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STUDIES

Teaching strategies in motivating global English learners:
The Adaptive Relatability Motivation Framework

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English has undoubtedly become a global language. Within the last decades, however, societies and individuals have changed, became more complex, and identities, emotions and social spaces have been dramatically affected and re-negotiated by globalisation (Heyward, 2004; Tanu, 2016). This opinion article focuses on the author's researches and experiences in Central Asia and Eastern Europe as a teacher and lecturer. Based on her previous researches and observations the author offers a new framework that addresses students' needs and preferences for learning Global English. According to the Adaptive Relatability Motivation Framework, learners should be provided with culturally less invasive, identity-safe and emotionally more accommodating learning environment, where they can become more engaged, autonomous and adaptive in their own learning processes. Thus, learners will be able to continually relate their needs, social spaces and motivations to the successful use of the target language. The framework's concepts are summarized in four points that give a more pragmatic view on its use. These four points are further detailed, offering how these ideas can be implemented in an empirical fashion by educators and students.

Key words: ESL, motivation, learning autonomy, relatability, adaptability

1. Introduction

There are a large number of theories and new approaches in foreign language motivation that surface each year, most of them targeting the understanding of one very specific aspect of learning (Yuan, Li & Yu, 2018; Brevik & Rindal, 2020). These theories are meaningful on the academic level, as they are mostly descriptive and analytical, but in general offer little practical solutions for teachers and institutions on the macro and micro levels. It would be useful for teachers to follow the latest academic research in language education and try to implement it into the daily life of school and curricula. Nevertheless, most teachers have no time to do so and/or possess no skills to translate and implement the useful academic findings into empirical classroom practices (Komlosi-Ferdinand, 2019c, 2020a). Also, few educators have a clear understanding of the applicability of new research in their own country's socio-cultural context. Understandably, certain new findings and teaching methodologies will not necessarily result in some countries. Therefore, when presenting new educational strategies, they should be based on universal and adaptable principles, rather than rigid laws or dogmatic views on isolated factors. It is necessary to consider modern and real concepts that can be applied and modified according to empirical needs. In fact, both educators and learners must be able to relate to these strategies,

as the contrary may result in emotional turmoil, emotional-cognitive insecurity and threat to learners' identity.

2. The background

This opinion essay is based on the author's ten years of experience teaching in international schools, boarding schools for gifted children and universities across Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation and Bulgaria. In all these countries, the author conducted researches and had experienced many challenges while teaching through the medium of English. These countries' educational background can be compared based on their historical legacies. In fact, none of them ever had English as a second language, nor they were ever invaded by English speaking powers. However, all of them were under Soviet rule at one point in history, thus making it possible to draw some conclusions about their English language teaching habits. Based on the researches and her observations, the researcher presents a framework here that summarises and organises the key educational issues that were most commonly present in those countries. The focus of the framework is to offer some key steps to create emotionally and culturally safe learning spaces, and to enhance language learning motivation among Global-English learners. Also, some practical suggestions are made on how to implement the framework with the goal of substituting empty, monotonous or depersonalized classroom practices with positive educational strategies that nurture autonomy and adaptability.

2.1 Adaptability and Relatability

It would be absolutely impossible to consider all variables across cultures, spaces and time that may affect the learning of a new language. Therefore, the focus of this article targets a specific new tribe, the global English learners/speakers, whose needs are addressed here. Global English could be defined as a variety of the English language that is spoken by non-native speakers in often international and intercultural settings, is free from colloquialisms that are particular to one specific country where English is the official and most dominant language (Crystal, 1995). The learners and speakers of global English often use the language as a tool for education, leisure and work, but have no specific intentions to relocate to an English speaking country and to adapt to its culture (Yuan, Li & Yu, 2018; Galloway & Numajiri, 2019; Xie, 2017).

The fact itself that this new tribe has emerged, points toward a rather sharp change in societies and in global dynamics (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). As new situations often need new understandings and approaches, fittingly, the concepts of *adaptability* and *relatability* emerge as the two key elements in learning English as a global language. Nowadays, the word relatability is mostly used in magazines, social media and blogs, but it is often avoided in academic studies. However, as social research in general aims to study real people, new trends and new realities should not be ignored, but included and taken as a serious factor. Another key term, adaptability, reflects both the intention of this framework – being adaptive to new needs- and cognitive and emotional adaptability, as a quality that both English learners and the industry that serves them should possess.

During the last decade, millions of lives became considerably more dynamic and therefore (often forcibly) adaptable, either pushed by changing workplace policies, by life circumstances or by own choice in almost every domain in life. To the extent never seen before,

an immense flow of information is seen, processed and connected by engaged minds. This flood of information is by no means a passive concept, but it is expected to be used dynamically in a variety of settings, which requires cognitive and sometimes physical adaptation. Unfortunately, learners of English are often ignorant about their own learning processes, preferences, motivations, and goals with emphasis on how to achieve them (Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998, Komlosi-Ferdinand, 2019c). This may seem very counterproductive, as adaptation to new circumstances and new concepts should be done in a conscious way by individuals. This should encompass building their understanding and capacity in a purposeful way, instead of submitting their intellect in a non-linear fashion to every surfacing trend and to morally or culturally non-acceptable perceived requirements. Conflicts may surface in early scenarios of learning English at schools, language schools or even at higher levels, where most learners have no real understanding regarding when and how to use their new knowledge, or even how to use it properly in a variety of circumstances (Komlosi-Ferdinand, 2021). In fact, it is very hard and cognitively dissonant to adapt to possible circumstances and scenarios to which the learners cannot relate at all.

