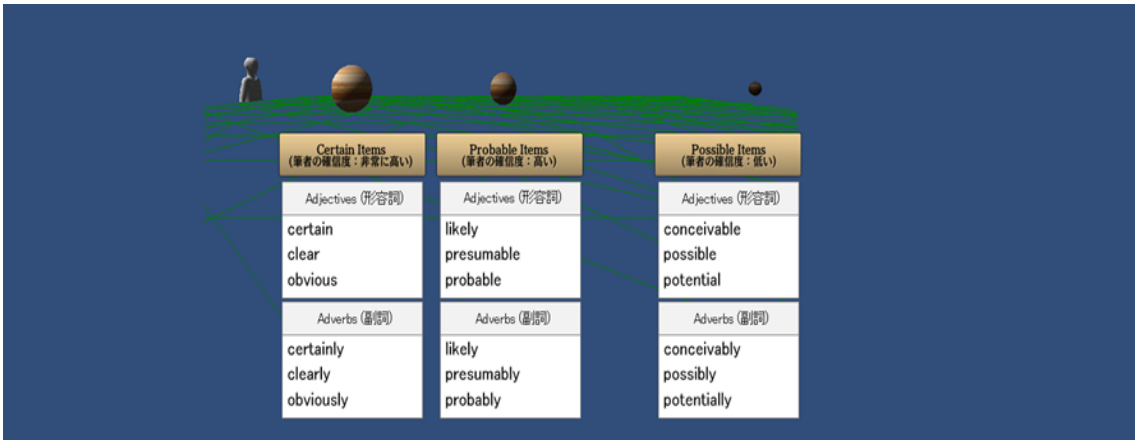

Figure 2
A Scene from the List Viewed by the Control Group

	Certain Items (筆者の確信度：非常に高い)	Probable Items (筆者の確信度：高い)	Possible Items (筆者の確信度：低い)
Adjectives (形容詞)	certain clear obvious	likely presumable probable	conceivable possible potential
Adverbs (副詞)	certainly clearly obviously	likely presumably probably	conceivably possibly potentially

Testing Instruments and Procedures

This study adopted a pre-test post-test design (Brown, 2014) to reconfirm the effect of the metaphor-based approach and its connection with RH involvement. Since the focal point of this study was to pursue the possibility that the metaphor-based approach to developing EFL learners' knowledge of the different degrees of sureness entailed RH involvement, the present researcher decided not to administer a delayed post-test. Pre-test was administered a week prior to the first learning treatment, and post-test was conducted a week after the treatment.

The pre-test consisted of a comparison test only, while the post-test included a comparison test and a speaking test. The comparison test was administered online through CoursePower, a learning management system, whereas the speaking test was administered online individually through Zoom.

Two versions of the comparison test were developed and administered in order to minimize the testing effect. The comparison test was administered to check participants ability to produce a correct contrast/similarity judgment about the spatial relationships between *certain, probable*, and *possible* items. The speaking test, which also involved both contrast and similarity judgments, was conducted to check participants' ability to produce appropriate target words in line with different situations and observe whether the development of their knowledge about differences between degrees of certainty was related to the involvement of RH dominance. The participants were asked to complete the comparison tests and speaking tests within 5 minutes each.

Comparison Test

The participants were required to read 12 statements and then evaluate the difference between the writer's certainty-levels as expressed by two underlined words according to whether the levels of certainty were "completely different," "fairly different," "slightly different," or "not different at all." Participants' judgments were compared with the model answers and scored by the researcher. When a participant rated the difference between the writer's certainty-level in the underlined words appropriately on the 4-point scale above in line with the model answers, five points were given. The test contained 12 items, for a maximum possible score of 60. A sample item from the comparison test is presented below:

Directions: Assess the difference in the writer's or the subject's certainty level of the two underlined words.

Other (a) potential (b) certain factors could be involved in the longevity of happy people.

not different at all **1** — **2** (slightly different) — **3** (fairly different) — **4** completely different

Speaking Test

During the speaking test, the participants were asked to sit directly in front of the computer screen and keep both hands still and on the same table as their computers. The researcher and the participants were facing each other through the computer screen and the researcher video-recorded the participants' responses in "Active Speaker View" mode with Zoom. The participants were instructed to speak in sentences in response to the tables about the expected number of participants for the overseas program. Group names such as Group A, Group B, and Group C on a white sheet of paper (72-point font) were presented one by one by the researcher, who held the paper up until the participant began responding. After video recording, the researcher transcribed the participants' responses, and two native speakers of English (one British and one New Zealander) scored the participants' transcribed responses on a 5-point scale according to appropriateness in reporting the main ideas and using the target expressions. The test contained *certain, probable*, and *possible* items (1 each), with the maximum score being 15. Some sample items from the speaking test follow:

Direction: The table below shows the expected number of participants for the overseas program in 2021 as predicted by you. You are planning to participate in the overseas program. For each group, tell your friend the number of people expected to participate in the overseas program and express the degree of certainty, in English. Please start speaking now.

Expected number of participants for the overseas program in 2021

	The overseas program 2021
Group A	2 participants （certainty-level：very high)
Group B	3 participants (certainty-level：high)
Group C	5 participants (certainty-level：low)

Reliability

The inter-rater reliability of the two native English raters for the speaking test was evaluated by means of an intraclass correlation coefficient to investigate whether their scores were correlated. The intraclass correlation coefficients for single measures and average measures were .943 and .971 each, which shows statistically significant values ($p < .001$).

Cronbach's alpha Brown (2014) reliability estimates for each of the testing instruments were investigated by means of the internal consistency, and Version B of the comparison test .868 and Version A of the speaking test .884 were fairly high. However, the exception was Version A of the comparison test .682 which was lower than the other tests in reliability, but still within an acceptable range of reliability.

Validity

Since the comparison test and speaking test in this study were criterion-referenced tests, only content validity and construct validity were investigated. Concerning content validity, the situations for administering the two testing instruments were carefully planned to ensure validity and matched to the theoretical framework according to the *certain, probable*, and *possible* variables.

Regarding the construct validity, Brown (2014) argued that construct validity for criterion-referenced tests is expected to be high in the pre-test-post-test design indicating the degree to which the test is measuring the construct for which it was designed. This study with the pre-test-post-test design was able to compare the participants' performance on the pre-tests with their performance on the post-tests. As this study discovered significant differences between the pre-test scores and post-test scores for the comparison test ($p<.001$, $np^2= .643$). Therefore, it can be concluded that these results confirmed the construct validity of the comparison test.

Results

Data Analysis

Quantitative analyses were performed for the comparison and speaking tests using SPSS 27.0 (IBM Corp., 2020). Additionally, the recordings of the participants' mouths' openings were analyzed by using two-dimensional motion analysis software (Move-tr/2D, Library Inc., Tokyo, Japan), which processed the participants' mouth movements on a scene-by-scene (1/25 second) basis during the participants' responses.

Results from Comparison and Speaking Tests

The descriptive statistics (see Appendix A) reflect the performance of the metaphor-based approach and control group participants on the pre- and post-test comparison and speaking tests in this study. In each case, the number of participants (*n*), mean (*M*), and standard deviation (*SD*) are shown.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was run for the comparison test and the independent- measures *t*-test was performed for the speaking test. Although this study checked the assumptions for the statistical analysis, the assumptions of normality and of homogeneity of variances were not met because of the nature of the criterion-referenced test. As the ANOVA and *t*-test were robust with respect to departures from the normality assumption and from the equal variance assumption (at least when sample sizes are equal or near equal) and more powerful than non-parametric tests (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), the present researcher decided to run the parametric tests. Results of the two-way repeated-measures ANOVA for the comparison test showed a significant main effect for Instruction, F (1, 55)=15.75, p=.000 < .001, ηp^2=.223. A significant main effect for Time across the pre- and post-test was also found, F (1, 55)=99.19.57, p=.000 < .001, ηp^2=.643. There was no significant interaction effect between Instruction and Time, F (1, 55)=12.66, p=.001, ηp^2=.187.

Additionally, results of the independent-measures t-test for the speaking test demonstrated a significant main effect for Instruction, $t(55)$=5.10, p<.001, d=2.83. Accordingly, two important characteristics of the comparison test and speaking test results were revealed: (1) although there were no statistically significant differences between the metaphor-based approach and control groups on pre-test scores, F(1, 55)=.920, p=.342>.01, ηp^2=.016, the metaphor-based approach group made significant gains from pre-test to post-test on the comparison test; and (2) significant positive effects for the metaphor-based approach group were also confirmed with the speaking test. The pre- and post-test scores for the comparison and speaking tests offer a study in contrast (see Appendix A):

Comparison test: Metaphor-based approach > Control
Speaking test: Metaphor-based approach > Control

These results suggest that the metaphor-based approach was more effective than the rote-learning approach in promoting learners' acquisition of the knowledge of differences in degrees of certainty between *certain, probable,* and *possible* items.

Results from Mouth Asymmetry Analysis

During the participants' responses, only scenes of the participants' mouth movements when using target words were included in analyses. For the metaphor-based approach group, 590 scenes were subject to mouth asymmetry analysis (172 for *certain* items, 199 for *probable* items, 219 for *possible* items). For the control group, 329 scenes were captured (123 for *certain* items, 76 for *probable* items, 130 for *possible* items).

Using the first scene of the recording as the basic scene, the center of the participant's forehead (Point 1 in Fig. 3) was fixed as the reference point. Based on the reference point and the tip of the nose (Point 2 in Fig. 3), the vertical axis on the coordinates was determined. Then, using the vertical axis as the reference axis, the left end of the mouth (Point 4 in Fig. 3) and the right end of the mouth (Point 3 in Fig. 3) were set as measurement points, and the horizontal axis was determined from those coordinates. Comparative coordinate conversion was performed on recordings after the basic scene. Namely, the coordinates were converted with the reference point in the center of the participants' foreheads as (x, y)= (0, 0) and assuming that the reference axis connecting the reference point and the tip of the nose was immobile. The coordinate displacements of measurement points 3 and 4 were calculated based on the reference axis. The mouth asymmetry in this study was defined as right-side dominant (the left side of the mouth opens wider than the right side of the mouth) or left-side dominant (the right side of the mouth opens wider than the left side of the mouth).

Figure 3
Enlarged Picture Depicting the Left Side of the Mouth Opening Wider than the Right Side of the Mouth during Target Word Production

First, this study analyzed whether the right-side and left-side mouth-opening widths differed between the metaphor-based approach and control groups. As shown in Table 2, the results of two independent measures *t*-tests yielded significant differences between the left-side mouth-opening width (L) and the right-side mouth-opening width minus the left-side mouth-open width (R-L) in *certain, probable*, and *possible* items; no significant differences were observed in the right-side mouth-opening width (R). Second, in order to find where the differences lie, this study ran two paired-samples *t*-tests. The results revealed significant differences between L and R within the metaphor-based approach group ($t(27)=-2.87$, $p<.01$, $d=2.77$ for *certain* items; $t(27)=-6.60$, $p<.01$, $d=1.39$ for *probable* items; and $t(27)=-4.31$, $p<.01$, $d=2.24$ for POSSIBLE ITEMS); no significant differences between L and R were found within the control group ($t(28)=.37$, $p=.711$, $d=1.73$. for *certain* items; $t\ (28)=-1.2$, $p=.250$, $d=1.29$ for *probable* items; and $t(28)=.77$, $p=.446$, $d=1.90$ for *possible* items).

In summary, there were significant differences in L and R widths between the metaphor-based approach and control groups with the metaphor-based approach group's L being significantly wider than R; this leads this study to consider that the metaphor-based approach group increased left-side bias in mouth openings during their production of the target words (see Fig. 4), which could be translated as RH involvement in the participants' metaphorical processing of the target words in use.

Table 2
Right and Left-Side Mouth-Opening Widths and the Difference between Right-Side Mouth-Opening Width Minus Left-Side Mouth-Opening Width during Target Word Production

	Treatment	Mean	SD	*t*	*p*	*d*
Certain R	MA	2.10	2.06	1.54	.131	1.65
	Control	1.41	1.12			
Certain L	MA	3.60	2.29	4.52	.000	1.91
	Control	1.29	1.46			
Certain R-L	MA	-1.50	2.77	-2.65	.011	1.03
	Control	.12	1.73			
Probable R	MA	1.36	1.03	-.009	.993	1.03
	Control	1.36	1.03			
Probable L	MA	3.10	1.49	3.82	.000	1.43
	Control	1.65	1.37			
Probable R-L	MA	-1.74	1.39	-4.09	.000	1.34
	Control	-.28	1.29			
Possible R	MA	1.35	1.42	-1.28	2.03	1.64
	Control	1.90	1.82			
Possible L	MA	3.17	1.86	3.63	.001	1.59
	Control	1.63	1.27			
Possible R-L	MA	-1.82	2.24	-3.80	.000	2.07
	Control	.27	1.90			

Note: R=right-side mouth-opening width; L= left-side mouth-opening width; R-L= R minus;
MA = metaphor-based approach

Discussion and Conclusion

The results indicated that the metaphor-based approach group outperformed the control group in comparison and speaking tests. These results showed that the proximal-distal metaphor enabled the participants to connect the spatially visualized concept of distance with different degrees of sureness attached to the use of the *certain, probable,* and *possible* items and remember them; during this process, their left side mouth-openings were wider than their right mouth-openings, thereby lending support to findings in previous studies (Argyriou & Kita, 2013; Argyriou, Byfield, & Kita; 2015) on possible RH involvement in metaphor processing.

There are two possible factors behind the supposed RH involvement in the metaphor-based approach on the possible involvement of the RH. The first factor is associated with the proximal-distal metaphor that generates cross domain mapping between source and target domains. During the learning sessions and post-test, the metaphor-based approach group practiced concept projection; through this process, participants understood the abstract concept degrees of certainty, in terms of the spatial concept distance, which entailed RH involvement in the process. Conversely, the control group did not practice concept projection but instead engaged in rote memorization of a list of target words expressing degrees of certainty, which probably reduced RH dominance (Graves & Landis, 1990; Lindell, 2006).

The second factor may be related to low degrees of saliency in expressions of certainty-levels. During the speaking test, the metaphor-based approach group engaged in metaphorical concept mapping from the concept of distance in the source domain to the concept of degree of certainty in the target domain. This specific process of metaphorical mapping is participants' effort to bring two distant concepts closer together to comprehend the differences in degrees of Certainty between the *certain, probable*, and *possible* items.

According to Beeman's Fine Coarse Coding theory (Beeman, 1998), RH processing activates distantly associated concepts and peripheral aspects of meanings and simultaneously maintains activation of multiple meanings, while LH processing selects and maintains activation of closely associated concepts and central aspects of meanings. That is, metaphorical expressions with low degrees of saliency such as certainty degrees are inclined to be maintained in the RH, whereas literal expressions with high degrees of saliency are treated in the LH.

As Japanese EFL learners have difficulty identifying and categorizing *certain, probable*, and *possible* items according to their degrees of certainty and tend to confuse *probable* and *possible* items especially, metaphorically speaking, *certain, probable,* and *possible* items are less salient metaphoric expressions, and the *probable* and *possible* items display even less saliency than *certain* items. In fact, the R-L values of *probable* and *possible* items are more significant than the R-L value of *certain* items in the metaphor-based approach group. This suggests even stronger RH dominance when participants used *probable* and *possible* items, likely due to the less salient nature of those items. Thus, activation of RH process with metaphorical mappings from source to target domains is a more naturally occurring phenomenon that inoculates participants with understanding of different degrees of certainty differently than the LH process involved with the rote memorization of the list. Kacinik and Chiarello (2007) argued that RH processing is better suited than LH processing for understanding metaphoric expressions because it leads to deep processing of these experiences and creates stronger memory traces of them (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003; Littlemore, 2004).

Regarding limitations, although the present study checked the assumptions for the statistical analysis, the assumptions of normality and of homogeneity of variances were not met because of the nature of the criterion-referenced test. Brown (2014) argued that violations of the normality assumption are only problematic on norm-referenced tests and a skewed distribution may actually be a desirable outcome on criterion-referenced tests like the comparison and speaking tests in this study.

Meanwhile, even with some limitations, this study will provide guidance to researchers and practitioners for applying the metaphor-based approach based on the spatial concept to teaching abstract concepts and creating stronger memory traces of them in an EFL context.

To extend the current findings, given the apparent efficacy of the spatial concept-oriented metaphor-based approach is related to both the right and left hemispheres in the brain, deeper insights can be gained from future studies that investigate the effects of the spatial concept-oriented metaphor-based approach on relative involvement of the right and left hemispheres in EFL learners' metaphoric processing. Further analysis of the spatial concept-oriented metaphor-based approach from the perspectives of brain science would be beneficial for fellow researchers and teacher to gain an insight into the true nature of the approach and expand its application in an EFL context.

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Appendix A

Descriptive Statistics for Two Testing Instruments

	Comparison Test				Speaking Test				
Time	Treatment	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Time	Treatment	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Pre	MA	28	18.57	7.68					
	Control	29	16.72	6.85	N/A				
	Total	57	17.63	7.27					
Post	MA	28	46.61	13.95	Post	MA	28	15.00	0.00
	Control	29	30.00	15.87		Control	29	11.24	3.97
	Total	57	38.16	17.02		Total	57	13.09	3.39

Note: MA = metaphor-based approach; Pre = pre-test; Post = post-test

A Corpus-Driven Approach on Learning Near Synonyms of Pain in Indonesian

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Abstract

Pain is human-universal since it is experienced by people across the world. However, since it is related to personal feelings, different people may feel it in a different way and rely on language to communicate. This paper presents a cross-cultural comparison of the study of the emotion of pain in Indonesian by examining the usage of two near-synonyms: *sakit* and *nyeri*. This study aims to provide a new insight for L2 learners of Indonesian regarding the study of emotion. A corpus-driven method by using the usage-feature analysis (Glynn, 2010b) is employed to test the hypothesis on the semasiological structure of pain from Indonesian dictionary. The corpus data of Indonesian News 2020 with a total of 15,206,710 tokens were extracted from the Leipzig Corpora Data Collection of Indonesian (Goldhahn et al., 2012). A total of 400 examples of *sakit* and *nyeri* were extracted from the corpus data using AntConc version 4.1.2 (Laurence, 2022) for manual annotation. The manual coding of the lexemes was conducted based on cross-linguistic dimensions of pain proposed by Wierzbicka (2016). After manual annotation, two statistical analyses were conducted in R (R Core Team, 2022), namely Binary Correspondence Analysis (Glynn, 2014) and Binomial Regression Analysis (Levshina, 2015). The result of exploratory analysis shows that *sakit* and *nyeri* can be distinguished by bodily focus and intensity. However, the confirmatory analysis confirms bodily focus as the significant predictor. It means *nyeri* is strongly associated with pain on the part of body relative to *sakit.* The finding of the current study may have an implication for the possibility of combining cross-cultural competence with L2 vocabulary learning by making use of corpora in L2 learning design.

Keywords: corpus-driven, learning, near-synonyms, pain, Indonesian

The study of near-synonyms has been an interesting topic in language learning these days. Since the use of corpora in language study increases, it is found that synonymous words are not actually synonymous when observed by their use (Reppen & Simpson-Vlach, 2020). Reppen and Simpson-Vlach (2020) elaborated on this claim by giving instances of how dictionary lists “resulting copula” *become*, *turn*, *go*, and *come* as synonyms. However, when these words are researched in corpora, they might differ by their context of use. Therefore, the term “near-synonym” is used instead of synonyms because they represent a group of words with closely similar meanings (Yu et al., 2016). This subtle difference between near-synonyms can be revealed by using corpus as a tool, as it may enrich the exploration of word senses that have been provided by dictionary for the purpose of foreign language learning (Reppen & Simpson-Vlach, 2020).

Among the near-synonyms that have been studied by scholars (Krawczak, 2015; Rajeg , 2016; Rajeg et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2016), the social emotion of pain becomes increasingly interesting due to its variation of meaning across cultures. This has been highlighted by Priestley (2016), who examined words and expressions of pain used by Koromu speakers. In her study, she described how the influences of culture, environment, and key life events have shaped the concept of pain in the Koromu language, making the terms vary in different constructions. Moreover, Wierzbicka (2016) also emphasized how pain is related to personal feelings, hence different people may feel it in a different way and rely on language to communicate what they feel about it.

As language becomes the only tool for expressing pain, it sometimes turns problematic when people from different cultures communicate, especially in medical practice. Kalengayi et al. (2012) described challenges faced by health practitioners in cross-cultural care. In their study related to problems in communication between international migrants and caregivers in Sweden, they proposed the translation of key documents and trained interpreters to cope with the challenges in communication. While translation and interpretation become the solution, it should be noted that not all languages have the same concept of pain as it is expressed in English (Wierzbicka, 2016). Thus, studying it cross-culturally will shed light on the cultural concept of pain from different languages to find the nearest equivalence to deal with translation issues and develop cross-cultural communicative competence of L2 learners of Indonesian.

Byram and Wagner (2018) highlighted the importance of including cross-cultural knowledge in language education and encouraged it to be part of language learning. They assumed that having cross-cultural communicative competence will enable learners “to engage in intercultural communication, to think and act critically, and to negotiate the complexities of today’s world” (Byram and Wagner, 2018, p. 141). In line with their statement, Stone (2023) argued that utilizing a dictionary and textbook would never be adequate to learn and comprehend a foreign language because learners will not be able to communicate and negotiate successfully in a real-world communication as they lack the context of use. Therefore, developing cross-cultural communicative competence in language learning will help learners engage with the cultures where the language is spoken.

Despite the importance of the cross-cultural study on pain from the sense of language learning, Wierzbicka (2012) argued that many studies only focus on the medical and social aspects of pain and tend to ignore the cross-cultural and cross-linguistic perspectives. While this area is less explored, it is essential to note that pain is why people seek medical care, and language is used to communicate it. As language is used for communicating pain, previous studies on medical communication (Dorsey et al., 2022; Unger et al., 2022) have shown ineffective communication experienced by patients from different cultural backgrounds due to language barriers. For example, a Korean immigrant in Australia explained her struggle to describe the symptom she felt related to pain in her stomach (Yoon, 2007). It, therefore, signals the need for cross-cultural analysis to shed light on L2 learning.

Based on this crucial issue in language learning, the present study provides a cross-cultural comparison of the study on the emotion "pain" in Indonesian by examining the usage of two lexemes, *sakit* and *nyeri*, from a corpus and comparing their patterns of use quantitatively. While there have been few previous corpus studies focusing on pain in Indonesian, this study may benefit the study of near-synonyms in two ways. First, for L2 learners of Indonesia, this study presents a new insight into the use of *sakit* and *nyeri* and how the quantitative approach may help them understand to what extent these words may differ significantly or insignificantly in their context, in which sakit is associated with pain in the body as a whole that includes both of physical and emotional phenomena, while nyeri is more localized and physical. Second, this study may enrich the cross-cultural concept of pain in Indonesian so that translators may compare it with other languages to choose the appropriate equivalence of pain in Indonesian.

This paper is organized into several sections. It will begin with the theoretical framework related to this study, followed by the research methods. Then, in the results section, it presents two statistical analyses to discriminate near-synonyms of pain as well as discussion. In the last section, recommendations are made before presenting the conclusion covering the summary of the analysis.

Literature Review

Usage-feature analysis in Cognitive Semantics (Glynn, 2010b) attempts to make generalizations about the usage of words or lexemes, then make an assumption that certain usage patterns represent the speaker's knowledge of symbolic relations that denote "meaning". The usage-feature analysis is developed based on usage-based theory (Bybee, 2013). The principle of this theory is that cognitive representation of language is impacted and created by experience with language (Langacker 1987, 2000b; Kemmer & Barlow, 2000 as cited in Bybee, 2013). This theory highlights an essential characteristic of human language: high repetition of individual units and sequences of the unit leads to conventionalization, association, and automation of sequences (Bybee, 2013). Therefore, the frequency of co-occurrences between words from usage data distinguishes the meaning of words (Rajeg et al., 2020).

Despite the claim that this methodology is more empirical than the traditional approach towards meaning, several critics arise concerning corpus representation, quantification of meaning, and reliance on frequency to understand language. With respect to corpus representation, it is argued that enumeration as a goal can never be achieved due to the infinity of language (McEnery & Wilson, 2005). McEnery and Wilson (2005) further elaborated on the critics of the methodology that since language examples in natural language is infinite, corpora are considered incomplete in nature and cannot represent language. Based on this view, the empirical approach toward language is questioned for its reliability in representing natural language. Moreover, as the corpus is related to language usage or performance, the schools of Structuralist and Mentalist argued that an object of study should be the speaker's competence. Because of this, introspection is considered an ideal method (Glynn, 2010a). In relation to the measurement of meaning, this methodology is questioned regarding the effort of applying quantitative techniques (Glynn, 2010a). As meaning is an abstract concept of subjectivity and a non-observable phenomenon, it requires introspection. While introspection data are considered unreliable, Broekhuis (2020) claimed that most of the data are based on intersubjectivity, which means that the judgment is also built on other people's judgment when the researchers are not entirely sure about their own. Lastly, on the issue of frequency, some linguists argue that it can never be used to describe a language, especially regarding salience. Hence, the reliability of the usage-based approach is still debatable in the study of meaning (Glynn, 2010a).

While aware of these questions, Glynn (2010a) and Geeraerts (2010), however, argue that this methodology is reliable for several reasons. First, the usage-based approach is necessarily subjective because introspection is essential in corpus linguistics. Therefore, using a quantitative approach in the usage-feature analysis is not about *p-values*. It involves meticulous analysis of a wide range of formal, semantics, and sociolinguistic features of natural language that consist of thousands of examples. The manual or semi-automatic analysis leads to the availability of quantitative treatment of the data. Therefore, *p-values* are just one of the other important roles that indicate statistical significance. Second, quantification in semantics offers several benefits regarding confirmation of the statistical significance of the result, identification of patterns in usage that cannot be effectively identified by introspection, and accuracy test of an analysis (Glynn, 2010a). However, what may serve as the weakness of this approach is that since it requires a large number of instances, a small number of data may affect the result. It is because analysis of meaning requires a labor of intensive manual annotation, which may restrict the number of samples. With a small number of samples, the number of different factors being examined in the study will be restricted, thus affecting the result (Glynn, 2010b). Therefore, to have a more reliable result, a more significant number of data might be needed.

In order to make semantic data possible for quantification, a previous study of social emotion using the introspective method is used as a theoretical reference, in which hypotheses are formulated and conceptual roles that play a scenario of pain are developed. Albeit the absence of relevant study on the semantic aspect of pain in Indonesian, Goddard and Wierzbicka (2014) claimed that it is a human universal because people across the world feel it in some ways. Therefore, the cross-linguistics concept of pain is used here as the gate to go into the conceptual structure of pain in Indonesian. The attempt to test a hypothesis based on the introspective study of meaning is mentioned by Geeraerts (2010). He argued that subjective analyses can be used as the first step in the cycle of analysis because they represent hypotheses, therefore, they should be tested.

The present study provides a cross-cultural comparison of the study on the emotion of pain. Pain is considered culture-specific as a part of emotion (Goddard, 2011). However, Goddard and Ye (2016) argued that cultural diversity is often underestimated, so when the word is used without considering its cross-cultural difference, it may risk "a biased discourse that is centered on the Anglo cultural perspective" (p. 2). Due to its specified concept, it hardly has equivalence in other languages that do not have similar concepts to that of English. In order to address this issue, the natural semantic metalanguage (NSM) concept of "someone feels something bad" is used to explain the universality (Wierzbicka, 2012, p. 311). While the prototypical concept of pain in English covers bad feelings in one's part of the body due to a concurrent bad event that includes the person's consciousness and the unwanting feeling, such a similar concept may be absent in other languages. To illustrate this, Wierzbicka (2012) explains the absence of the concept of pain in Yankunytjatjara, one of the Australian Aboriginal languages. Owing to the absence of an exact counterpart of the word pain in English, the closest concept suggested by the dictionary of the language is the noun pika, which is related to "a bad feeling located in a particular part of the body and associated with physical cause" (Goddard & Wierzbicka, 2014,

p. 142). This concept does not construe the psychological pain expressed in English (Goddard & Wierzbicka, 2014; Wierzbicka, 2012).

Another cross-linguistic perspective of pain is conceptualized by a single word, *dolor* in Spanish. While in English, pain is described via pain-related words such as sore, ache, pain, and hurt, in Spanish, all localized bodily symptoms and emotional suffering can be expressed by the word *dolor* (Silva, 2016). This is in contrast with Indonesian, in which pain can be experienced via several pain-related lexemes such *as sakit, nyeri, pedih, perih, linu, and ngilu*. However, in this paper, the focus of discussion only covers the two lexemes: *sakit* and *nyeri*. Although pain in Indonesian is less explored, its corresponding meaning can be found in Tagalog and Cebuano-Bisayan's word for pain: *sakit*. As the word etymologically comes from Proto-Malayo-Polynesian (Wictionary), the comparison of the meaning of the word in different languages can be identified. In Tagalog, *sakit* can either be related to a localized pain in the body caused by a medical condition or refer to a broader phenomenon that involves well-being which refers to emotional pain (Cordero, 2021; de Castro & Alvarez, 2004). Similarly, *sakit* in Cebuano-Bisayan also covers pain on the part or whole of the body as expressed in the saying *Ang sakit sa kumingking sakit pud sa tibu "uk lawas*". "The pain experienced by a little finger is the pain as well of the whole body" (Lanaria, 2009, pp. 65-66). Moreover, the dictionary definition of *sakit* is "ache, emotional pain" in *Ang sakit sa ákung kasingkásing.* "The ache in my heart" (Wolff, 1972, p. 848), as well as a figurative expression of *Ang akung kasing-kasing* "My heart is pained" (Lanaria, 2009, p. 61) also clearly embodies the concept of emotional pain. The physical and non-physical concepts of bad feelings in the body likely indicate the similar meaning of *sakit* in both languages in which the discussion mainly focuses on two dimensions: bodily focus (physical or emotional) and location (part or whole of the body) with no further elaboration on intensity and duration.

As the conceptualization of pain varies across languages in which the diversity is viewed from a cultural perspective, the diverse concept can be explained by the Saphir-Whorf hypothesis on linguistic diversity. Linguistic relativity proposes that "the particular language that one speaks influences the way one thinks about reality" (Lucy, 2001, p. 903). This theory highlights two critical claims, which are viewed as strong and weak hypotheses. The strong hypothesis is related to linguistic determinism, which strongly argues that the way people think is determined by language. In contrast, the weak hypothesis is related to the partial influence of language on thought (Jiang, 2017). Concerning language determination on thought, Wierzbicka (1997) argued that a person's native language influences his or her conceptual perspective on life. The influence of language on the way one perceives reality is closely linked to the way the vocabulary of a particular language treats a specific phenomenon (O'Neill, 2006). Wierzbicka (1997) supported this argument by providing evidence on how the concept of freedom in Roman (libertas) and Russian (svoboda) is different because of culture and history. While libertas presents a concept of one as a master on his/her own and not under someone else's control, svoboda suggests no external constraints on someone's action and a sense of well-being. Therefore, the different conceptualization of the meaning of words between languages illustrates the strong influence of one's native language on their thinking habits (Wierzbicka, 1997).

Referring to the cross-linguistic perspective of pain, Wierzbicka (2016) proposes several concepts as the basic idea of pain: "someone can feel something bad in their body." Although the concept of pain varies cross-culturally, the differences may include the following dimensions. First, pain can either focus on the body or the person as a whole. Second, a reference to the body as the locus of pain can refer to the body as a whole or as a part of the body. Third, regarding intensity, the bad feeling can refer to someone who feels something bad or something very bad in the body. Lastly, pain can vary by "bad feeling" of any duration, and bad feeling extended in time. This study uses these dimensions to code each concordance of the lexeme from corpus data before revealing their conceptual differences using quantitative analysis.

Based on the theoretical framework of usage-based theory (Bybee, 2013) and the cross-linguistic concept of pain (Wierzbicka, 2016), this study is contextualized by the hypothesis on the semasiological structure of pain from the Indonesian dictionary. If referring to Online Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) (Badan Bahasa, n.d.), *sakit* is related to pain in the body or part of the body because of fever, stomachache, and so forth. At the same time, *nyeri* is also related to pain in the body. However, the dictionary describes it as the feeling when part of the body is injected repeatedly or clamped, which causes suffering (Badan Bahasa, n.d.). Moreover, KBBI also lists the second sense of *nyeri* from the psychology domain, defining *nyeri* as a physical and emotional experience that is caused by tissue injury (Badan Bahasa, n.d.). The definition of these two lexemes from the dictionary likely indicates that the two lexemes of pain can be differentiated by the focus of pain, degree or intensity, as well as duration. By degree of pain, *sakit* is likely to be less painful, or it can be assumed that *nyeri* is more painful and has a more lasting effect. Therefore, this study hypothesized that *sakit* and *nyeri* are distinguishable by location, intensity, and duration dimensions.
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Methods

This study employs a corpus-driven method by using usage-feature analysis (Glynn, 2010b). Two statistical analyses were conducted namely exploratory and confirmatory statistics. In relation to exploratory analysis, Binary Correspondence Analysis (Glynn, 2014) was used to find the co-occurrence of usage features that gives a map of the patterning of the two lexemes (Glynn, 2014). Glynn (2014) noted that Correspondence Analysis does not require equal distribution, but making a balanced selection for each form is the best way of achieving it. Meanwhile, to confirm the significance of the patterns, Binomial Regression Analysis (Levshina, 2015) was employed. The statistical analysis was conducted in R (R Core Team, 2022) using the code provided by Glynn (2014) and Levshina (2015).

Data Collection

Corpus data used in analysis and presented as instances in the discussion was downloaded from the Leipzig Corpora Data Collection of Indonesian (Goldhahn et al., 2012). The instances from Leipzig Corpora Data Collection of Indonesian News 2020 that are included in this paper are provided with their English translations. Leipzig Corpora is a web-crawled corpus. The data are sourced from news publishers, newspaper collections, web-based news, Wikipedia, and text retrieved from websites (Biemann et al., 2007). The genre of news has been mainly used in this analysis. Approximately 200 examples were randomly extracted for each lexeme, with a total of 400 sentences. The rationale behind the number of examples solely relies on the feasibility of the analysis. Compared to similar studies that have been conducted, Krawczak (2015) used approximately 400 instances, while (Glynn, 2010b) used in total 650 instances. It shows that the number of instances values the quality of the result.