Unfortunately, in most English learning classrooms, learners are often unable to relate to the English language and its teaching processes, either because of the very unrelatable design of the textbooks, or because educators themselves are biased towards certain aspect of effective language learning, ignoring the psychological aspects of it (Bromeley, Hua & Jandar, 2019). Needless to say that if the learner is told from the beginning to 'learn English to have a good future' is not a negative concept. While this sentence is the much promising motto of most institutions where learning English as a foreign language takes place, yet, it may simply not be relatable to learners. Actually, learning English for a better future sounds such a wide range of vague possibility that it is hard to establish a realistic and sustainable motivational factor. Therefore, the learner is moving towards a possibly meaningful, yet, unknown destination. For global English learners, depending on their culture, gender and identity, specific training strategies are needed to ensure their understanding of their dynamically changing goals, motivations, sometimes the lack of it, and how to adapt to these changes. In fact, learners should be made aware of that despite such fluctuations, the learning process should not be abandoned, but upgraded to a more relatable one, which will lead to continuous engagement and cumulative motivation, where they can relate to new circumstances and how to use English in them.

2.2 The compound nature of language learning psychology – some previous studies

It is worth mentioning some quite recent theories that put second language learning motivation in a new light. In 1997, Larsen-Freeman had already used the ideas *chaos* and *complexity* referring to motivation in psychology, giving an obvious hint that motivation is definitely not a simple and linear concept. This was further developed by Mercer (2011), naming it Complexity, Continuity and Change, a theory which further explained and expanded academic understanding on the subject. In 2014, Waninge, Dörnyei and De Bot's article on dynamics in language learning, have reaffirmed a key concept that motivation is dynamic. The importance of these ideas lies in the fact that they attempted (with plausible success) to eliminate rigidity in understanding and researching motivation altogether. Al-Hoorie (2016) also offered some interesting insights on unconscious motivation, and how the learners' relationship to their L1

may bias their attitudes towards learning and using L2, mostly as a result of a threat to cultural identity.

The new framework the author presents here is very much in line with recent developments, although it is not based on them. While these previous theories are significant and relevant, there is a gap within these new developments in one very specific way. As the titles of the previous theories suggest, dynamicity, complexity and – to a certain extent – chaos were investigated as a continuum of new trends in motivation. While they are very accurate descriptions, the implementation of these ideas, where they are most empirically needed, in foreign language learning, are somewhat complicated. It is not difficult to picture the reaction of any teacher or learner, who are told that their motivation is complex, dynamic and somewhat chaotic. Although this may very well be the case, probably the reality should be presented in a more psychologically affordable fashion: Individuals should adapt and/or develop their motivation in a way that can be *relatable to their present or foreseeable circumstances*. This concept is both easily understandable, teachable and may help individuals to analyse and organise their learning circumstances and motivation.

3. Adaptive Relatability Motivation (ARM) Framework

Building a bridge between the academic research community and educators' and learners' real empirical needs is vital. Theories on foreign language motivation and new frameworks developed by academics should be of service to the target community. While there is no advocacy whatsoever for over-simplification of complex ideas, there is a desperate demand for making them empirically applicable in learning scenarios. This need is well reflected in Bourdieu's words (1996, p. 7) stating: "As I never accepted distinction between theory and methodology, conceptual analysis and empirical description, the theoretical model does not appear there embellished with all the marks by which one usually recognizes 'grand theory' (such as lack of reference to some empirical reality)."

The new Adaptive Relatability Motivation (ARM) framework presented here aims to be practical and uncomplicated to adapt to everyday classroom needs. In the framework, the columns describe the 1) factors to be validated; 2) the educational strategies; 3) the consequent benefits and the 4) outcome. Nevertheless, the framework is not to be interpreted strictly horizontally. Hence, although, all factors from all columns should be present in order to achieve success, by no means one specific horizontal line of sequence should be forced to be implemented without considering the overall objective of the framework. While the framework is primarily developed based on researches and experiences lived in Central Asia and Eastern Europe, its principles could be adapted in other countries as well. In fact, the ARM framework is designed in order to be used sensitively, considering learners' culture, language and religion, and according the institutions' or individuals' possibilities and relatability. Therefore, the framework's adaptability ensures its applicability and relatability in many different cultures.