Data Analysis

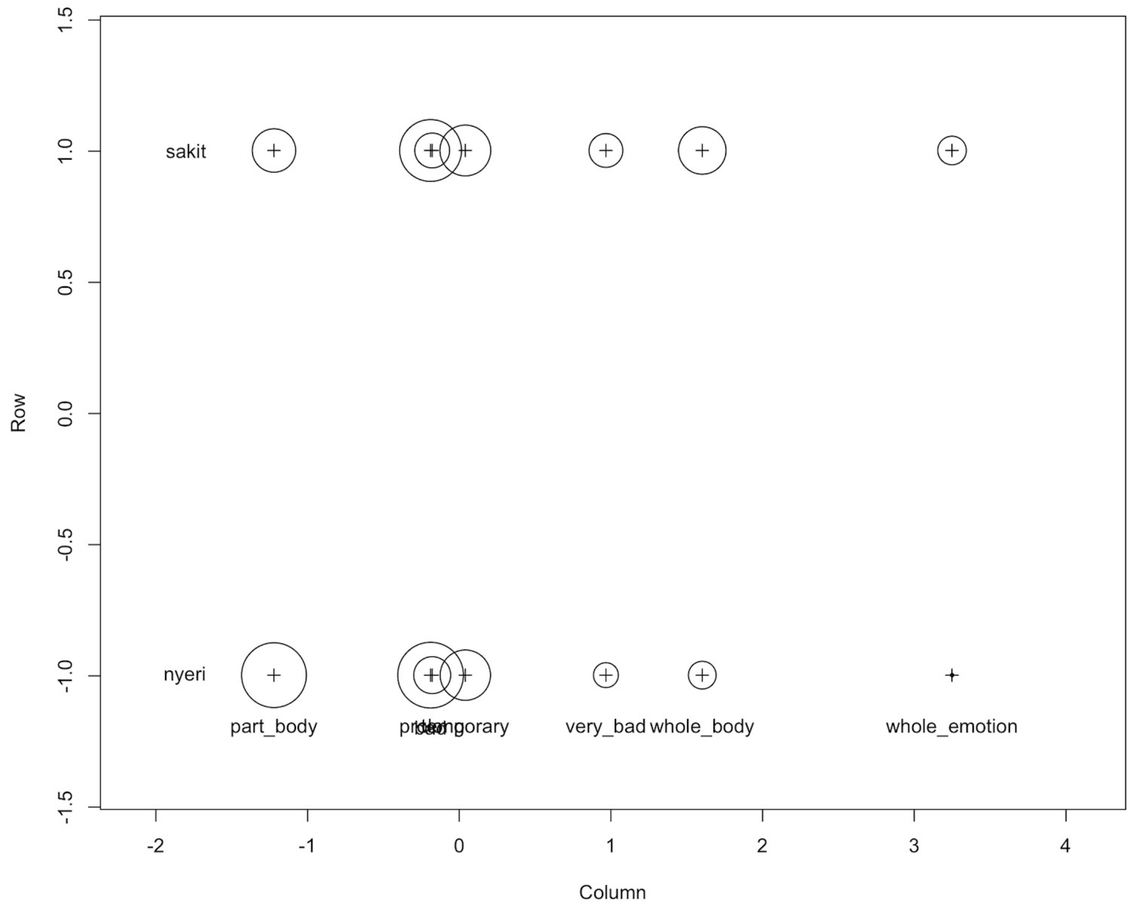
Analysis was conducted based on the following steps. First, the corpus data of Indonesian News 2020 was downloaded from the Leipzig Corpora Data Collection of Indonesian (Goldhahn et al., 2012) with a total of 15,206,710 tokens. Then, the corpus data was processed in AntConc version 4.1.2 (Laurence, 2022) for searching the concordance list by using an advanced setting. The focus of the search was limited to the context of verbal and adverbial expressions related to “feeling” such as *rasa, merasakan, derita, menderita, makin, semakin,* and *mulai* in order to avoid hits of *rumah sakit* “hospital”, which is not directly related to *sakit* as a bad feeling. A total of 400 examples were extracted from AntConc (Laurence, 2022) before manual annotation. The data were coded manually based on dimensions of pain, such as bodily focus (part or whole), intensity (bad or very bad), and duration (momentary or prolonged). After annotation, the data was loaded into R (R Core Team, 2022) for Binary Correspondence Analysis using R package *{MASS}* (Glynn, 2014). After that, the analysis proceeded in Binomial Logistic Regression (Levshina, 2015) using *lrm* function. As stated by Speelman (2014), this confirmatory analysis can be used to identify factors that have an impact on the choice between near-synonyms as well as separating their respective effects.

Results

This section covers the result of two statistical analyses. The result of the exploratory analysis (Glynn, 2014) is presented in a graphic representation showing the clustering of usage feature of the two lexemes. The next result of confirmatory analysis from Binomial Logistic Regression shows the reliability and accuracy of the profiles to approve the identified conceptual association of the lexemes that have been annotated manually.

The result of the Correspondence Analysis is presented in Figure 1. The result is plotted in a biplot with *nyeri* and *sakit* on the x-axis (representing the row), while the dimensions of pain are plotted on the y-axis (representing the column). The clustering of the dimension of pain consists of three levels of bodily focus (*part_body*, *whole_body*, and *whole_emotion*), two levels of intensity (*bad* and *very_bad*), and two levels of duration (*temporary* and *prolonged*). Bodily focus represents the physical and non-physical dimensions of pain, while intensity shows the degree of pain, whether it is bad or very bad. Lastly, duration describes the usage feature related to the length of pain, whether it is momentarily or prolonged. The biplot presents the categories of the variables in the positive and negative values on both axes, indicating the association between them. On the x-axis, *sakit* is plotted on a positive value while *nyeri* is on a negative value. Meanwhile, the categories of dimension are plotted along the y-axis, where *part_body* is clearly plotted on the negative value, while *very_bad*, *whole_body* and *whole emotion* are on the positive value. The overlapping categories of *prolong*, *bad*, *temporary* are plotted nearly at the center of the plot.

Figure 1
The Result of Correspondence Analysis



Based on the plot, it appears that *nyeri* is more strongly associated with *part_body* than with *whole_body* and *whole_emotion*. The distance between *nyeri* and *part_body* is shorter than the distance between *nyeri* and *whole_body*, indicating a stronger association with the former. Meanwhile, *sakit* is located closer to *whole_body* and *whole_emotion* compared to the other categories. This suggests a stronger association between *sakit* and these two categories compared to the other categories. Moreover, *prolong*, *temporary*, and *bad* are located near the center of the plot, indicating that they are not strongly associated with any of the categories in the analysis. However, based on the distance, *temporary* is likely closer to *whole_body* and *whole_emotion* categories compared to other categories. This may suggest that pain that is described as *temporary* is more likely to involve the entire body and emotions, rather than being focused on a specific part of the body or limited to a physical sensation.

The distance of the categories towards certain lexeme may indicate that *sakit* and *nyeri* can be differentiated by bodily focus and intensity. It can be assumed that *nyeri* is closely related to pain in a specific part of the body, while *sakit* is closely related to pain in the whole body. The following examples from the corpus data illustrate the two distinct usage features. The association of *sakit* with pain in the body or person as a whole (coded as whole_body) is presented from (1) to (6), while *nyeri* with pain in the part of the body is explicated from (7) to (12).

1. Gangguan somatik merupakan salah satu gangguan mental di mana sang penderita mengeluh rasa sakit di tubuhnya namun tidak dapat diketahui penyebabnya.
   Somatic disorder is a mental disorder in which the sufferer complains of pain in his body but cannot identify the cause.

2. Dia telah diberikan obat pembunuh rasa sakit agar bisa meredakan rasa sakit yang dialaminya.
   S/he had been given pain killers to relieve the pain s/he was experiencing.

3. Tidak biasa bagi perempuan untuk tidak meminta epidural untuk menghilangkan rasa sakit selama persalinan, terutama ketika melahirkan untuk pertama kalinya.
   It's uncommon for women not to request an epidural for pain relief during labour, especially when giving birth for the first time.

4. Dia mengaku sempat menahan rasa sakit sejak bulan lalu hingga akhirnya memeriksakan diri di rumah sakit.
   S/he admitted that s/he had endured the pain since last month until finally having a medical checkup in the hospital.

5. Gara-gara kebiasaan buruk itulah kini Betrand harus menahan sedikit rasa sakit pada perutnya.
   Because of his bad habit, now Betrand has to endure a little pain in his stomach.

6. Dia mengalami sedikit rasa sakit di bahunya.
   S/he had a slight pain in his/her shoulder.

7. Selain itu motif lainnya, menurut Ramadhan, ada yang didorong karena rasa sakit hati dan dendam sehingga melalukan tindakan pengeroyokan dan penganiayaan, bahkan sampai pembunuhan.
   In addition to other motives, according to Ramadhan, some were driven out of hurt (resentful or lit. heart pain) and revenge so they carried out acts of beatings and persecutions, even to the point of murder.

8. Dia mengatakan ada rasa sakit yang mendalam terukir di jiwa bangsa kita dan di hati jutaan orang.
   He said there is a pain that is deeply engraved in the soul of our nation and in the hearts of millions.

9. Stress dapat memicu produksi asam lambung meningkat, sehingga dinding lambung akan mengalami iritasi, maka timbul rasa nyeri yang berlebihan di lambung.
   Stress can trigger stomach acid production, so that stomach wall will experience irritation, resulting in excessive pain in the stomach.

10. Gejala gigitan semut api biasanya diawali dengan rasa nyeri yang sangat tajam, seperti terbakar atau habis dicubit.
    Symptoms of a fire ant bite usually begin with a very sharp pain, like burning or being pinched.

11. Tak heran dia merasakan nyeri yang berlebihan di bagian perut.
    No wonder he felt excessive pain in the stomach.

12. Operasi itu seharusnya dapat meredakan nyeri punggung kronis.
The surgery was supposed to relieve chronic back pain.

13. Hal ini mengakitbatkan kristal menumpuk di persendian dan menyebabkan sendi terasa nyeri, bengkak, dan meradang.
This causes crystals to build up in the joints and causes the joints to feel painful, swollen, and inflamed.

14. Olahraga ini dapat mengurangi nyeri haid dan ketidaknyamanan selama menstruasi.
These exercises can reduce menstrual pain and discomfort during menstruation.

The usage feature of *sakit* shows that *sakit* can be associated with pain in the part of the body, such as in (5) and (6). Yet, the exploratory analysis shows the tendency of pain experienced by a person as a whole, which is illustrated in (1) to (4). In comparison with *sakit*, the whole bodily sensation rarely occurs with *nyeri*. This is best explicated in (9) to (14), in which *nyeri* is associated with pain in the stomach or lower abdomen (9, 11, 14), part of the body which is bitten by a fire ant (10), the back of the body (12), and the joints (13). Meanwhile, emotional pain only corresponds to *sakit* with no occurrences in *nyeri*. This is best illustrated by (7) and (8), in which *sakit* is related to emotional sensation in the heart and soul. In terms of intensity, although the very bad intensity is plotted relatively close to *sakit*, the dimension can be identified in both *sakit* and *nyeri.* The very bad intensity in *sakit* is explicated in (2) and (3) for physical pain and in (8) for the emotional phenomenon. Comparable with *sakit*, the intensity in *nyeri* can be identified by the use of intensifiers, such as *yang berlebihan* "excessive" (9) and *yang sangat tajam* "very sharp" (10). Moreover, due to its very bad intensity, it needs to be relieved, as explicated in (12) and (14). While the two dimensions of pain show a tendency to a certain lexeme, the duration of pain shows no distinct usage between the two lexemes.

The exploratory analysis has given a particular usage pattern to specific lexemes. However, the degree of accuracy needs to be confirmed. The accuracy and predictive power of the findings are confirmed by Binomial Logistics Regression. The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1
The Result of Binomial Logistic Regression (Model 1)

lrm (formula = node ~ body_focus + intensity + duration, data = dat)				
	Model Likelihood Ratio Test	**Discrimination Indexes**	**Rank Discrim. Indexes**	
Obs 309	LR chi2 95.02	R2 0.353	C 0.766	
*nyer*i 156	d.f. 4	R2(4,309) 0.255	Dxy 0.532	
sakit 153	Pr(>chi2)<0.0001	R2(4,231.7) 0.325	Gamma 0.673	
max |deriv|0.001		Brier 0.184	tau-a 0.267	
	Coef	**S.E.**	**Wald Z**	**Pr(>|Z|)**
Intercept	-1.3393	0.3049	-4.39	<0.0001
body_focus=whole_body	1.9815	0.3142	6.31	<0.0001
body_focus=whole_emotion	11.0543	30.5787	0.36	0.7177
intensity=very_bad	0.5666	0.4057	1.40	0.1625
duration=temporary	0.7129	0.3204	2.23	0.0261

The result of analysis using *lrm* function on R (R Core Team, 2022) gives a number of statistical values related to the accuracy of the model as well as the predictors. The column of Model Likelihood Ratio Test shows that the model is significant in general with p-value <0.0001. The value on statistics C=0.766 means that the model has acceptable discrimination (Levshina, 2015). However, the model shows that there is an insignificant predictor (intensity=very_bad) with a p-value of 0.16. In order to get accuracy related to significant predictors, the model is then pruned manually in a step-wise fashion.

The final model (Model 2) is presented in Table 2, showing the whole body as the only significant predictor with a p-value <0.0001. The model sets part of the body by default as the referent level with estimated log odds -0.79 or simple odds 0.45, meaning that the chances of *sakit* are 0.45 times smaller than *nyeri* in the context of part of the body. Whereas the coefficient of significant predictor is in a positive value, meaning that the usage feature of the whole body favors *sakit* in comparison to part of the body. The log odds ratio of the significant predictor is 1.88 (simple odds=6.53). This value means that the chances of *sakit* compared to *nyeri* in the context of the whole body are 6.53 times higher than those in the context of part of the body.

Table 2
The Result of Binomial Logistic Regression (Model 2)

lrm(formula = node ~ body_focus, data = dat)				
	Model Likelihood Ratio Test	**Discrimination Indexes**	**Rank Discrim. Indexes**	
Obs 400	LR chi2 112.78	R2 0.328	C 0.745	
nyeri 200	d.f. 2	R2(2,400)0.242	Dxy 0.491	
sakit 200	Pr(>chi2) <0.0001	R2(2,300)0.309	gamma 0.806	
max |deriv| 0.001		Brier 0.189	tau-a 0.246	
	Coef	**S.E.**	**Wald Z**	**Pr(>|Z|)**
Intercept	-0.7992	0.1381	-5.79	<0.0001
body_focus=whole_body	1.8760	0.2496	7.51	<0.0001
body_focus=whole_emotion	11.0020	28.5945	0.38	0.7004

Discussion

In general, it can be assumed that logistic regression confirms the exploratory analysis to a certain degree. First, the usage feature of the two near-synonyms is distinguished by body focus, in which *sakit* is more associated with pain in the whole body while *nyeri* is related to pain in a specific part of the body. Despite the association with the body in general, *sakit* is also a localized bodily sensation. This allows expression such as *sakit* kepala "headache" and *sakit* gigi "toothache" in which pain is expressed by locating it to a particular part of the body with reference to illness or diseases. The association of pain as a localized bodily sensation is more comparable with Tagalog (Cordero, 2021; de Castro & Alvarez, 2004), in which *sakit* is always located based on where the pain is felt. The association of *sakit* with both a localized and a general bodily sensation is comparable to the usage in Cebuano-Bisayan (Lanaria, 2009; Wolff, 1972). In contrast, *nyeri* is more associated with a localized feeling, so the localized bodily expressions such as *nyeri punggung* "back pain" and *nyeri sendi* "joint pain" are more common than *rasa nyeri di badan* "pain in the body". When referring to pain in the body as a whole, *sakit* is used instead of *nyeri*, so it is more common to say *Badan saya terasa sakit* "My body is painful" than *Badan saya terasa nyeri** "My body is painful". This general conceptualization of *sakit* compared to *nyeri* is more associated with pain in English. While pain in English is related to something bad that is happening to someone's part of the body, Goddard and Wierzbicka (2014) argued that sometimes it could be conceived as global. Therefore, an expression such as *She is in pain*, in which pain does not refer to any particular part of the body, is comparable to the Indonesian expression "Dia kesakitan" with no comparable expression in *nyeri* such as "Dia kenyerian"*.

Moreover, although emotion is not a significant predictor in the model, the exploratory analysis shows that the usage feature is mostly related to *sakit* without any chances of occurrences in *nyeri*. It can be assumed that *sakit* is related to physical and emotional pain, while *nyeri* is only related to physical pain. This finding may also correspond to the occurrence of the idiomatic expression *sakit hati* (lit. ill liver) in Indonesian that is related to displeased feeling such as revenge and hatred due to being hurt emotionally. The association of *hati* in Indonesian and

Malay as the center of emotion and thought is explained by Siahaan (2008) and Goddard (2008; 2010). Siahaan (2008) argued that the anatomical use of liver as the conceptualization of emotion compared to heart in English has been influenced by ancient Indonesian ritual of liver divination and ancient cultural belief. Meanwhile, Goddard (2008; 2010) who analysed *hati* in Malay emphasized it as the key word of Malay culture, particularly as the conceptualization of emotion. Because of this, the fixed expression of *sakit hati* is related to "emotional hurt rather than the illness in this organ" (Siahaan, 2008, p. 55). Similarly, Goddard (2010) also explained that this expression may imply something like pain. While pain in the heart or feeling is closely related to *sakit* with no similar expression that corresponds to *nyeri*, it is possible that the usage feature of emotion does not occur in *nyeri*. However, the definition in the dictionary shows that emotional pain in *nyeri* is related to the psychological domain. The absence of the usage feature of emotion in *nyeri* may also be related to the genre of the corpus in this study. Since the genre is only news, it may also decrease the possibility of occurrences in relation to emotional pain in *nyeri* due to psychological effects because such domain may be related to specific genres such as academic journals.

In relation to the hypothesis, the finding confirms but also disconfirms the hypothesis in this study. The result of statistical analysis confirms the hypothesis that *sakit* and *nyeri* can be distinguished by the usage feature of body focus. While sakit can occur in the body as a whole and the part of the body, the association is statistically related to pain in the whole body compared to the part of the body, which is more associated with nyeri. However, it disconfirms that *nyeri* is more painful and lasting than *sakit* because intensity and duration are not significant in the final model of confirmatory analysis.

Overall, this result gives a discriminatory picture of the use of near-synonyms of pain for L2 learners of Indonesian. The difference in meaning between the two lexemes can be clearly identified by the context of body focus. Based on bodily focus, *sakit* is related to pain in the whole body, which covers part of the body as well. In other words, *sakit* is a word used to describe the unpleasant bodily feeling in general. This context of use allows an expression like *Dia menunjuk kaki Luna yang sakit dan masih diperban* "He pointed Luna's leg which was painful and was still bandaged", in which pain is localized. Moreover, *sakit* can be used for unpleasant bodily sensation in general, such as *Lewat pengalaman, pertemuan rasa sakit dan bahagia, kita dituntun untuk menjadi insan yang lebih baik* "Through experience, the crossing of pain and happiness, we are led to become a better person". From this example, *sakit* can be related to either non-specific unpleasant bodily sensation or unpleasant non-physical sensation, which corresponds to emotion. It enables the use of *sakit* in a more general context, not only bodily sensation. Meanwhile, although temporary duration shows no distinct usage between the lexemes, it is likely related to *sakit* relative to *nyeri* if compared to *hurt* in English. Wierzbicka (2014) mentioned that *hurt* and *pain* do not essentially mean the same in English. While *pain* is global, *hurt* is a localized bodily and short-time occurrence. However, in Indonesian, *sakit* may cover the meaning of both *pain* and *hurt* as it can refer to a generally unpleasant bodily sensation in the previous example as well as a localized bad feeling on body that occurs temporarily after an immediate preceding cause as in the sentence like *Ditusuk jarum yang harusnya terasa sakit, justru dirasakan Westny hanya terasa dingin* "Being stabbed by a needle, which should have hurt, Westny only felt cold".

Meanwhile, *nyeri* is more localized and physical as it occurs most commonly on specific parts of the body, such as muscles, chest, epigastrium, and joints. The cause of this physical pain may cover chronic disease in a sentence like *Biasanya penderita asam urat juga merasakan nyeri di bagian-bagian tertentu seperti jari tangan, lutut, pergelangan tangan* "Usually gout sufferers also feel pain in specific parts such as fingers, knees, wrists". It is also experienced because of injury, which is illustrated in a sentence like *Korban mengalami luka cakaran di lengan dan wajah, serta nyeri di beberapa bagian tubuh* "The victim suffered claw wounds on his arms and face, as well as pain in several parts of his body". Moreover, although the duration is not a significant predictor based on statistical analysis, in some contexts, *nyeri* likely appears to be more lasting than *sakit,* as expressed in the following sentence *Beberapa pasien dilaporkan hanya kelelahan, menggigil, sakit kepala, dan nyeri di tempat suntikan* "Some patients were reported only felt fatigue, chill, headache, and pain at the injection spot". It may suggest that *nyeri* has a more lasting effect compared to *sakit* in relation to injection. While *sakit* is a short-period experience after an immediate occurrence such as an injection, *nyeri* occurs longer as the side effect of the action.

Implication

The result of this study gives a new insight for L2 learners of Indonesian on the study of near-synonyms from a cross-cultural perspective. Since the meanings of emotion words are considered to be culture-specific (Goddard and Ye, 2016), as an implication, this study may enrich L2 vocabulary learning and cross-cultural competence. This study demonstrates the use of corpora to study near-synonyms of pain in Indonesian as well as comparing them with other languages. The finding, thus, enriches L2 lndonesian learning for both of educators and learners. For educator, this study offers possibility of combining cross-cultural competence and vocabulary learning in L2 learning design by making use of corpora. Moreover, for L2 Indonesian learners, this study may have an immediate implication in vocabulary learning as the finding helps them discriminate near-synonyms of pain based on the context of use as well as presenting the comparison of meaning with other languages.

Recommendation

This study has demonstrated using a corpus-driven approach to study near-synonyms in Indonesian. As this study may benefit L2 learners of Indonesian, several recommendations are made for practical purposes and methodology development for future study. For the practitioner, a similar approach can be used to test the usage features of near-synonyms in other languages. As many corpora have been made available for public use, it may provide a rich context of use to help L2 students differentiate near-synonyms based on their usage. In terms of methodological scope, despite giving a clear context on the use of near-synonyms, the present study can be developed for further analysis. First, concerning the genre of the corpus, this study illustrates the use of a specific genre of corpus to analyze emotion. Future studies on emotion using a similar methodology can be developed by comparing usage profile of lexemes from different genres of the same corpus or different corpora, for example, between BNC and Kolhapur. Specifically, for the study of pain in Indonesian, the current study can be extended by using specific genres, such as the psychological or medical domain. Since corpus data in this study only covers the genre of news, expanding the corpus composition may enrich the finding of this study. Moreover, in relation to variables, a similar study can be adapted to more pain-related lexemes in Indonesian. The additional variables may enrich the cross-linguistic concept of pain and help L2 learners of Indonesian understand the context of use to achieve the success of cross-cultural communicative competence.

Conclusion

Sakit and *nyeri* are two adjectives of pain that have closely related meaning in Indonesian. By using the multivariate corpus-driven approach, the analysis shows that *sakit* is more associated with pain in the whole body and emotions with very bad intensity. At the same time, *nyeri* is more associated with pain on the part of the body. However, the confirmatory analysis indicates that body focus is the only significant predictor of the near-synonyms. This finding confirms the hypothesis that *sakit* and *nyeri* can be distinguished by bodily focus. While *sakit*, by dictionary definition, covers both part and whole body-focus, it is likely more associated with the whole body than *nyeri*, which only covers specific parts of the body. The general focus of *sakit* includes physical and emotional pain, while the specificity on *nyeri* only covers physical phenomena.

Moreover, the confirmatory analysis disconfirms the hypothesis that *nyeri* is more painful and lasting than *sakit*. Despite the result, the analysis of this study has limitations. First, concerning corpus size, the data in this study is relatively small compared to other similar studies (Glynn, 2010b; Krawczak, 2015; Rajeg, 2016; Rajeg et al., 2020). Therefore, it may not cover all factors proportionally, particularly occurrences of intensity and duration. Secondly, related to a specific genre, this study only uses the news genre. Thus, it may decrease the possibility of occurrences of emotional pain in *nyeri* related to the psychological domain, which is more scientific. Therefore, future study with more significant instances and more varied genres of the corpus is recommended for a more reliable result.

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Rhetorical Strategies Used by Information Technology Students in In-Class Presentations

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Abstract

Rhetoric plays an important role in helping information technology (IT) professionals communicate their ideas clearly and effectively. By employing rhetorical devices when speaking about technology topics, IT professionals can present logical and convincing arguments, and demonstrate their knowledge and expertise while engaging the audience and making complex technical concepts more accessible for non-experts. This study attempts to understand how IT students construct and develop persuasive arguments by analysing their use of rhetorical strategies in a sample of persuasive presentations delivered in the course "English for IT". Both corpus analysis and manual analysis were used to identify different types of rhetorical strategies students employed to influence their audiences' attitudes. The results show that IT students not only created a logical appeal which might be more natural for them but also employed a wide range of rhetorical strategies and devices to establish disciplinary credibility and create a more personal connection with their audience, thus maintaining an appropriate balance of logos, ethos and pathos. The study further recommends systematic and careful rhetorical analysis of ESP (English for specific purposes) students' spoken language across disciplines and the consequent adaption of learning materials and teaching methods to improve ESP students' rhetoric skills.

Keywords: ethos, logos, information technology students, metadiscourse markers, pathos, persuasive presentations

Despite the traditional concept of science and technology as formal, objective, and impersonal, there appears to be a “general agreement that science is indeed a rhetorical enterprise” (Selzer, 1993, p. 6). Science and technology rely on rhetoric to communicate scientific knowledge, and to persuade others of the validity of its claims. Rhetoric is used in various forms such as writing reports for publication, presenting research findings at conferences, or communicating ideas through the Internet, television and journals. Frye and Damrosch’s (2001) observations that the only road from grammar to logic runs through the intermediate territory of rhetoric since “anything which makes a functional use of words will always be involved in all the technical problems of words, including rhetorical problems” (p. 331), suggest that science and technology inevitably involve rhetoric because they need language as well as other symbol systems, such as figures, visuals and different symbolic notations. Even though scientific communication is recognizable as scientific rather than poetic, economic or political, it “does not ensure that all scientific communication is exactly the same, and it does not rescue scientists from the chore of persuading their peers” (Reeves, 2005, p. 73). The scientists aim to convince their audience of the validity of their observation, and they often tend to exaggerate especially when accommodating their texts. Fahnestock (1986) emphasizes the importance of the rhetorical character of scientific articles whose main purpose is “to celebrate rather than validate” (p. 279). Gross (2006) and Latour (1988) claim that the making of scientific knowledge is a social and rhetorical process rather than exclusively rational. Rude (1992) adds that “if scientific knowledge is socially constructed, rhetorical issues (motivation, social networks. and persuasion) play an important role in the making of this knowledge” (p. 88). Gross (2006) further suggests that scientists are not only persuaded by logos, the logical structure of argument, but also by ethos represented by a network of scientific authority relationships and its values and pathos reflected in emotional appeals that are “clearly present in the social interactions of which science is the product” (p. 28), for example, in cases of peer-review procedures or proposed research in a controversial area, therefore scientists are expected to use a combination of rhetorical strategies such as logos, ethos and pathos to effectively convey their message.

The typical features of the language of information technology (IT) professionals are accuracy, conciseness, consistency, completeness, and clear organization. IT professionals like all scientists rely on evidence and reasoning when they make claims about their data. However, data may be interpreted in more ways than one, so it is important for IT professionals to “understand scientific rhetoric, the art of persuading a scientific audience that a claim is valid and viable given the available evidence” (Reeves, 2005, p. 4). In the course English for IT, students often enthusiastically engage in in-class debates and conversations about technical topics, yet when delivering a formal presentation, their enthusiasm is often restrained in favour of serious and impersonal recitation of dry facts because the information is supposed to be precise and accurate, and the students might also fear that too much enthusiasm casts doubt on scientific objectivity. Therefore, they should be trained to give effective presentations, argue rationally, and advance not only discipline-specific but also English language knowledge via such argumentation.

In IT, if a speaker can persuade a listener to do or at least listen to what they are saying, they can influence their decisions, judgments, and selection. Not only must IT professionals select words, sentence styles and formats that belong to their scientific discourse, but they must also understand scientific rhetoric or the art of persuading a potential audience that may range from experts in their field, who might be sceptical about their findings, to wider audiences, especially if their topic is controversial or interesting to the general public. Thompson (1998) explains that “developing persuasive language powers is one technique which can make you a powerful communicator" (p. 39). Similarly, Reeves (2005) confirms that "a good scientist is not only a good technician, a good experimenter, but also a good communicator" (p. 96).

The arguments mentioned above reveal that rhetoric is central to science, and not only scientists but also students of different scientific disciplines should be trained to improve their rhetorical communication. For this reason, this study aims to analyse how students of English for IT employ rhetorical strategies in their presentations related to their field of study and how they incorporate individual components of the Aristotelian (2010) triad (logos, ethos and pathos) in their presentations to appeal to their listeners.

Literature Review

Little research has been done in the field of the persuasive language of ESP students. Most empirical studies deal with the written form of persuasive language. Aziz and Ahmad (2017) tried to identify the distinctive features of persuasive essays adopted by Malaysian students of English. Using the Toulmin model (Karbach, 1987), they discovered that while the students applied the basic persuasive components such as claiming, giving evidence and justifying, their essays lacked more complex persuasive components, such as qualifying, rebutting and backing. Ho and Li's (2018) analysis of 181 argumentative essays of the students at the University of Hong Kong showed that some students had problems using metadiscourse in constructing convincing arguments. A study by Khairuddin, Rahmat, Noor and Khairuddin (2021) revealed that Malaysian university students of English failed to pay attention to their credibility as writers when writing persuasive essays. Saputra, Jumariati and Febriyanti (2021) used a questionnaire and an open-ended interview to identify the problems that students of Lambung Mangkurat University faced while writing argumentative essays in English. The results indicated that the students had problems with cognitive aspects (lack of knowledge of the key features of an argumentative essay), linguistic aspects (content, grammar, organization, vocabulary, claim, and evidence), and psychological aspects (fear of making mistakes, lack of self-esteem, and low motivation) that affected their writing.

Very few empirical studies have dealt with the spoken form of persuasive language used by university students. Most of the studies focus on an analysis of rhetorical moves and metadiscourse of an academic genre of three-minute thesis (3MT) presentations by graduate students from different disciplines. A study by Hu and Liu (2018) examined the rhetorical structure of 3MT presentations to discuss disciplinary distinctions between hard and soft sciences, and pure and applied sciences. They analysed a corpus of 142 thesis presentations by PhD students of biological sciences, mechanical engineering, education and history at 70 universities across the world and identified eight distinct rhetorical moves, including obligatory moves, such as Orientation, Rationale, Purpose, Methods, Implication, and Termination, and two optional ones, Framework and Results. Their analysis revealed statistically significant associations between disciplinary affiliation and the likelihood to employ three moves (i.e., Framework, Methods, and Results). Specifically, even though the hard-discipline students were much less likely to deploy a Framework move than the soft-discipline students, they were much more likely to employ a Methods move. Furthermore, the pure-discipline students were more often observed to deploy a Results move than their applied-discipline counterparts.

Hyland and Zou (2021) analysed 140 3MT presentations in the worldwide competition of PhD students of the physical and social sciences. Drawing on Hyland's (2005a) stance model, they attempted to analyse hedges, boosters, attitude markers and self-mention that students used to project themselves into their texts to communicate their integrity, credibility, involvement and relationship to their subject matter and audiences. Their findings showed that while hard science students took a stance by casting doubt or asserting certainty in the reliability of the information, social science students claimed an authorial self through a more visible personal presence and explicit affective commentary. Similarly, Qiu and Jiang (2021) used Hyland's (2005b) stance and engagement framework to examine how the popularisation of scientific knowledge had influenced the ways 80 presenters from six disciplines interact with their audiences. The results showed that stance markers were more often used than engagement markers, while explicit mentions of self and listeners were the most common features. Additionally, presenters in the hard sciences, compared to those in soft-knowledge fields, made more use of the interactional features, but rhetorical questions were more frequently used in the soft-knowledge fields.

Considering the lack of studies dealing with undergraduate ESP students' spoken form of persuasive language, this study aims to contribute to the current state of knowledge and identify the characteristic rhetorical strategies used by students of the bachelor's study programme "Information Technology" at Brno University of Technology. The following research questions were defined:

1. How did English for IT students employ rhetorical concepts of logos, ethos and pathos to argue and support their claims in their presentations?
2. What were the most common rhetorical strategies English for IT students used to persuade their audience?

Method

The present research study was based on the analysis of in-class presentations in the course "English for IT" taught at the Department of Foreign Languages at Brno University of Technology. According to the syllabus of the course, students are required to deliver in-class persuasive presentations on a product or service related to their field of study. This approach helps support active and strategic learning leading to the improvement of students' speaking skills involving the art of rhetoric. The presented products or services could be real or fictional and the areas from which they could be chosen include desktop computers, laptop computers, mainframes, components of the motherboard, input devices, output devices, storage devices, system software, application software, computer networks, networking hardware, Internet access and Internet safety. In the participants' presentation, students were required to include specific points unique to the target group of customers and a description of the product or service including the advantages of buying and using it. They were supposed to support their speech with visual resources or, if possible, with the help of a physical demonstration. The length of a presentation ranged from 5 to 7 minutes.

A total of 75 students, 35 Czechs, 35 Slovaks and 5 Russians in the first year of a bachelor's study programme at the Faculty of Information Technology at Brno University of Technology, participated in the research. The students' English language level was B2 according to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) and the *Global Engineers Language Skills (GELS) Framework*. The *GELS Framework* (for more details, see Rinder, Geslin & Tual, 2016) states that students with B2 language level can describe and give effective instructions about specific processes and methods within their field of engineering, and they can interpret data spontaneously and share their understanding precisely and concisely when giving pre-learnt speeches in the English language. Even though the *GELS Framework* includes an ability to convince both non-expert and expert audiences in the description of the

C1 level, the students of the course "English for IT" are instructed on how to deliver persuasive presentations. Besides the unit dealing with features of persuasive language in the coursebook *English for Information Technology* (Ellederová, 2022), students watch illustrative videos and analyse persuasive strategies used by speakers from the IT sector, including Steve Jobs, Elon Musk, Sebastian Linus (a Canadian YouTuber best known for creating and hosting YouTube channels that cover technology, especially Linus Tech Tips) and Christina "CK" Kerley (a powerhouse speaker and strategist who helps modernize Fortune 500s brands, business models, and workforces for the digital age). Students also develop different rhetorical strategies in in-class argumentative debates on controversial topics from the field of IT and are accustomed to being recorded in classes for educational purposes. Besides giving presentations, they often participate in role-plays and in-class debates where their self-assessment and feedback on their fellow students' performance are required after watching the recorded videos.