Factors to be validated		Educational Strategies		Benefits		Outcome
Cultural identity	+	Focus on L2 usefulness	→	Multidimensional motivation	=	Adaptive relatability to L2 that motivates continuous engagement in its learning process
Gender-related aims and behaviours		Helping students to understand their learning style preferences		Reduced identity crisis (or loss of fear to being forced into a new one)		
Current motivation		Teaching practices that promote autonomous learners		Perception of L2 as a positive force for personal, professional and societal growth and/or cultural literacy		
Emotions in the classroom		Teaching L2 related EQ		Becoming proficient and a really emotionally intelligent foreign language speaker		

Figure 1. Framework of Adaptive Relatability Motivation (ARM) in L2 Learning

4. Empirical strategies to use the ARM framework

In this section, the author offers four recommendations that summarize the concepts presented in the ARM framework. Also, suggestions are provided on how to implement and design culturally, individually and/or mission-related strategies that enhance learning success and enjoyment in a variety of learning contexts:

- **Eliminating teacher likeability bias and classroom dependent learning:** Shifting towards the promotion of cognitive and emotional independence from the teacher and focusing on individual learning style preferences in the path of developing learning autonomy.
- **Validating emotions, teaching through culture-appropriate strategies and emphasizing foreign language related emotional intelligence:** Helping students to understand and foster their identity, validating their emotions and motivation, while teaching cultural and pragmatic sensitivity of the manifestations of the English language.
- **Respecting gender groups' needs in the ESL classroom:** designing classroom strategies and learning content that genders can identify with without embarrassment.
- **Adaptability and Relatability:** Balancing needs, preferences and reality for continuous engagement.

5. Eliminating teacher likeability bias and classroom dependent learning

The first point focuses on preventing and eliminating both teacher likeability bias and classroom-dependent learning. In foreign language education, emotions and learning are very intertwined (Op't Eynde, De Corte & Verschaffel, 2007; Pekrun, Goetz, Titz & Perry, 2002; Saito, Dewaele, Abe & In'nami, 2018). In fact, classroom emotions and preferences towards teachers are sometimes based on previous life experiences, being very difficult to alter (Oxford, 1993; Hill, 2018). By no means, the goal is to emotionally re-programme learners, but to empower them to see the practical content of the lessons and to try to focus all their cognitive resources on the learning goal, not necessarily on the channel through which it is delivered (Reinders, 2010; Komlosi-Ferdinand, 2019c). This should be true for educators who are perceived unlikeable and/or very likeable as well. In the case of teachers that are perceived as likeable, there are equal benefits to focus on their lessons instead of their personality mostly. While it is a greatly rewarding experience to have an engaging, positive and caring teacher, the desired outcome of any learning scenario is eventually knowledge acquisition in an appropriate, accommodating context, not enjoying a show (Karimi & Nikbakht, 2019).

5.1 The role of management

Nowadays, many educators are expected to be not only professional, but highly entertaining. This fact is heavily reinforced across universities, private schools and language schools in particular. The fact that students can and often are obliged to give reports about the teachers to the administration, positions teachers in a vulnerable situation, forcing them to act in the classroom in ways that not necessarily nurtures knowledge acquisition and learning autonomy. There is much daily pressure on the teachers to be overly and unduly apologetic and forcibly entertaining. At this point, unfortunately, there is another factor to consider. Foreign language education in private and language schools is inseparably linked to high monetary benefits. Therefore, English language educators are required to be both highly charismatic and educators of the highest quality if they want to continue being employed. However, more institutions should aim for the excellence of education, where the focus is on knowledge and learning-autonomy (Holec, 1981; Benson, 2011). Accordingly, teachers should embrace classroom practices that are centred on learning, and emotionally caring for students *in that context*, instead of trying to win learners' good intentions and blessing by keeping them amused in the classroom. To achieve this, a seemingly contradictory strategy is needed: to focus on the learner. This focus should not target learners' boredom or wish for having a cheerful and easy time in the classroom, but to teach them their learning strengths and how they can become autonomous in their studying processes (Nakata, 2014).

5.2 From homework to relatable short projects

Teaching learner-autonomy should always be a priority in all classrooms, as learners from all backgrounds are capable of developing and mastering it (Cohen, 2004; Nakata, 2014; Chaffee, Lou, Noels & Katz, 2019; Sakai, Takagi & Chu, 2010). By this practice, learners could develop emotional stability in their learning processes, while having cognitive reassurance and care by the teachers (Martin, 2004; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2011). As every classroom based learning