For the study, the presentations were video recorded in the classroom during the summer semester of 2022. All students gave written consent that the recordings could be used for the purposes of the research. Even though, they could decline participation in the research, all students agreed to participate and learn about the research outcome. Transcripts of all presentations were uploaded and analysed in the corpus manager and text analysis software Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff, Rychly, Smrz & Tugwell, 2004). The whole corpus of IT students' presentations included 75 transcribed presentations, 57,814 tokens comprising 50,294 words, and the researcher as a transcriber identified some 3,232 sentences.

Two methodological approaches were used to identify and analyse rhetorical strategies and devices: a corpus analysis and a manual analysis (e.g. Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005; Friginal, Lee, Polat & Roberson, 2017). The corpus analysis was mainly used for the identification of figures, attitude markers, boosters, engagement markers, self-mention, linking devices, question tags, imperatives, exclamations, alliteration and some types of hyperbole. The manual analysis was necessary to identify humour, anecdotes, metaphors, rhetorical questions, flattery and tricolons. A similar research design was used by Dontcheva-Navratilova, Adam, Povolná and Vogel (2020) who recommend processing the text in the corpus manually for "fine-grained contextualised analysis" (p. 13).

Results

Oral presentations where students tried to present a particular product or service to potential listeners from an IT sector provided some interesting variations on the Aristotelian triad because, although the students' crucial responsibility was logos (i.e. to report facts, features, and functions of the product or service), pathos determined by emotional impact and ethos including the speakers' credibility and knowledge of the social and psychological characteristics of their audience as the specific discourse community played an important role as well. The following sections focus on the analysis of rhetorical strategies to appeal to logic, values or trust, and emotions.

Logical Appeal

The logical appeal can be very powerful when applied correctly by IT students, allowing them to convince their audience through logic and evidence rather than authority or emotion. Table 1 lists the rhetorical strategies students employed to create a logical appeal.

Table 1
Rhetorical Strategies for Creating a Logical Appeal in IT Students' Presentations

Logical appeal	Number	%
Listing and adding	2013	63.90
Contrasting	322	10.22
Figures and statistics	235	7.46
Conditioning	227	7.21
Reasoning	204	6.48
Exemplifying	90	2.86
Making a new start	24	0.76
Reinforcing	16	0.51
Changing the subject	14	0.44
Summarizing and generalizing	5	0.16
Total	3150	100.00

Technical details such as specifications, measurements and performance numbers helped students provide an objective assessment of their product to demonstrate its superiority over competitors. Students used facts, figures and statistics (Example 1) to explain the benefits of the presented product. They also discussed product characteristics and processes (Example 2) in detail to help the audience understand how it works, what features are available and why they should choose it.

(1) *During last year over **10 billion more attacks** were recorded worldwide and over **30 million devices** were infected with malware, and these numbers are expected to grow even bigger in the future.*
(2) *Sadblock uses keyword blocking and dynamic filtering. **Dynamic filtering analyses** the content and looks for specific content to identify. **If it evaluates** it's negative in any kind, the content on that page **will be automatically blocked**. **This is done by searching through** the text and format of the page **while looking** at this text…*

Since logos is an appeal to rationality, referring to the clarity and logical integrity of the argument, it seems more natural for IT students than the other two appeals, pathos and ethos. However, the logical appeal is only achieved if the audience is able to follow the speaker's logos, so students tried to process and elaborate their arguments by listing and adding, signposting, reasoning, conditioning, exemplifying, reinforcing, contrasting and summarising to make their speech persuasive.

As Table 1 indicates, the most frequent strategy for logical appeal was listing and adding. Students used the linking devices *and, first, second, third, also, then, next, too, as well as, last but not least, both… and…, finally* and *in addition*. Example 3 shows how these linking devices helped students connect ideas, further develop them, and create a logical flow to their presentation.

(3) *And **last but not least**, we have a fully adjustable stand allowing you all sort of all sorts of pivoting swivelling tilting to adjust the monitor to the position you want making this **not only** comfortable **but also** convenient.*

Using *well* and *now* to signal something new and expressions *by the way, now that I showed you, let us look at* to change the subject (Example 4) helped students guide their audience through the presentation and compel them to keep listening.

(4) ***Now that I showed you*** *the basics of how the Snackatron 3000 works,* ***let's all look together*** *at all the marvellous foods that it can make for us…*

Contrasting was the second most frequent strategy used to create a logical appeal. Students used *but, while, however, although, even though* and *on the other hand* to emphasize the differences between products, show that one idea is stronger than another or point out different sides of their arguments (Example 5).

(5) *So* ***even though*** *we have to consider configuration which you selected, when it comes to design, we try to make it as portable as possible.*

Another rhetorical strategy appealing to logic was conditioning. Conditional clauses are often used in persuasive discourse since they can provide evidence to back up a speaker's or writer's argument by describing circumstances, expressing dependencies, or conveying demands with consequences (cf. Fahnestock, 2011; Carther-Thomas & Rowley-Jolivet, 2017; Dontcheva-Navratilova et al., 2020). Using conditional clauses allowed students to express facts (Example 6), make predictions based on their observations and experience and draw conclusions from data (Example 7). These strategies helped them form a logical argument that could be shared among their audience for evaluation, criticism, and further refinement.

(6) *Well, as I have described earlier, it has the tools for teamwork, but* ***given*** *the fact that part of the Reflux package is the Reflux SR or the standalone renderer, a shared render farm can be also implemented.*
(7) ***If*** *we look at the price, MacBook is more than twice more expensive than Acer.*

Reasoning helped students build an effective case for their point of view by using evidence, facts, examples, and logic to support their claims. Using linking devices such as *because, since, therefore, so, that is why, the reason why* and *due to* helped students support their claims as well as anticipate potential objections from the audience, and consequently provide counterarguments or rebuttals to those points (Example 8). By reasoning students made the audience concentrate on the statements and accept them as true (cf. Young, 2017), thus giving them confidence in what they were being told and making them more likely to agree with the speakers' viewpoints.

(8) *CCleaner ratings are another* ***reason why*** *I think you should be interested in using this software* ***because of*** *its advanced features yet very simple user interface.*

Exemplifying allowed students to back up what they were saying with examples to contribute to the logos of their arguments. Students often used expressions *for example, for instance, like, such as* and *namely* to provide specific and vivid examples for the purpose of adding more information to clearly explain and illustrate features, functions and advantages of the presented product (Example 9).

(9) *Some other useful utilities included in CCleaner are,* ***for example****, disk analyzer browser plugin manager or software updater.*

A similar purpose was achieved through linking devices *besides, apart from, anyway, in fact* and *what's more* that students used for reinforcing, as illustrated in Example 10.

(10) ***What's more**, it's all wrapped in minimalistic beautiful and easy-to-use interface.*

The linking devices for summarizing and generalizing *to conclude* (Example 11) and *to sum up* were used less frequently than the other linking devices. This was probably because of the character of the presentation where the main aim was to appeal to the listeners' emotions and persuade them to buy the particular product, so most presentations concluded with powerful questions (e.g. *What are you waiting for?*), conditional imperative clauses (e.g. *And if you have any questions feel free to ask.*) and imperatives (e.g. *Then join us and achieve things you've always dreamed of.*).

(11) *And **to conclude** this presentation, I'm going to shed some light on a couple of the most frequently asked questions.*

Ethical Appeal

Ethos is an ethical appeal related to the speaker's credibility and competence that involves their stance and tone taken towards the topic and its context (Cockcroft & Cockcroft, 1992). The statistical outline of different rhetorical strategies students used to create an appeal to ethos is presented in Table 2. Students mediated ethical appeal by different rhetorical strategies, such as using boosters, self-mention, expressing corporal identity, attitude markers and referring to expert opinion.

Table 2
Rhetorical Strategies for Creating an Ethical Appeal in IT Students' Presentations

Ethical appeal	Number	%
Expressing corporal identity: *we* and other expressions	490	46.67
Attitude markers	210	20.00
Boosters adding a sense of credibility and competence	182	17.33
Self-mention with boosters: *I believe/think/know/am sure/convinced*	86	8.19
Engagement markers	49	4.67
Expressing corporal identity: *we believe/think/know/are sure*	25	2.38
Referring to experts	8	0.76
Total	1050	100.00

As Table 2 shows, the most common strategy for creating an ethical appeal was expressing corporal identity (i.e. when a student spoke as a representative of or on behalf of a company). As Examples 12 and 13 indicate, by using the pronoun *we* and *our*, students conveyed the image of a company as a team or a group with a clear identity that shares responsibility for the presented product (cf. Bramley 2001).

(12) *However, **we guarantee** stability and warranty for free sensors on the same PC.*
(13) ***Our** motto is one system for all.*

Example 14 illustrates how expressing corporal identity can also engender solidarity with potential customers by addressing the audience using the second-person pronoun and identifying the product with the company's mission.

(14) *So, **you** really need a protection from that, and **we** have the perfect solution for you.*

The second most frequent rhetorical strategy for creating an ethical appeal was the use of attitude markers. Students' presentations included adjectives (e.g. *important, expected, significant, necessary, crucial, relevant, clear, required*), adverbs (e.g. *personally, honestly, essentially, obviously, even, indeed*) and expressions (e.g. *we (all) know, in my opinion, in my point of view*) to express judgements of necessity or importance of the presented product based on its technical specifications and facts. Examples 15 and 16 show how students attempted to enhance their credibility by adopting a subjective stance and sharing personal judgements with their audience. Besides, the inclusive *we (all) know* in Example 16 implies respect and open-mindedness toward the audience and acts as a positive politeness device because it reflects solidarity and links the speaker and the audience as members of the same discourse community of IT students (cf. Hyland, 2005a; Fahnestock, 2011; Dontcheva-Navratilova et al., 2020).

(15) *I **personally** don't like to pay for software which I don't know.*
(16) *We all **know** that optical cables are the best solution…*

Boosters adding a sense of credibility and competence, such as evidential, deductive and research verbs *know*, *show, prove, demonstrate* and *find*, and expressions *the fact that* and *importance of*, were used to express students' confidence and certainty in what they say, and to indicate involvement with the topic of their presentation as well as solidarity with their audience (cf. Hyland, 2005a). By using evidence-based language (Example 17), students were able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the topic, as well as provide support for any conclusions or recommendations they made. Furthermore, the boosters allowed students to present themselves more professionally while still conveying their personal thoughts and opinions on a given subject.

(17) *Well, it has been **proven** by multiple studies that South VPN is faster, it's more effective, and it is easier to use for the average person.*

Another frequent rhetorical strategy to build a personal ethos was self-mention. Students often referred to themselves as an authority on a presented product using the expressions *I, my* and *myself* (Example 18). Despite Hyland's (2005a) observations that self-mention is rather rare in science and technology discourse, IT students employed this strategy quite frequently not only to demonstrate a confident and trustworthy image but also to give their audience the impression that they are personally involved and willing to share information (Example 19).

(18) ***I** tried it **myself** about a year ago, and since then, **I** live a quiet and peaceful life.*
(19) ***I** am really excited because today **I** have a chance to introduce you to something **I believe** you will find very useful.*

A frequent combination of the pronouns *I/we* with the boosters *believe, know, think, be (definitely) sure* and *be convinced*, as demonstrated in Examples 19 and 20, indicates the speaker's overt acceptance of personal responsibility and their explicit attempt to build a personal ethos of competence and authority in order to promote the confident and positive image as a representative of a fictional company (cf. Hyland, 2005a; Xiaoqin, 2017).

(20) *Well, **we believe** in a wireless future where all of your devices are connected…*

Since credibility is "most easily gained on the strength of company successes" (Hyland, 2005a, p. 78), students attempted to activate the ethical appeal by referring to experts, authorities or reviewers of the presented products or services to emphasize the trustworthiness of their assertions. In Example 21, a student mentions a popular Canadian YouTuber and technology demonstrator, Linus Gabriel Sebastian. Similarly, in the presentation on the headphones, a subsidiary of Samsung Electronics that designs home and car audio equipment is referred to (Example 22).

(21) *And all of those advantages make this not only, in my opinion, but also by **Linus Tech Tips**, the best gaming monitor out there right now*.
(22) *The Asus Golden Ear team worked with audio specialist **Harman Kardon** to create the latest version of Asus Sonic Master audio technology, and the results are astonishing.*

The engagement markers *let's, as you can see* and *you can see that/how* for direct appeal to the audience allowed students to acknowledge the presence of their audience, lead and manipulate them according to their intentions, focus their attention (Example 44), guide them to intended interpretations (Example 23) and anticipate their possible objections (cf. Hyland, 2005a, 2005b). Addressing the audience using *you* and inclusive *let's* also contributed to the development of a relationship between the speaker and the audience, which also helped realize an emotional appeal, as discussed below.

(23) ***As you can see**, the growth in processing power is stagnating more and more every single year.*

Emotional Appeal

Pathos is an essential factor in scientific presentations because it allows the presenter to convey more than just facts and make their arguments more compelling and memorable. By using rhetorical strategies for creating an ethical appeal (Table 3), IT students attempted to establish a more personal connection with their listeners, helping them not only better understand the importance of the presented arguments but also make complex technical concepts more accessible and relatable for non-experts. This could help ensure that everyone understood what was being discussed, making presentations much more effective overall.

Table 3
Rhetorical Strategies for Creating an Ethical Appeal in IT Students' Presentations

Emotional appeal	Number	%
Evaluative adjectives	531	45.23
Rhetorical questions	271	23.08
Interjections and sound words	88	7.50
Imperatives	61	5.20
Exclamations	52	4.43
Alliteration	33	2.81
Repetition	31	2.64
Hyperbole	23	2.00
Tricolon	19	1.62
Flattery	18	1.53
Question tags	17	1.45
Metaphors and personification	15	1.28
Humour and fun	11	0.94
Anecdotes	4	0.34
Total	1174	100.00

As Table 3 indicates, the most frequent strategy was the use of positive evaluative adjectives. Students described the features and functions of the products as *advanced, amazing, astonishing, brand-new, excellent, fast, great, ground-breaking, incredible, innovative, new, revolutionary, sleek, smart, special, stunning, unbelievable* and *unique* to express appreciation, invoke a positive judgement and support their expert opinions. Examples 24 and 25 demonstrate how students attempted to emphasize the value of the presented items and ensure that the audience would respond favourably to these positive assertions and would be eager to learn more about how they could benefit from it. To make a stronger positive evaluation, premodifiers were often added (Example 25).

(24) *With the **revolutionary** laser printer Canon ImageRunner C3125i, all of your problems disappear.*
(25) *It is highly customizable and comes with **modern ground-breaking** web addiction algorithms that will make scanning for viruses **much faster** and **astronomically more efficient**.*

A rhetorical question, an interrogative form that allowed students to interact with their audience more subtly and emotionally, was the second most frequent strategy to create an emotional appeal. Rhetorical questions in Examples 26 and 27 not only put forward suggestions and ideas but also require no answer other than the audience's agreement with the proposition implied. Their effects might vary, for example, to shake the confidence of the audience opposed to the persuader's view, reinforce an opinion already formed or forming, or simply to make the audience act (cf. Cockcroft & Cockroft, 1992 Fahnestock, 2011; Young, 2017; Dontcheva-Navratilova et al., 2020).

(26) ***Are you tired** of waiting for your documents to be printed?*
(27) ***Who doesn't want** to have files secured and safe?*

Another quite frequent category of rhetorical devices was interjections and sound words. Interjections were used to convey surprise and amazement (*Wow!*, *Oh!*), excitement (*Oh* *yeah!*), delight (*Hmm!*) and approval (*Yeah!*). The other purposes of the interjections in students' presentations were to attract attention (*Hey! Behold!*) or ask for agreement (*Huh!*). The sound word *Boom!* to create imagery while describing a process or activity (Example 28) also occurred several times in the presentations.

(28) *The web page loads, you choose your current episode and press play.* ***Boom***. *You've got hacked.*

When talking to their audience, students employed imperatives to urge their audience to act, instruct them on what to do, prevent them from taking inappropriate action and direct the imagination of the listeners proactively towards the benefits of the product (Example 29). They often kept the imperatives brief to maximise their effectiveness, as illustrated in Example (30).

(29) ***Imagine*** *the possibilities that smart lenses can provide.*
(30) ***Go*** *and* ***don't delay***.

A direct appeal to the audience was also accomplished by using a second-person pronoun (Example 31), which indicates "a subtle and clever way to guide the thinking of the audience" (Halmari, 2005, p. 126) that signals the interpersonal function referring to social reality (Halliday, 2004).

(31) *Well,* ***you*** *and only* ***you*** *can access them.*

Exclamations (Example 32) were another persuasive device used by students to emphasize the quality of the presented product and influence the emotions, attitudes, and behaviour of the audience. Question tags (Example 33) performed similar functions.

(32) *Isn't it amazing?*
(33) *Let's change that* ***shall we****?*

Using hyperbole, students intended to make a statement salient by the excessive wording and extreme exaggeration to evoke strong feelings and make a powerful impression (Examples 34 and 35). Fahnestock (2011, p. 117) points out that hyperbole may be a very slippery device since both "understatement and overstatement become tools for signalling ironic intention", which is illustrated in Example 35 where the student's overstatement created a somewhat humorous effect.