scenario is time limited, assignments that can be executed at home are a great tool to develop such learner-autonomy. I propose the modification of homework in its traditionally used form. The conventional concept of homework, besides being an outdated idea, has become a psychological threat to many learners, particularly in its meaningless, repetitive form (Kralovec &Buell, 2000; Kohn, 2006; Bennet & Kalish, 2006; Bomarito, 2017). As the ARM framework suggests, relatability – besides capacity – is the key. Therefore, learners should have short *challenges* that allow them to work on personalised short projects at home (Redding, 2000; Epstein & Van Voorish, 2001). This should encompass the selection of the proper vocabulary and structure in a topic that they can relate to, within a frame given by the educator. For example, if the topic is 'health' learners should be encouraged to choose any viewpoint or story they wish and elaborate it creatively. Relatability here is vital, as some learners may lose interest on elaborating a project on the benefits of eating a number of vegetables each day. Instead, based on individual interest, some may research about the newest discovery in cancer treatment, while others may be investigating the effects of body building, etc. The same approach would be very beneficial with assessments. Learners should be given authority to develop their own tests by developing properly structured essays or question and answer formal tests. This flexibility and adaptability showed by the institution would also allow learners to feel more comfortable about assessment in general. Such practices would also encourage students, as they would not be compared against other students, but would see the effectiveness of their own strategies, resulting in more learning autonomy and motivation (Xu, 2008a, 2008b; Bembenutty, 2011).

5.3 Promoting autonomy: the importance of teachers' guidance

The above discussed strategies should help greatly both teachers and students to have a clear understanding of the boundaries and aim of the physical or virtual classroom itself. On the one hand, teachers should design their curricula and syllabi to be individual-centred, as opposed to a focus on the teachers' skills reduced to the classroom as well as heavily monitored and supervised activities (Felder & Henriques, 1995). On the other hand, learners should be constantly encouraged to expand their English language knowledge further in relatable domains. This, in most of the cases, needs some direction as well. While most teachers have it consciously or unconsciously clear how learners could/should benefit from using English outside the classroom, surprisingly few educators teach/discuss it (Xie, 2017). Such things should never be given for granted, but rather, by providing ideas and guidelines teachers should try to inspire students.

In fact, metacognition and how to develop learning autonomy could be good topics of common brainstorming, where learners may relate to some ideas and later develop their own line of interests and motivations. Arousing learners' curiosity may also help them to see opportunities to use English in fields they never considered before. Motivation to learn English should not be understood as finishing the exercises set by the teacher and sitting still during the lesson. Teachers should help learners to see beyond classroom-bound motivation and how to take practical steps to achieve their goals. However, to embrace such strategies requires much effort from both learners and educators, as giving up long-standing classroom practices may be socially, cognitively, emotionally and psychologically very demanding. The properly understood and locally acceptable use of positive psychology may be a great tool to achieve

such outcomes and may help to broaden the comfort zone of individuals with secure steps (Komlosi-Ferdinand, 2020b).

6. Validating emotions, teaching through culture-appropriate strategies and emphasizing foreign language related emotional intelligence

Validating emotions in the classroom is a challenging strategy. In many cultures the student-teacher power dynamics vary, are often rigid, and hierarchy is unalterable. Therefore, validating, or even accepting the emotions of the learners may present a challenge (Bada & Okan, 2000; Xiao, 2006). While this is particularly true for local teachers with local students, the scenario where foreign teachers teach local students may provoke considerable confusion. Nevertheless, every human being has emotions, thus, they can be validated in different ways. The focus of this strategy mostly lies in validating negative emotions which surface while learning a foreign language. Excluding assessments, among the biggest anxiety and discomfort inducing realities learners encounter is balancing their own cultural, moral and religious values, which may not necessarily coincide with countries where English is spoken (Fearon, 1999). In such cases, local and foreign teachers should consider adopting slightly different, yet converging strategies.

6.1 The role of local teachers

As for local teachers, there is an urging need to resist 'localizing' the English language. To a certain degree, it is understandable when local teachers approach the first lessons in teaching English from the local perspective, so the language is presented in an intelligible and relatable way to the learners. However, to continue such strategies as if English should be understood and spoken from the local perspective will confuse learners and will lead to failure when communicating with foreigners.

Local educators do well to preserve and nurture local students' own cultural identity, without drawing unnecessary nationalistic and/or political parallels between the local culture and English as a language and a culture they attach to them (Heyward, 2004). Emotional validation must always be implemented with focus of personal and cognitive growth, to which English is not a threat, but an added value to the individuals' existing competencies. Maintaining the autonomies of both the local language and culture and the English language, should result convergent and positive attitudes that recognise the worth and place of both entities.

6.2 The role of foreign teachers

Unfortunately, some foreign teachers, hopefully unwittingly, tend to show colonising behaviours and treat local students as expatriates (Cohen, 2004). Whenever this attitude is present, it often reflects a real shock for foreigners, when learners do not meet their standards. In fact, learners are often unable to respond as swiftly and correctly as expected during the lessons. Moreover, many learners of English are not able to fully understand foreign mentality and English related emotional intelligence. For these students, the speech of the foreign teachers is often not fully intelligible, as they understand most of the words, but not the connotations of

their speech or the pragmatics. Foreign teachers need to be aware that, even if learners are able to make more or less complex sentences, or even fluently communicate in English, it does not automatically result in having all the cultural and English-related emotional intelligence body of knowledge that foreign teachers possess (Komlosi-Ferdinand, 2019b).

6.3 Emotional validation according the learners' culture

Learners being able to express themselves to a certain degree, does not signify that they understand the other speakers' intended message clearly (Zarezadeh, 2013; Spirovska-Tevdovska, 2017). These concepts must be introduced, clarified and taught without taboos, but in a culture and age sensitive fashion. In failing to do so, communication fails and the lack of understanding of behavioural clues may seriously compromise learners' motivation or even self-esteem (Schmidt, Boraie & Kassabgy, 1996; Mehrdad & Ahghar, 2013). Emotional validation, however, can make a real difference in such cases. Western teachers are often more acquainted with the idea of positive psychology, and use it according to their own understanding. Being positive is a good quality without reservation. However, the concept of emotional validation should be clarified. Foreigners should thoroughly research the local culture, and get acquainted with locally acceptable forms of education, societal expectations and management of emotions in and out of the classroom (Parkinson & Dinsmore, 2019). For example, if a foreign teacher is always overly cheerful in the classroom, that may not necessarily suggest positivity to the learners depending on their culture or the context. In fact, according to the cultures found in Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan, displaying overtly positive and emotional attitudes equates to simple-mindedness. It needs to be emphasized here that *understanding* the other culture's values *is not* necessarily the key point, but *accepting* it and *respecting* it will result in a positive learning environment.

The approach proposed here allows time for learners to feel safe, without unnecessary criticism, or visible surprise and disapproval for their low language skills. They are not English speakers with low mental capacity, but individuals with a different language(s), culture and world-view. Accepting this difference is a very effective form of emotional validation. Another positive strategy is showing respect for, and gaining some understanding about learners' cultures in both explicit and implicit fashions. For example, "This behaviour may be acceptable with your Bulgarian teacher, but not in my class!" may undermine learners' self-worth and may incite nationalistic feelings. However, such a strategy probably won't make them understand how their attitudes and behaviours are unacceptable. Instead, while reassuring learners about their good intentions, the different requirements and standards of the foreign teachers should be made absolutely clear. It cannot be accentuated enough how important details are. Foreign teachers should never assume learners understand correctly all the pragmatic, cultural and behavioural implications of a foreign language. Even if learners believe they do so, this is most often their perception, not the reality. Thus, cultural sensibility in the classroom is vital, as learners from a variety of cultures may be particularly vulnerable to foreign teachers (McKinley, 2007).

Furthermore, foreigners may emotionally validate learners by not openly discussing their weaknesses publicly. For example, learners in Asia may feel extremely humiliated if asked by the teacher in front of the class what do they find difficult. To them, this would be considered an irreparable loss of face and they probably wouldn't give an honest answer regarding their

learning struggles. To a lesser extent, this phenomenon might be true in Eastern Europe as well, particularly among male learners. The strategy I recommend here is uncomplicated and effective. Simple pieces of papers should be anonymously thrown in a box at the end of each lesson with an actual difficult point written on them. Then these ideas should be written on the board and learners asked to make a short investigation about a particular point at home. Linking learning-autonomy and emotional validation can be very beneficial. By sharing their findings, learners can feel empowered, and other students may relate more to their conclusions than they would to the teachers' explanation. In a later lesson, before moving on to more difficult levels without a solid foundation, the content of these presentations should be discussed without the necessity of finding out who has experienced a particular difficulty. If there is still a need for a teacher to intervene, or provide an additional explanation, such interventions should be sensitively expressed. Thus, acknowledging the difficulty of learning a foreign language, honouring learners' dignity and emotions, and helping with practical steps, is a greatly validating and motivating experience that will create a real positive and caring atmosphere (Oga-Baldwin, 2019; Oxford, 1993; Swain, 2013; Parkinson & Dinsmore, 2019).

6.4 Teaching emotional intelligence (EQ)

Emotional intelligence is defined as the capacity to perceive, understand and conscientiously demonstrate emotions and to use this knowledge for further emotional development (Brackett, Mayer & Warner, 2004). As English has become a global language and many learners and speakers have no intentions to relocate and to adapt to a specific English speaking country, the cultural and pragmatic components of teaching and speaking English have become a complicated issue during the learning process. However, those learners who wish to use English as a simple tool still need to be aware of its specific and internationally acceptable communication strategies.

For example, if in an international business setting participants from a variety of continents, countries or territories needed to have fluent communication in English, it would be impossible for all of them to use the English language mixed with their own culturally acceptable behaviours and communication styles. In the case of global English learners in particular, it would be very confusing to focus on the USA or UK related variant, as those cultures do not cover the general understanding and relatability of English learners and/or speakers. Global English language-related EQ, therefore, has to focus on some specific psychological, kinesiological and pragmatic application of the language, instead of culture-specific ones. This concept greatly facilitates successful communication among individuals and groups. Moreover, it would not be perceived as being culturally invasive towards the foreign speaker in international settings. In fact, the lack of global English-specific EQ could provoke an erroneously structured intellectual and moral hierarchy among the different speakers and could be perceived as a threat towards their own cultural and ethnic identity. Learning global English related EQ may greatly contribute to learners' motivation and may enhance their understanding of the complex nature of a language, allowing them to communicate with ease in settings that differ from their own culture (Brackett, Mayer & Warner, 2004).