(34) *It's* ***the best of the best*** *monitors, so* ***definitely*** *worth it, in my opinion.*
(35) *Now, if you still don't believe that this is* ***the single greatest greatest thing*** *that humanity* ***ever did, ever accomplished****, I invite you to ask some questions.*

As Table 3 demonstrates, another effective rhetorical strategy that occurred in students' presentations was flattery. This strategy evokes reciprocity, positive mood and liking (cf. Burger, Soroka, Gonzago, Murphy & Somervell, 2001; Grant, Krieger, Nemirov, Fabrigar & Norris, 2022). As Example 36 indicates, students complimented the audience on their expertise, intelligence and good taste to appeal to their vanity, make them feel good and encourage them to buy the presented product.

(36) ***Someone who knows the industry like you*** *can see a good bargain when it walks onto their doorstep.*

A tricolon is a persuasive device for organizing and presenting phrases, clauses, or sentences in groups of three (Jasinski, 2001). As Example 37 illustrates, tricolons helped students significantly strengthen their point of view and emphasize the benefits of the product in a memorable way.

(37) *What's more, it's all wrapped in* ***minimalistic***, ***beautiful*** *and* ***easy-to-use*** *interface.*

Similarly, alliteration (Examples 38 and 39) functioned as another attention-grabbing and memorable rhetorical device.

(38) *This solid-state drive costs 99 US dollars and is the* ***best bang*** *for the* ***buck***.
(39) *You can enjoy* ***crystal clear calls*** *with 2 outer mics that pick up your voice and preserve it against background noises.*

Repetition denotes a degree in a persuasive argument (Cockcroft & Cockroft, 1992), so it helped students create a greater agreement with the message. In Example 40, repetition creates a sense of rhythm in the language used as well as emphasis by reinforcing what has already been mentioned, thus making it more memorable for the audience.

(40) *And the* ***more*** *engines will explore this technology, the* ***more*** *games will use the powers of Ray tracing, thus resulting in* ***more*** *immersive experience.*

Personification and metaphors helped students paint a very clear picture of the product they were trying to promote. Examples 41 and 42 illustrate that using metaphors allowed students to attract their audience's attention and see the presented products in new ways by pointing to an unexpected and surprising resemblance or relationship between things (cf. Mulder, 1996; Thompson, 1998; Sopory & Dillard, 2002).

(41) *But look at this* ***little boy***. *It's about the same capacity and is actually quite faster than the big one.*
(42) *ZenBook Pro Duo is a real* ***powerhouse*** *when it comes to performance.*

As listed in Table 3, students also included humour, fun and anecdotes in their persuasive presentations. Humour and fun link the speaker and the audience since they signal shared experience (Cockcroft & Cockroft, 1992; Reeves, 2005; Adam, 2017; Dontcheva-Navratilova et al., 2020) and similar underlying values (Meyer, 1997). Humour transforms the emotional state of the audience, implies "the power of intelligence, observation and understanding," and creates real communication because the "audience actively responds to the speaker through laughter" (Thompson, 1998, pp. 55–56). Example 43 illustrate how encouraging the audience to laugh together allowed students to create a sense of community, shared interests and experiences, thus breaking down barriers between them and their audience.

(43) *How are you supposed to have a good conversation with somebody if they sound like they are underwater, and they look like a pixelated character from a retro video game?*

Anecdotes (Example 44) helped students to provide an example of how the product could solve their potential problems in the real world and establish a rapport with the audience by identifying with the speaker and understanding their character. They also might help students relax in the difficult introductory stage of the presentation.

(44) *I'll start with a quick story that's happened to me. Imagine it's Friday evening. You are playing Counter Strike Global Offensive with your friends, and suddenly this happens* [plays a video]. *If you see yourself in this video, then, my friend, admit it, it's time to buy a new mouse, for example, the M801 from Redragon. I personally have this mouse, and it has saved me from a lot of bridges.*

Discussion

The research results revealed that IT students employed a wide range of rhetorical strategies and devices of the Aristotelian triad in their in-class presentations. They appealed to logic in their speeches by presenting facts, figures and data that supported their points. They also used logical reasoning and exemplification of successful implementations to explain and prove why their ideas are valid and how they could be beneficial. Furthermore, to make their arguments more effective, a variety of linking devices for listing, adding, changing the subject, contrasting, reinforcing and summarizing were included. Referring to the expertise and experience of respected IT professionals, expressing corporal identity and using attitude markers and boosters allowed students to add a sense of credibility and competence to their speeches. Regarding pathos, students tried to use emotionally charged language full of positive evaluative adjectives, interjections and sound words, exclamations, alliteration and hyperbole. To make complex IT concepts more accessible and easier to understand for their audience, students used personification and metaphors. They also focused on connecting with their audience through rhetorical questions, imperatives, repetition, flattery and anecdotes that evoked emotion. Additionally, to make their presentations more entertaining and allow them to relate to their audience on a personal level, students used humour, which also had the potential to reduce stress levels among them and their audience.

The analysis of IT students' language in their persuasive speeches indicates that one of the biggest challenges for ESP students seems to be understanding the subtle differences between words and phrases that can change meanings significantly. This can make it difficult to effectively communicate ideas, particularly when appealing to logic, values or trust, and emotions. Having a limited vocabulary might be another challenge faced by some ESP students, which makes it hard for them to express themselves clearly when trying to appeal using logic or emotion since they do not always have the right words at their disposal, especially if their native tongue does not have equivalents for certain concepts expressed only through English terms and phrases (e.g. idioms). Nevertheless, most IT students did not have any problems with vocabulary and specialized terminology when giving their presentations, not only because their speeches were pre-learnt but also because they can gradually acquire specialized terminology in the course "English for IT". Finally, struggling with grammar appears to be a common issue among some ESP students who try to master all the rules associated with constructing sentences correctly to effectively convey thoughts and feelings. This might be challenging especially when trying to appeal to someone's emotional side since poor grammar will detract from their message instead of enhancing it, as some illustrative examples in the Results section showed. Grammar mistakes in IT students' persuasive presentations were, however, less frequent than when they had to respond spontaneously during in-class debates and discussions.

IT students must understand and be able to use formal, grammatically correct language and informal varieties of the language if their presentation is going to succeed. However, English as a lingua franca (ELF) settings must be considered as well. After they graduate from Brno University of Technology, IT students will work in multinational IT companies, such as IBM, Y-Soft, Vodafone, Red Hat, Avast Software and Zebra Technologies, where they will communicate with a large number of non-native English speakers rather than native English speakers and be exposed to different varieties of English. Non-native speakers will likely learn non-standard forms of English from each other, and they, as Björkman (2013) points out, "aim for functionality before any other factor such as conforming to what may appear as the norm, accuracy or language complexity" (p. 162). Communicative functions and fluency seem to be more important than accuracy for people who work in the IT sector because their goal is to employ pragmatic strategies to assure their language output is comprehensible and communication effective (cf. Mauranen, 2003, 2010; Smit, 2010; Björkman, 2013). According to Mauranen (2003, p. 7), "to hold up a native speaker model as the target for international users of English is counterproductive because it sets up a standard that by definition is unachievable," therefore a more effective solution might be to exploit ESP students' strengths in acquiring and focusing on those aspects of the language that are most useful in communicating with other ELF speakers, for example, rhetorical strategies and devices.

One of the limitations of the study is missing comparison of English for IT students' use of rhetorical strategies with the rhetorical strategies used by their native English counterparts since it is rather complicated to find corpora containing spoken language in the form of persuasive presentations by the similar group of native English speakers studying IT. Another limitation is that students' presentations were recorded gradually during the whole semester (three presentations in one class), so students who had their presentations later could improve their rhetorical strategies after listening to their fellow students. However, due to the organizational constraints of the academic year, it would be impossible to record presentations by such a large sample of students at the same time.

Recommendations

ESP students should learn how to use persuasive language by studying rhetorical devices to develop their logical arguments and evidence-based claims. They should review examples of successful rhetorical appeals in other speeches to identify effective strategies used by experienced speakers from their field of study and practice writing persuasive essays that incorporate strong and well-supported points. ESP teachers should design learning materials with tasks and activities for students focused on expressing different communicative functions (e.g. reasoning, suggesting, contrasting, agreeing and denying) and using linguistic means (e.g. metaphor, hyperbole, boosters, hedges, engagement and attitudinal markers) to appeal to the potential listeners and teach their students how to demonstrate their expertise and experience in the subject matter by citing relevant sources and data.

Future research in ESP students' persuasive language could address four issues. First, rhetorical strategies used in persuasive presentations by ESP students from different technical disciplines should be analysed and compared to provide insight into how students construct and present arguments that are tailored to their specific discipline. Additionally, understanding how these strategies are employed can help teachers better prepare their courses and aid in developing rhetorical skills necessary for success within the student's chosen field.

Second, the results of this analysis might be compared with rhetorical strategies employed in persuasive presentations by native speakers to identify areas where a non-native speaker's speech would benefit from improvement. By analyzing the patterns of language used by native speakers, non-native speakers could learn how to deliver effective persuasive messages.

Next, listeners' perception is another crucial factor determining the rhetorical effect, which can be achieved through the assessment of ESP students' presentations by their audience, including fellow students, teachers or even potential employers. The research findings might help determine the skills required for successful persuasion among ESP students. Besides, the opinions of the audience might allow presenters to understand how their presentations are interpreted by different people and thus better prepare their future speeches accordingly.

Finally, ESP coursebooks rarely include sections focused on rhetoric. Therefore, a systematic analysis of students' persuasive language might help ESP teachers identify both frequent and rare rhetorical strategies and consequently adopt teaching methods and design supplementary learning materials to help students develop and improve their art of rhetoric in science and technology.

Conclusion

This study examined and discussed the concept of rhetorical strategies in a genre of IT students' in-class presentations, which hitherto has not attracted much attention from researchers. Persuasive presentations on a product from the IT sector are a specific genre because they require a deep understanding of the product, its features, functions and benefits, and how it fits into the larger IT ecosystem. The presenter needs to be able to explain complex concepts in simple terms while also providing persuasive arguments, which requires the use of a wide range of rhetorical strategies and devices to convey the presenter's credibility and competence, appeal to their audience's sense of reason, and evoke a positive emotional response in their audience. Moreover, this type of presentation needs to be tailored to the target audience, which means that the presenter must understand their needs and how they will benefit from using the product.

The research on rhetorical strategies revealed that IT students maintained a balance of logical, ethical and emotional appeals. They successfully employed technical specifications, facts, figures, statistics and logical connectors to provide logical reasoning and well-structured arguments. Besides using facts, figures and statistics, the most frequent strategies were listing, contrasting, conditioning and reasoning. Expressing corporal identity, self-mention, attitude markers and boosters were the most common strategies that students used for enhancing credibility and gaining the trust of their audience. Rhetorical strategies and devices helped IT students structure their presentations so that they were logical, organized, and easy for the audience to understand. They also allowed speakers to emphasize key points, create persuasive arguments, and appeal to the emotions of their listeners. Rhetoric also assisted with conveying a sense of professionalism by providing language that was appropriate for the given situation and creating an engaging environment where students felt comfortable interacting with each other.

ESP students need to be able to use persuasive language and argumentation to effectively communicate their ideas and points of view, so it is important to systematically develop their rhetorical skills. To do this, they should practice their persuasive speaking by finding a topic related to their field of study, formulating arguments based on evidence, and then persuasively presenting the arguments. ESP teachers should design activities that focus on effective rhetorical strategies such as in-class debating or public speaking which will help hone students' persuasive language skills.

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Transforming Multilingual Students' Learning Experience Through the Use of Lego Serious Play

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Abstract

To prepare their students for the increasingly demanding workplace of the 21st century, business schools resort to using experiential learning techniques to make explicit connections between knowledge and experiences students already have, encouraging them to make their own interpretations. In this case study, 50 multilingual students participated in a Lego Serious Play (LSP) intervention for one academic semester. Due to the continuous rise of the numbers of international students in management schools in the UK in the post-COVID-19 era, researchers and lecturers indicate that additional support is often deemed necessary to promote social justice for multilingual and multicultural students and support their well-being. These students used LSP to make better sense of the assessment criteria and the theories they had to use to respond to the instructions and prepare a group paper and a group oral presentation in terms of a module on intercultural management. Findings revealed that these English as a Second Language (ESL) students were inspired by the use of LSP as it allowed them to reflect on the theories and apply them in creative ways fostering collaboration and creative problem-solving. Students initially felt uneasy to engage in this new approach but then enhanced their performance in their group oral presentations by 35% as they were able to improve their second language competence and intercultural awareness. The article concludes by discussing implications for using LSP with multilingual ESL students to help them overcome linguistic and cultural barriers, offering suggestions for the effective use of game-based techniques in Higher Education.

Keywords: Lego ESL writing, linguistic and intercultural barriers, multilingual and multicultural students, post-COVID-19 well-being, presentations skills, Serious Play

LEGO® Serious Play™ (LSP) is well established as a management technique, as it has been employed widely in various business contexts such as banking and project management (Gkogkidis & Dacre, 2021). However, although the foundation of LSP is underpinned by many constructivist educational theories and practices (i.e., exploratory learning, see Duckworth, 2006; Rick & Lamberty, 2005), it has as yet seen little application in educational contexts (McCusker, 2014) with a few exceptions (Kurkovsky, 2015; Mccusker, 2014). LSP has been used to improve learner engagement and interaction, develop competency in receptive or expressive academic language (Howland, et al., 2013) and create exploratory teaching environments that can support learning (Gkogkidis & Dacre, 2021). It is an experiential approach designed to promote innovation and optimum performance in the business and management world. LSP is related to the Serious Play theory, which is also supported by pedagogical theories such as complex adaptive systems, and self-referential epistemology (Roos & Victor, 2018). At present, LSP is gradually becoming a prominent method used in business schools but also in Higher Education (HE) more widely as it is employed in various knowledge fields as diverse as marketing, second language acquisition, arts, and education (Bushnell, 2009; Dann, 2018; Grienitz & Schmidt, 2012; James, 2013).

Research indicates that LSP can be a valuable tool that lecturers can use to support ESL students as they can receive peer support and even look up vocabulary while trying to express themselves in English (Bond, 2018). It is claimed that LSP also encourages playful learning which makes learners less self-conscious and more willing to take risks, contribute to group conversations and make mistakes (Atmatzidou, Markelis, & Demetriadis, 2008; McCusker, 2020). Previous studies indicate that the integration of serious games, such as LSP, in ESL classes, may decrease students' stress, and motivate and maintain their interest in ESL learning, even when this is combined with content learning (Lykke, Coto, Mora, Vandel & Jantzen, 2014). It can also assist students in learning and retaining the language, for example with new vocabulary, in an enjoyable way (Anyaegbu, Ting-Jessy, & Li, 2012).

This study explored the use of LSP at a business school in the UK to increase students' engagement. One of its main goals was to support students in the post-COVID-19 era as they struggled to adjust to life after the pandemic evoking playfulness (Wheeler, 2023). These multilingual students also needed to make sense of the assessment criteria, the assignment instructions, and the theories they needed to use to overcome significant language barriers (Steigerwald, et al., 2022). As Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in the UK welcomed an increasing number of international students after the pandemic, lecturers sometimes had to explore new ways to support these multilingual and multicultural students allowing them to learn while also having fun. The business students in the present study were invited to use LSP once in terms of a 3-hour long workshop. The overall aim was for them to reflect on their work for their group paper and related oral presentation, interact with their peers, provide, and receive feedback and most importantly connect through a face-to-face learning experience which included serious gaming. The current undergraduate final-year students had never been involved in using the LSP simulation technique before.

This learning intervention allowed management students to experiment with LSP to make sense of their coursework, develop their linguistic resources, and clarify the management theories they had learnt so far. The main aim was to use these theories while co-writing their papers with their peers and preparing their group video presentations. The lecturer and researcher utilised this intervention to develop these international students' language and professional skills as many prestigious companies ask future employees and interns to engage in LSP in order to assess their creativity and ability to collaborate with others (de Ramírez & Lafford, 2017; Leopold & Reilly, 2020).

Peabody and Noyes (2017) explored the use of LSP as a reflective practice pedagogy, and their findings revealed an optimal impact on group cohesion, inclusive teaching and learning, and an experiential process associated with different learning styles. Ever since 2010, LSP has been progressively employed by many educators in the academy. Various studies have indicated its significance as an innovative (language) learning approach, particularly in HE (Gauntlett, 2018; James, 2015; York & DeHaan, 2018). However, this approach has yet to be further adapted to support international students' well-being and academic advancement (Tseng, 2017). In the current implementation, the main aim of LSP was to foster creativity and imagination and support the strategic development of international students' linguistic, negotiation, and presentation skills. Therefore, it is hoped that the present intervention will guide other colleagues who want to experiment with serious games in their classes to support their international students while they try to apply their language skills to real-life-like communication (Berns et al., 2016). There is very little research (if any) exploring students' attitudes towards LSP in management education (Lopez-Fernandez et al., 2021). In the present study, students' perceptions of LSP were explored after their participation in a 3-hour long LSP workshop. The researcher also examined the impact of this intervention on students' academic performance as this was perceived by the participating students. The research questions this project aimed to shed light on were the following:

a. What is the impact of LSP on final-year international business students' academic performance (i.e., on their linguistic dexterity, as this was perceived by the participating students)?
b. What are final-year international students' attitudes towards the use of LSP on their motivation and well-being with a focus on the post-COVID-19 era?