Both local and foreign teachers have the duty to teach a range of English-related emotional intelligence concepts and skills to the learners (Valiente, Swanson & Eisenberg, 2012). As an example, proper use and mirroring of body language (Tipper, Signorini & Grafton,

2015) can be crucial when expressing respect for other individuals. Basic skills, such as appropriate forms of greetings, polite information request, clarification of possible communication differences, understanding of social/professional hierarchy related cultural differences and respecting the concept of personal space should be taught explicitly. Otherwise, mistaken actions may have unfortunate consequences, and the other party may feel uneasy or even offended (Barkai, 1990). The use of short educational videos and the clear, detailed, yet simple explanations of certain culture-embedded behaviours may help learners to learn specific behavioural rules that will lead to successful communication. However, when using such visual material or demonstrations it should be avoided to identify certain behaviours as 'right' or 'wrong'. To clarify existing foreign culture or language based differences, educators should draw attention on 'this is how people do in other countries'. By this, students' own cultural preparedness will be acknowledged and validated, yet, they will understand that other ways are acceptable and needed in other cultural and linguistic contexts (Gershon & Pellitteri, 2018). Moreover, a strong and positive collaboration between local and foreign teachers will serve as an excellent role model for children to perceive both sides' worth, and how these sides can complement each other without harming learner's cultural identity.

6.5 Understanding non-verbal clues and the need for being specific

Another key concept to teach is understanding non-verbal clues, which is probably the most difficult task when communicating in a foreign language. In fact, it is critical to teach how emotions and implied behaviours are expressed in other cultures (Sparrow & Knight, 2006; Sándorová, 2016; Mahboob, 2018). The teaching of expressions and interpretation of emotions should gradually encompass complex ideas, not only the basic ones. Learners eventually should understand the difference between the other party being sad, or possibly disapproving and retreating from the interaction altogether because of the learner's perceived inappropriate behaviour. As Maclellan (2013, p. 2) points out: "Our capacity for reflexive thought means that we are able to think about how others see us and who we are... This consciousness of our own identity - our self - is possibly our most important possession". However, sometimes it can be very difficult to discern non-verbal clues. For example, in a scenario, where non-verbal clues are not understood, individuals often simply do not react anyhow. This is quite natural, as they may be trying to guess the other party's intentions, but not necessarily with much success. To avoid such uncomfortable situations, learners should be taught to ask for polite clarification. If such request is properly done, the discomfort can be eased and even a certain measure of bonding may take place.

Another crucial factor I recommend considering is the need to be specific. The fact of being specific in opinions and requests may seem somewhat a personal trait to many, but in this case it will be generalised to individualistic as opposed to collectivistic cultures (Gudykunst, et al., 1996). As many Western cultures are regarded as individualistic and many Asian cultures collectivistic, being specific in communication may have an entirely different meaning and may easily lead to misunderstandings. In fact, in some collectivistic cultures, non-verbal clues are more often used to express preferences, rather than expressing it verbally and specifically. However, the same strategies may not work well in in English, and the expected outcome of the learner's communication goal may be entirely lost. This could be illustrated with the use of the word 'no'. While certain cultures mostly avoid using this word (or even have no word for it),

other cultures will use it freely, without any reservation. These practices are heavily embedded in the speakers' original culture. For example, Russian speakers of English will extensively use 'no' in their speech, while Japanese speakers will avoid it as much as they can. Another example is the extensive and improper use of the word 'maybe'. It is often seen with Asian students to answer yes or no questions with maybe, or attaching maybe at the end or sentences where doubt should not be expressed at all. While this may sound amusing in the beginning, this phenomenon should be balanced by teaching and reminding the proper use of such words in the foreign language classroom. Therefore, as can be seen here, there is a possible pitfall of not being specific enough, and the other speaker may not be able to understand our non-verbal clues. Hence, it is crucial to teach learners about when and how being specific is acceptable and expected when speaking English.

6.6 Teachers' struggles to teach English-related EQ

The implementation of the aforementioned ideas from the perspective of local teachers who may have never travelled to English speaking countries themselves, may result to be a very difficult task. Local teachers often do not access teaching-psychology training during their university years at all. If they travelled/studied/lived abroad, there is no guarantee that they know how, or even the fact that they should teach English-related emotional intelligence (EQ) at all (Sparrow & Knight, 2006).

Ideally, plans and strategies regarding teaching EQ should be designed by educators who have the professional capacity and sensitivity to do so, and who understand the local and the foreign culture objectively and in a balanced way (Brown 2007; Huynh, Oakes & Grossman, 2018; Dewaele, Petrides & Furnham, 2008). There should be much emphasis on eradicating the practice of overwhelming learners with grammar and exercises, hoping they will eventually (miraculously) gain all knowledge regarding EQ later. Grammar and English-related EQ should be laterally and systemically introduced and taught as opposed to sudden, ill-prepared and not carefully planned sessions (Komlosi-Ferdinand 2019b).

In the case of foreign teachers, they should participate in such professional communities as well. This is particularly true, as they may not be conscious about the very existence of, or the need, to teach English-related EQ, as this is natural for them. In the case of non-native foreign teachers (with a culture foreign to both the local and to native English speaking countries), they may also revisit such ideas in order not to mix English-related EQ with their own cultural habits. Very importantly, such training should be effectuated before foreign teachers begin the school year, not drip-fed during the year. It is of key importance to set clear and coherent guidelines on the strategies teachers will need to follow, as teaching English-related EQ is *not* a concept based on teachers' personal preferences and cultural views (Chang, 2004). As seen, validating learners' emotions and nurturing their autonomy is a complex task, which requires teacher training in the first place. As societal and cultural factors are key in effective English language teaching, differences in learning among gender groups should gain more emphasis (Sakai, Takagi & Chu, 2010). This is true not only because of differences among both groups' attitudes in certain contexts, but because many cultures require such differentiation.

7. Respecting gender groups' needs in the ESL classroom

The third point is to consider the specific needs of different gender groups in the classroom. Gender stereotyping may prove to be inaccurate both on the individual and societal level on certain occasions. Yet, the separation of gender groups in different classrooms may be advantageous. In fact, many cultures place emphasis on traditional gender roles in every area of life, thus, the importance of maintaining this practice in the foreign language classroom prevails as well. Moreover, by separating genders, much anxiety could be reduced and efficiency increased, as it gives opportunity to teach in a relatable way with relatable material (Dekhtyar, Weber, Helgertz & Herlitz, 2018).

7.1 Male learners

Male learners are often misunderstood. They mostly prefer practical learning content and approaches, and empirical evidence of being able to use English in real-life settings. Classroom practices that require role-play, excessive demonstration of communicative and soft skills, may demotivate male learners. In fact, forcing 'unmanly' activities on male learners, particularly in front of female students, may not necessarily result in positive outcome. Also, forcing male learners out of their comfort zone may be perceived too offensive, childish and humiliating, which may result in heavy loss of motivation and negative classroom behaviour. The learning content may play similar role in motivating or demotivating male learners. A classroom entirely made up of male learners would respond more positively and would engage better when the learning content and activities are more practical and relatable to them. This strategy can expand their comfort zone sensibly and gradually and can validate their identity and social space. This can also open new, safe paths for them in order to be adaptive towards topics and learning contents that would have been deemed unpleasant before. Here, there is no intention to design relatable syllabi in the first instance and later immerse them in completely unrelatable topics, but to widen their interest enough to be able to engage in a variety of learning content without feeling shame or stigmatization.

7.2 Female learners

Similar factors are to be considered with female learners. They need more emotional safety in the classroom, a higher degree of challenge and more intellectually oriented learning content. Moreover, more emotional validation may increase their motivation and widen their engagement and adaptability in a wide variety of contexts and situations. (Kiziltepe, 2003; Weis, Heikamp & Trommsdorff, 2013). The average time of achieving self-confidence among female learners may manifest later as compared to male learners. However, comparing the two groups, or even suggesting having competition between them may result in gaining a superficial knowledge pool, and may be emotionally draining for female learners. Therefore, an all-female classroom may be an ideal place to show additional emotional validation and reassurance of their different learning pace. Finally, it is each institution's responsibility to consider individuals' who identify with the opposite gender and wish to attend one specific gender-segregated classroom.

8. Adaptability and Relatability

The fourth point explores adaptability and relatability. These are the two concepts that describe best the direction language learning should embrace. Hence, my fourth proposal focuses on adaptability and relatability as part of teaching metacognition and learning autonomy. Teaching strategies and content should always be designed and directed in a sensitive, inclusive and differentiated fashion. Nevertheless, relatability to learning goals and context will mostly be a very personal experience, which may vary even among individuals of the same culture, belief and gender to a certain extent. (Komlosi-Ferdinand, 2017). There is an immense combination of traits, past experiences and future expectations that may determine individuals' opinions, and the concepts they identify relatable (Freiermuth & Ito, 2020). Similarly, motivation, whether clearly identified or not, should be a very personal, intrinsic force, as opposed to exposing learners to clichés or concepts of impersonal and unrelatable mass motivation dogmas.

Emphasizing respect for learners' individual needs, wishes and motivation may effectively promote their adaptability in a variety of learning and life circumstances (Komlosi-Ferdinand & Ferdinand, 2016). A recent study by Kudinova and Arzhadeeva (2019) illustrates well both the importance and the gap in adaptability research. They found that a group of ESL learners, who participated in debate classes, developed considerably higher adaptability as opposed to the group who did not. This, significantly points toward the idea that whenever viewpoints can actively be expressed, and some degree of relatability to the teaching exercise is present (in the form of expressing one's viewpoint) positive results will be seen. However, institution based debate groups are mostly controlled, and may even conflict with the learners' interest. Therefore, the more relatability in learning material and methods are present, more learning enjoyment, and therefore learning success is to be expected (Komlosi-Ferdinand, 2019a). The following tool is aimed to develop increased understanding and ability to link the dynamics of self-consciousness, learning autonomy and relatability that leads to adaptation.