Literature Review

The ever-evolving role of HEI towards knowledge construction, innovation, entrepreneurship, and solving sophisticated real-world problems has led to new ambitious actions and reform processes (European Commission, 2015). Nowadays, business education needs and aspires to abstain from traditional teaching models (Sierra, 2020). Among the new promising approaches, the use of gamification is becoming extremely popular (Dichev & y Dicheva, 2017). Research indicates that gamification has an actual impact on learning, irrespective of age, sex and ethnicity, offering significant benefits, such as enabling knowledge, skills acquisition and language learning development (Prez, Duque & Garca, 2018; Sierra, 2020), the evolution of higher cognitive abilities (Bernabeu & Goldstein, 2009) or continuously growing motivational and engagement levels in learners (Buil, Catalán, & Martínez, 2019). With this method, HE instructors offer their services more as enablers for developing innovation-associated competencies and group creativity to face real-world challenges (Steiner, 2013) rather than as experts on a specific subject who only offer their knowledge but do not encourage any interaction and/or reflection. Therefore, the literature indicates that LSP is an innovative teaching and learning technique for reflective practice pedagogy in a non-traditional ground-breaking format (James, 2013); it allows the evolution of creative instructional approaches directing HE lecturers towards teaching for creativity and teaching creatively while meeting the language learning needs of international students (Berns et al., 2016; Jeffrey & Craft, 2004).

Nowadays, graduates from business schools are expected to be technically competent in their chosen field, but also to have fully developed their professional skills, namely negotiation, intercultural awareness in linguistically rich and cognitively challenging environments (Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012), creativity and teamwork skills (Karzunia et al., 2019). To respond to employers' requirements, management schools focus on experiential learning interventions, such as the use of LSP, to develop soft skills, especially critical thinking in learners (Laufer, McKeen, & Jester, 2018). These initiatives frequently require group work either due to class size constraints, or because they need to promote collaboration with the specific aim of developing students' teamwork, decision-making and interpersonal communication which also enhances language learning (Betts & Healy, 2015; Celce-Murcia, 2007).

However, although the use of LSP is supported by many educational, linguistic (Cohen, 2012), and pedagogical theories, it has not been applied widely in educational contexts, especially in HE (McCusker, 2014). The LSP Method involves learners' use of LEGO blocks as mediating artefacts to create symbolic and/or metaphorical representations of theories, abstract concepts and ideas. This novel educational tool allows students to bring theory and ideas into practice by concretising their conceptions and perceptions of intangible thoughts and ideas. Learners can then share their ideas and challenges through a physical representation. This enables them to further reflect on the problem they need to resolve, the assignment they need to complete or the theory they need to understand using a physical landscape. It also allows them to compare their solutions and see how their perceptions and ideas relate to those of other students. Most importantly, this is particularly helpful with students who have a visual/spatial, kinesthetic or interpersonal learning style (Gardner, 1991). Previous implementations reveal that this new approach provides a forum which promotes rich discussion, negotiation, and intercultural awareness among multilingual and multicultural learners (Aghasafari, Bivins, & Nordgren, 2021), as business schools, especially in the UK, are currently inundated with international students (Meletiadou, 2023). Research indicates that HE instructors often feel the need to provide equal opportunities for success for these ESL learners fostering social justice and sustainable learning and development for all students irrespective of their background (Meletiadou, 2022).

LSP was initially conceived as a workshop led by a facilitator, with a group of 6 to 10 participants. The facilitator usually asks a question or provides a problem and the participants create, share and reflect as well as exchange feedback on the ideas or solutions that they propose. LSP, as developed by Johan Roos and Bart Victor of the International Institute for Management Development in Lausanne, and put forward by Robert Rasmussen, Director of Research and Development at the LEGO® Company, was based on psychological theories of learning. It brought together ideas of play, constructionism, flow, the hand-mind connection, the use of metaphors and complex adaptive systems (beliefs) aiming to have a positive impact on group interrelatedness, cooperation and psychological safety thus promoting a mentoring/coaching approach (Rasmussen Consulting, 2013; Wheeler, Passmore, & Gold, 2020). The LSP method was created as a response to the need for fostering creativity, collaboration, innovation and imagination among people working in business settings with the aim of developing appropriate strategies to resolve and manage complex projects. Similar theoretical frameworks were then adapted and used in educational settings for various purposes, particularly to enhance student engagement, second language learning and promote cognitive functions like memory and reasoning (Garden, 2022).

Several researchers have examined the use of "play" in education (Paltoglou, 2021). Following the Piagetian (1977) theory of constructivism according to which a learner's knowledge and meaning are "constructed", it refers to a process in terms of which an individual (usually a young child) learns how to make sense of the world around him/her through the interaction of his/her ideas and experiences with other learners. Vygostsky and Cole (1978), on the other hand, claim that young individuals learn to support previous learning and knowledge through play, and most importantly gain new knowledge, ideas and understanding of increasingly greater complexity within a "Zone of Proximal Development" (ZPD). Papert (2002) supports the notion of ZPD by indicating that activities are delightful when they are used with the appropriate level of difficulty to maintain learners' curiosity, interest, and involvement. Several researchers and practitioners tried to use games to engage learners in cooperative language learning in their effort to enhance their academic performance (Pechenkina et al., 2017). These innovative approaches attempt to create a meaningful context in which students can engage with the play at a deep level (Vlachopoulos & Makri, 2017). McCusker (2020) discusses criteria for LSP which are perfectly aligned with achieving the flow state described by Csikszentmihalyi (1975). This actually underpins the LSP method.

Papert (1986) also discusses the idea of constructionism as an extension of constructivism. He maintains that individuals not only learn by creating and testing mental models of the world around them, but this learning can be further fostered if they are offered the chance to develop physical models in the real world. Keene, Rasmussen and Stephan (2012) also elaborate on the interconnection of the mind and the hands and claim that people's brains mainly operate by controlling their hands. Therefore, learning – especially language learning - is optimised when students are asked to think and interact while actually doing things. While this particular theory has been supported by the image of the sensory homunculus (Silva & Neves, 2020), researchers and lecturers do not yet know whether this connection can foster a more direct and thus more effective communication of knowledge, ideas, concepts, theories and understanding. However, by asking students to create mediating artefacts in terms of the LSP workshops, lecturers can promote enhanced learning by exploiting the close relationship of the hand and the mind (Hayes & Graham, 2020).

Creating artefacts is undoubtedly an important part of the LSP workshop but the story behind the artefact is the most crucial component of the LSP process. Students are therefore asked to use the artefact to tell a story reflecting on the theories and concepts they learnt and applying them into practice as they are also developing their linguistic skills. The significance of the use of LSP in HE, especially with multilingual students, lies in the process of reflection it entails. This facilitates deep insight and the opportunity for learners to share their ideas in a non-threatening setting with peers and make sense of the theories they learnt. Dewey (1933) highlights the significance of interpersonal communication, critical thinking and reflection in learning which seem to be promoted in LSP workshops. Kolb (1984) also refers to these ideas as he discusses his experiential learning cycle, in which he uses a process of experience, reflection, conceptualisation and testing of any concept or theory. This procedure reminds researchers and lecturers of the cycle of building, sharing and reflecting which are usually found in a typical LSP workshop.

It is awkward that although LSP is extremely popular in the commercial field, especially project management, it is not widely implemented in HE (Frick, Tardini, & Cantoni, 2013). Nevertheless, more recently, some HE Institutions have experimented with this approach in various settings, such as business (Kristiansen & Rasmussen, 2014). Moreover, despite the fact that there are few publications which discuss the use of LSP in HE, there is an increasing interest in its use in the academic context especially with ESL learners lately (Nerantzi, 2018;

Roos & Victor, 2018). Therefore, the aim of the current implementation was to reclaim LSP practices for use in academic and pedagogical practice.

To sum up, the benefits and challenges of using LSP to support international students while lecturers strive to help them develop their presentation and linguistic skills and promote enjoyment of learning at the same time were explored in terms of this study. LSP was implemented in an undergraduate final-year student module in the UK. The overall aim was to assist international students develop their presentation and writing skills while developing their collaborative and negotiation skills and increasing their engagement and second language competencies. As most of these ESL students confessed that they were intimidated to present their work face-to-face, especially after spending almost 2 years attending online classes, the researcher aspired to help them with this intervention. She therefore used LSP to increase students' engagement and academic (linguistic) development, promote enjoyment of learning and support students' well-being and mental health (Hill & Blackledge, 2019). The following section describes the methodology and presents this intervention in detail.

Methodology

During implementation, the instructor/researcher used a mixed-methods approach (Mikalef et al., 2017) and collected both quantitative (group oral presentation scores) and qualitative (anonymous student feedback, reflective report, lecturer's observations) data to respond to the research questions (see Table 1). She utilised paired t-tests to compare students' scores in the pre- (before the LSP intervention) and post-tests (oral group presentations) of the control group and the experimental group (Hedberg & Ayers, 2015). The main goal was to investigate the impact LSP had on students' language learning development and academic achievement. There were 25 students in each of the groups. Then, she employed thematic analysis to analyse data from (experimental) learners' feedback and reports (Braun & Clarke, 2023). Finally, the data were triangulated with the instructor's observations by comparing the main themes to increase the reliability and the collective value of the study (Kern, 2018) and examine learners' approaches towards LSP. Students were randomly assigned to the control and experimental group by the Head of Subject. All students received the same teaching and used the same learning materials as they registered to attend the same module.

Table 1
Methodology

Mixed-methods approach	
Quantitative data	**Qualitative data**
Sample: 50 learners [divided in 2 groups – experimental (use of LSP) 25 learners and control (no use of LSP) 25 learners] **Sources of Data:** In-class pre- (week 2) and post-tests (Week 10) oral/video presentations on learners' chosen topic (Intercultural Management module) **Method of analysis**: Paired and independent sample t-tests **Raters:** Researcher and an assistant	**Sample**: 25 students and 1 instructor **Sources of Data:** 1. Anonymous peer feedback via Mentimeter immediately after the LSP workshop (Week 6) 2. Reflective report in Week 13 3. Instructor's observations in the form of field notes about the implementation **Method of analysis**: Thematic analysis of learners' anonymous feedback and reflective reports. Triangulation with data from observations. **Coders**: Researcher and an assistant

Fifty final-year international management students (Table 2) participated in a module on intercultural business management which explored basic principles and theories of cross-cultural management (International Human Resource Management), as part of their regular undergraduate curriculum. One of the assignments for this module was a group video presentation assessing learners' productive skills, particularly speaking. Students were intimidated as they had just joined face-to-face classes after almost 2 years of online delivery due to the pandemic. The fact that they were international students and therefore faced additional linguistic challenges as English was not their first language made them even more hesitant to contribute to the group assignments.

The instructor asked students to form groups randomly and prepare a short oral presentation on their chosen topic after providing the students with a list. She wanted to assess students' previous knowledge, fluency in the target language (English), help them recall the theories they had learnt so far and assess their overall oral performance. The researcher secured research ethics approval from the university in which the study was implemented, and learners offered their informed consent as volunteers. The researcher ensured confidentiality and anonymity of learners' marks and reflective reports. The Mentimeter feedback was not compulsory and therefore not taken into consideration for learners' grades. This was to ensure learners' voluntary participation in the study.

Table 2
Student Demographic Characteristics

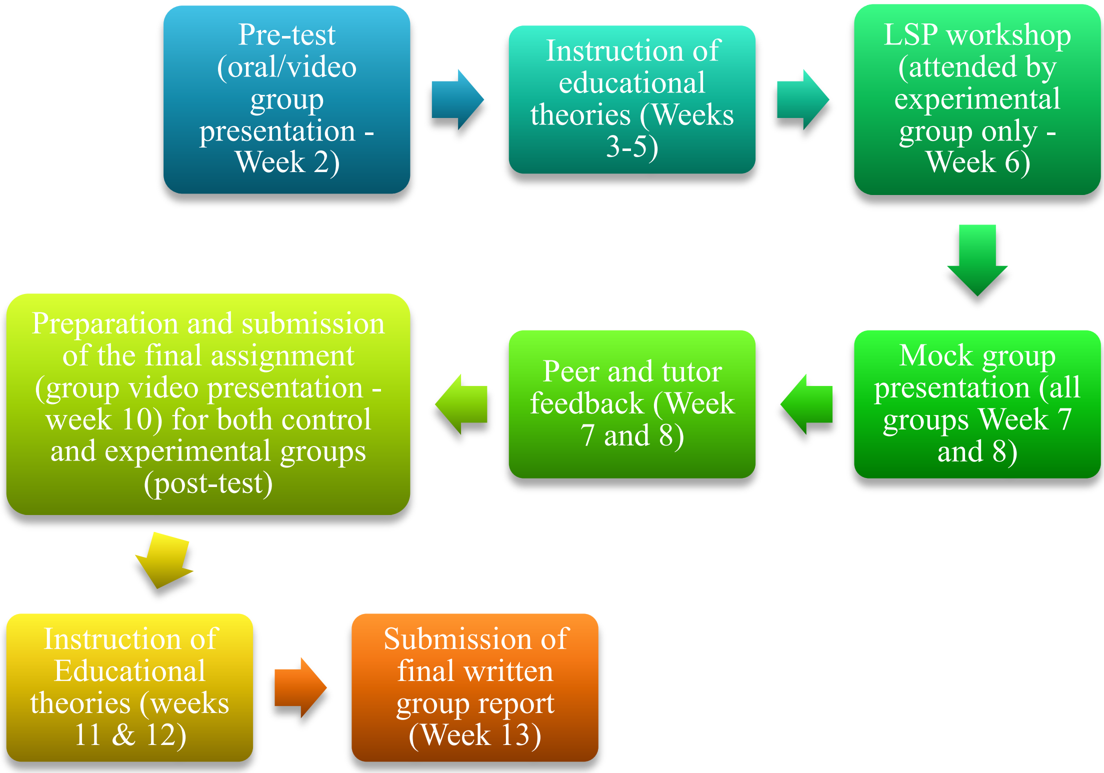
	Students	Frequency
Nationality	European	44
	Asian	6
Gender	Male	27
	Female	23
Age	20-25	45
	25-30	5
Class rank	High-performing learners	6
	Average-performing learners	20
	Low-performing learners	24

The Implementation Process

Learners at the management school where this LSP project was implemented frequently complained about the lack of interaction among learners in their classes. They protested about the repetitive lecturer-centred sessions in which there were few opportunities for students to support each other since they faced considerable linguistic challenges, especially in terms of vocabulary, as second language speakers of English. They were also unable to thoroughly understand the instructions for the assignments and the theories taught so that they could apply them in their assignments and in real life. Students in this Business Management course also complained about the lack of opportunities to develop their presentation skills and their oral fluency in the target language as most of them (50 out of 60 students registered in that module) were international students and English was their second or even third language.

Therefore, the researcher decided to facilitate an LSP workshop for the students who chose to participate in order to investigate its impact on international students' linguistic and academic development. From the 60 students registered in this module, 50 were international and 25 from them chose to participate in the LSP workshop and successfully submitted their group presentations. Twenty-five students were not present during the workshop either by choice or by chance (i.e., sickness). The lecturer provided a pre-recorded lecture (substitute) about some intercultural theories which were essential for the assignment since she talked about them during the workshop. Her goal was to support students who were absent. All students had to participate in a pre-test (Figure 1), which was a group oral presentation on the topic they had chosen, to assess their presentation skills at the beginning of the academic semester. The overall aim was to investigate the impact of LSP on students' oral presentation, writing skills and motivation. The post-tests for the experimental and control groups were the final group oral/video presentations students had to submit towards the end of the semester.

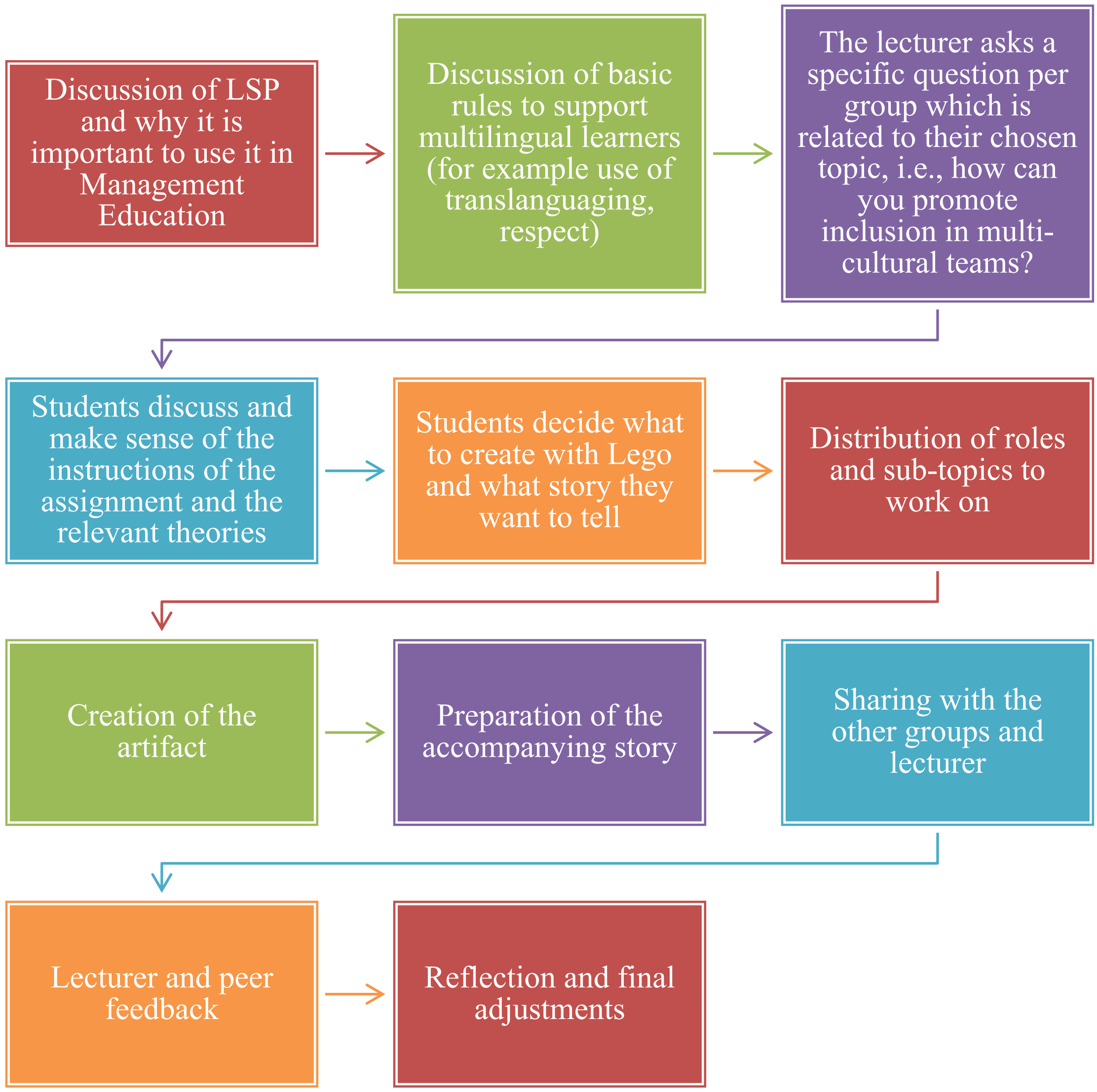
Figure 1
LSP Implementation in Terms of the Module



Participants in the experimental and control groups were asked to prepare their mock oral group presentations and present them by the end of weeks 7 and 8, that is immediately after the LSP workshop. Groups received peer and tutor feedback and were then asked to submit their final assignment by week 10.

During the LSP workshop (Figure 2), learners were asked to think about their chosen topic, namely ethical issues involved in receiving gifts in various cultural contexts and discuss the assignment instructions and the related theories with their peers. They were then guided to create an artefact to discuss how they would present their chosen topic and what they would include in their group presentation. All students' oral presentations were recorded and a second rater—an experienced instructor who had taught in a similar module in the past - assessed all learners' presentations to ensure reliability. This is the norm in HEI in the UK to maintain quality assurance (Gamage et al., 2020). The instructor and her assistant utilised the same assessment criteria to evaluate all learners' assignments. During the workshop, learners' communication in their mother tongue was allowed to ensure effective negotiation of meaning and enhance students' collaboration as they tried to overcome linguistic difficulties, and make sense of the instructions, and the concepts they had been taught. Experimental and control groups went through exactly the same procedure and the only difference was that students in the control group did not participate in the face-to-face LSP workshop.

Figure 2
LSP Step-by-Step Implementation



Experimental group students provided feedback via Mentimeter immediately after the LSP workshop. They were also asked to submit reflective reports about the LSP experience at the end of the academic semester. They could then further reflect on the benefits of the intervention on ESL students' overall academic performance as students also had to submit a group paper (Figure 1) in terms of this module. All learners had to participate in weekly seminars (3 hours each) for 12 weeks.

In terms of their group oral presentation (Assignment 1 - up to 15 minutes in total), the lecturer asked learners to work in a multi-cultural team with three or four other students from their seminar group on a topic of their choice, such as the principal causes of communication problems in global virtual teams, from the list provided. The presentation was delivered face-to-face and students had then to write a group paper (Assignment 2) on the same topic as well. Learners were provided with a group mark for their presentation. They were asked to use theories they had learnt in terms of the module and do their own personal research on the topic. Immediately after the LSP workshop, students were asked to provide anonymous feedback using Mentimeter (https://www.mentimeter.com/). This is an interactive digital platform frequently employed by university instructors to examine learners' approaches towards novel methods they utilised anonymously. The final goal is to explore their immediate response to this learning-oriented tool.

Moreover, the instructor kept field notes before, during and after the intervention while using this serious gaming approach to explore its impact on ESL learners' oral presentation and writing skills as learners also had to write a group paper after presenting their work orally. In the end, learners were asked to submit an individual report in which they reflected on the LSP workshop. They recounted how this influenced their overall experience of this module, ESL learners' academic performance (oral and written) and their engagement with the sessions.

Findings

Impact of LSP on Students' Presentation Skills

The investigator correlated students' presentation skills between a pre-test and a post-test (see Figure 1) to examine the effect of the LSP workshop on ESL learners' oral performance (experimental group versus control group). Another experienced instructor, who delivered lectures on this module last year, offered marks independently for all group presentations after watching the videos students recorded. Inter-rater reliability was evaluated by calculating the similarity percentage which was 92%. The high percentage verified that the researcher's grades were reliable (Belur et al., 2021).

Table 3
ESL Learners' Academic Performance (Presentation Skills)

Measurement	N	M	SD	T value	Df	Sig.	Cohen's d
Pre-test same for all students (exp)	25	47.2	8.1				
Pre-test (control)	25	38.4	10.6				
Post-test with LSP	25	74.8	10.9	16.1	24	p < .05	d = 2.87
Post-test without LSP	25	47	8.7	9.9	24		d = .88

A paired t-test was utilised to examine learners' academic progress in the two groups (control versus experimental). This revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between students' pre-tests ($M = 47.2$, $SD = 8.1$, $n = 25$) and post-tests ($M = 74.8$, $SD = 10.9$, $n = 25$) in terms of ESL learners' oral presentation skills ($t\ (24) = 16.1$, $p < .05$) for the experimental group, while there was a minor difference for the control group ($M=47$, $SD=8.7$ $n=25$, $t(24)=9.9$, $p<.05$). Cohen's effect size value ($d= 2.87$) indicated a "very large" effect size and high practical importance for the influence of LSP on ESL learners' academic performance (presentation skills) for the experimental group and a comparatively smaller effect size ($d=.88$) for the control group (Tomczak & Tomczak, 2014). These tests showed that the utilization of LSP in the experimental module enhanced ESL learners' presentation skills considerably more than when students were asked to prepare their oral group presentations without being previously engaged in a LSP workshop.

An independent t-test was also utilized to investigate the differences between the post-test scores of the control versus experimental group (Lakens, 2013). On average, experimental group ESL learners' scores ($M= 74.8$, $SD=10.9$) were higher than those in the control group

(M= 47, SD=8.7). This disparity was statistically important t (48) = 9.9, p = .000, d = 2.8. This finding underscores the fact that the utilisation of the LSP workshop had a statistically important effect on experimental group ESL learners' presentation skills corroborating earlier research (ElKelish & Ahmed, 2022).

Perceived Effect of LSP on ESL Students' Academic Performance and Approach towards Learning

The investigator utilised thematic analysis to examine the perceived effect of LSP on ESL students' academic performance and approach towards learning (Braun & Clarke, 2022). ESL learners' reflective reports and anonymous feedback (qualitative data) was collected and analysed by a research assistant so as to explore the various themes such as "enjoyment of learning" (Table 4). These data were subsequently triangulated with the investigator's field notes (Natow, 2020). The instructor and a research assistant analysed all data to mitigate researcher bias (Wadams & Park, 2018).

Table 4
Perceived Impact of LSP on ESL Students' Academic Performance and Approach Towards Learning

Themes (frequency of occurrence in Students' data)	Sample ESL Student Comments
Positive Impact	
1. Impact on ESL students' presentation and writing skills (25)	*Sessions are usually monotonous. The LSP workshop allowed us to interact sometimes using words from our own language and clarify any points in the assignment we did not understand as well as the theories. I think it had a considerable impact on the quality of our group presentation and report. (Reflective report S3)*
2. Development of critical thinking and reflection (23)	*Using Lego for three whole hours allowed us to critically think about the theories we learnt and how these are related to our topic and share our views while reflecting on how we could apply them in real-life situations in the future. Awesome experience! (Anonymous feedback)*
3. Professional skills development (24)	*LSP facilitated the development of various professional skills,i.e., negotiation,...problem-solving, creativity, effective intercultural communication, ... and teamwork. (Reflective report 6)*
4. Impact on ESL students' enjoyment of learning (23)	*I really enjoyed using Lego. It reminded me of when I was younger and carefree. I was then willing to use my imagination and spend hours playing. In terms of our LSP workshop, I was able to discuss how we can apply new theories to present our topic and write our paper ...despite my linguistic barriers as an ESL learner. (Anonymous feedback)*

5. Influence on ESL students' well-being post-COVID-19 (24)	*COVID-19 had a definite impact on us…Our health, our motivation to learn and our ways of life…I am glad we are back to real-life, interacting with multilingual people and why not…playing around while learning…LSP makes us feel safer and willing to contribute (Anonymous feedback)*
6. Impact on development of intercultural awareness (21)	*This involvement in an LSP workshop allowed us to interact in terms of a multi-cultural team and raised our intercultural awareness even more…I thoroughly enjoyed it. (Anonymous feedback)*
7. Development of students' autonomy and collaborative skills (24)	*Working face-to-face during the LSP workshop really helped us develop our teamwork skills although I was reluctant at first…I was then able to work on my own as well and reflect on what I have learnt. (Reflective report 13)*
8. Catering for different learning styles (23)	*Lego has improved our learning attitudes as we could play and learn at the same time…Great for me… as I am not that fluent in English…and I love moving around while learning (anonymous feedback)*
Challenges	
9. Non-traditional students' challenges with gaming (4)	*At first, I thought I was too old to do this especially after COVID-19…10 minutes later I was enjoying it with my peers…We are just used to listening rather than doing something with our hands at the Uni. (Reflective report 14)*
10. Resistance of some ESL students to engage in story-telling (3)	*I am not that good at storytelling, but I guess I should develop that skill. As an ESL student, I am also not that good at talking…Well, I have to work on that…The best leaders are excellent storytellers. (Anonymous feedback)*
11. Lack of sufficient time and bricks (2)	*I think three hours are not enough for us to complete the artefact and create a story. This is the first time we are doing it… I could also do with more bricks, animals, flowers etc. (Anonymous feedback)*

The qualitative data of this study revealed that ESL students felt that the LSP workshop was an exciting idea-generating event. They confessed that this empowered them to exchange thoughts and make sense of challenging concepts of intercultural management which were related to their topic while preparing their group presentations and developing their linguistic competence in English. The lecturer also observed that LSP activated innovative thinking and creative problem solving among these multilingual and multicultural international students (Table 4, Point 3). ESL learners revealed that the use of LSP helped them improve not only their presentation, but also their writing skills as they were able to negotiate the meaning of various unknown terms/words in English with their peers and collaborate effectively by engaging in meaningful gaming (Table 4, Point 1). LSP developed their critical thinking and reflective skills and enhanced their intercultural awareness even though these ESL students initially faced minor challenges (Table 4, Point 7). Certain students stressed that they needed more time and resources (bricks) to familiarize themselves with the new gaming approach and some of them also resisted engaging in story-telling due to the linguistic barriers they faced. However, they reported that they soon found themselves immersed in this new learning experience which reminded them of their young age (Table 4, Point 9). These findings corroborated former research into the use of LSP as they highlighted several benefits of the approach in terms of student engagement (Kristiansen & Rasmussen, 2014), ESL students' language development (Boudadi & Gutiérrez-Colón, 2020) and student satisfaction (McCusker & Swan, 2018).

To summarize, the current LSP intervention aimed to assist educators, especially in HE, explore new gaming approaches such as LSP, to increase ESL students' engagement and involvement in their own learning after the traumatic COVID-19 pandemic experience. It aspired to support colleagues in HEI to foster inclusion for international students who often need their lecturers to place more emphasis on fluency rather than accuracy. Lecturers may therefore opt to experiment with a game-based approach to relieve international ESL students' anxiety as they embark on their learning journeys in HEI worldwide.

Discussion

This research project aimed to provide insights into how undergraduate international students experienced the use of LSP as they endeavoured to improve their academic performance as ESL learners. The study illustrates how LSP helped them overcome their linguistic and cultural barriers while enhancing their well-being (Table 4, Point 5). Benefits as well as constraints related to the use of LSP in undergraduate education were presented in the findings to make other colleagues aware of the pitfalls related to the use of LSP so as to avoid them in the future (Table 4, Points 9, 10, 11). The current study confirmed previous findings which indicated that LSP promotes psychological safety for ESL learners particularly after a major crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Wheeler, Passmore & Gold, 2020) as students can immerse in meaningful play, negotiate meaning, and share new ideas and thoughts (Table 4, Point 5). Furthermore, it revealed that students in the current study developed valuable professional skills, such as storytelling, negotiation, creativity, intercultural communication, and teamwork (Table 4, Point 3 and 10). ESL students also confessed that LSP facilitated active learning by promoting student engagement in their own learning process (Dacre, Gkogkidis & Jenkins, 2018) thus fostering independence (Table 4, Point 7). One of the goals of this intervention was to bring together constructivist learning theories, intercultural (Signorini, Wiesemes, & Murphy, 2009) and multilingual learning frameworks (Dafouz & Smit, 2016) which foster translanguaging to emphasise fluency rather than accuracy (Table 4, Point 1) and empirical research on the use of LSP (James, 2013). The ultimate aim was to support ESL students in global HE settings.

Challenges encountered during the LSP intervention were related with what Papert (1980) identifies as "hard fun". Therefore, there were ESL participants who seemed reluctant to engage in deep reflection and to share ideas and emotions with their peers (Table 4, Point 10). The COVID-19 pandemic seemed to make it even more difficult for students to express themselves face-to-face and to interact with each other while exploring new theories, developing their language skills, and making decisions about their assignments. Students had been working in isolation for almost 2 years (Table 4, Point 5). The literature suggests that loneliness can be associated with significant stress, anxiety and even depression for ESL students (Richardson, Elliott & Roberts, 2017). In the present study, that was evident as some participants found it hard to enjoy the LSP workshop and reap its benefits (Table 4, Point 9) –

at least in the beginning – as this was a deeply "affective experience" (Neratzi, 2018). Some mature students thought it was challenging to revert to their childhood and engage with bricks (Table 4, Point 9). Alternatively, they claimed that they needed more time than available in this intervention to get used to the idea of thinking while doing (Table 4, Point 11).

ESL students, who had faced a prolonged period without their peers (Burns, Dagnall, & Holt, 2020), now felt disconnected and uncomfortable when surrounded by groups of people possibly suffering from social anxiety (Table 4, Point 5). In contrast with previous studies which emphasise that LSP encourages playfulness (Wheeler, 2020), the current intervention revealed that students needed additional resources, especially more personalised bricks which were linked with their own ideas and experiences (Table 4, Point 11). Therefore, having a greater variety of LSP bricks and figures as well as asking students to bring their own favourite Lego pieces from home or other serious games such as pieces of Playmobil Serious Play, would be a great idea. This could also allow students to choose their own favourite figures and better express their ideas and feelings as well as interact more effectively with their fellow students.

In summary, the current study, confirming previous research, reports that LSP was able to improve the ESL students' learning experience and academic performance and support their well-being as they strived to heal from the COVID-19 trauma. It also highlighted that ESL students from diverse cultural backgrounds need more opportunities to unleash their powers and focus on learning while having a good time without attaining perfection. LSP seemed to have increased the multilingual students' self-confidence and other-awareness and supported the learners through peer learning/mentoring while also creating vibrant communities of (language) learning. These ultimately helped the students fully develop their presentation, writing, interpersonal, linguistic, and psychological skills (Tables 3 & 4).

Conclusion

This study provided new information associated with undergraduate ESL students' experiences of using LSP in the post-COVID-19 era. The feedback the researcher collected from the students revealed that they thought that the intervention promoted critical discourse as learners engaged with highly complex organizational problems related to cross-cultural management. The present implementation also offered educators a practical methodology (Figures 1 & 2) as the lecturer employed experiential learning to foster learner involvement, ESL students' language development and co-creation of knowledge by promoting an exploratory context. The investigator aspired to enrich the teaching, learning and assessment practices of HE lecturers and promote the creation of active learning and professional communities among students.

The outcomes of the study reveal that although some ESL learners may have felt intimidated to invest time and energy in LSP, namely due to embarrassment, they soon opened up with the appropriate support. They then freely participated in group work exchanging ideas, developing their vocabulary, and reclaiming their creative imaginative powers while also involving themselves and others in deep reflection. Future research should be encouraged to explore the use of LSP in other countries and faculties in order to construct a robust pedagogical framework. This could facilitate the use of serious games in business and management schools, but also in HEI globally. The findings of the current study cannot be generalized due to the small number of ESL students involved in a particular setting for only one semester. More longitudinal studies involving a larger number of participants are needed to explore the impact of LSP on ESL students' academic performance.

The discoveries of the research suggest that as a response to the need for innovative and creative teaching, learning and assessment techniques, LSP may not only inspire creative confidence liberating freedom of expression in ESL students but also serve as a tool for further academic, linguistic, personal, and professional development. This study tried to empirically affirm LSP as more than a novel strategy for pedagogical use, further to expand its bandwidth as a potentially effective tool for producing divergent thought and creative solution generation to respond to complex organizational challenges and support multilingual and multicultural international students in HE. While this intervention empirically supported that core tenets of LSP, like playfulness and cooperation were present, a surprising finding, and one worthy of further future research, was the emergence of the support ESL students need in terms of their mental health after major crises such as COVID-19. The study showed that LSP may provide a formula to support ESL students' well-being, social and emotional development through play developing future professionals with increased intercultural and multilingual awareness and tolerance of ambiguity.

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