8.1 Metacognitive diaries

Metacognitive diaries (Clipa, Colomeischi & Stanciu, 2011), without the need for exhaustive information, are excellent tools. They allow learners to organise their perceptions on their own learning habits, motivations and achievements, and to identify areas for change of direction or improvement (Matsumoto, 1989; Simard, 2010; Ma & Oxford, 2014). Thus, the regular writing and (self) analysis of such diaries may enable learners to organise their thoughts on their progress and to eliminating excessive reliance on the teacher. Learners may also gain reliable data on their own identified learning style preferences, and how to focus on changing needs and strategies that work. Based on the diary's content, learners may realize and accept that motivation may change. Adaptability during such change is not only perfectly normal, but at times is even desirable, and will lead to continuous engagement and lifelong learning habits (2009; Bassett et al., 2010; Muijs, Reynolds & Kyriakides, 2016).

Many learners attend regular or private English lessons in Asia. Their parents often rigidly force the idea on the them that English will contribute to success in general, superior social status, and to better paying jobs in in their future. In reality, such optimistic outcomes rarely happen, yet, if learners are aware that the knowledge of English can be used in a variety of other ways and for purposes, they may succeed in them. Metacognitive diaries may help in

these circumstances, renegotiating the connection among the wish, the need and the possibilities. In most cases, teachers should explain how such diaries work, as this might not be obvious to all learners. This may prevent learners simply amassing data without understanding its significance, which may lead to boredom and abandonment of the project. Importantly, this strategy needs to be adapted to the learners' culture and age.

Moreover, teaching adaptability should not be limited to the reflection of metacognitive diaries, but the teacher should be flexible and adaptable in order be a role model. Languages, and their learning process are not mathematical formulas. While there are rules that cannot be altered, creativity and adaptability through learning should be of priority in the classroom. In this context too, a key concept described previously, emotional validation, should be applied. Needless to say, teachers will not always understand, or find acceptable learners' motivation, or what they find relatable. Nevertheless, validating learners' relatability in order to ensure their adaptability and engagement is crucial. Unfortunately, many learners are not granted such possibility and freedom, not because of lack of resources, but the rigidity of many institutions and the unpreparedness or lack of sensibility of some teachers and some institutions' administration.

9. Conclusion

This opinion article converges the author's researches and experiences as a teacher and lecturer in Central Asia and Eastern Europe throughout a decade. The aim of this paper was to provide comprehensive, empirical and practical solutions to institutions, teachers and learners who wish to succeed in learning English as a global language in a psychologically affordable fashion. As a result, the author offers the new Adaptability and Relatability Motivation framework that suggests directing teaching and learning practices towards contexts and ideas that learners may find relatable. Within a relatable context, learners may become more aware of their own learning preferences, and this may encourage positive attitudes towards autonomous learning as well. When these conditions are present and learners are not pressured into unrelatable motivations, they will be able to adapt their own motivation to their changing and dynamic circumstances which will ensure continuous engagement in the learning process.

As theory is incomplete without practice, the content and use of the framework is detailed in four points that may help to transfer theoretical knowledge into everyday learning scenarios. The strategies described are inexpensive and adaptable to many different cultures. A deliberate effort was made here to benefit teachers, as they are often overlooked, yet are expected to provide unrealistic results often without proper training and instruction. Indeed, "Everyone is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid." This quote, often attributed to Albert Einstein, but of unknown origin, summarizes well Global-English mass education. It also depicts the struggles of both teachers and learners which can and should eventually be changed. Everyone in education should feel respected and empowered, so this new capacity can be transferred to other areas of life as well.

The four points recommend some flexible strategies and argue against negative assumptions and outdated classroom practices. In fact, the points unveil that no specific motivation should be taken for granted, while learners' attitude and aims may reflect a different perspective. Identity, culture, social space and gender often define this reality. Thus, forcing learners into a wrong motivational mould could entirely condition their emotions towards the

classroom and the teacher. Nevertheless, by validating learners' emotions and specific needs while teaching them English language related emotional intelligence and soft skills, may secure emotional stability both in and outside the classroom. Moreover, considering gender differences in attitudes may further expand knowledge about emotional and practical needs to be considered in the classroom. In particular, male and female learners' self-esteem, emotional stability and possible different language learning aims and perspectives need to be seriously considered. Such differences also govern perceptions towards the teacher. While the teacher's persona may indisputably important, emotional and cognitive dependence on it should be a practice to be avoided at all cost. In fact, as argued, teachers should teach learning autonomy and help learners to find their own learning style preferences. Teachers also should avoid nationalistic or colonising attitudes in order to maintain a balanced and neutral milieu in the classroom, and which does not result in identity conflicts but allows the process of English language learning to be healthy and productive.

Therefore, if positive role models and motivating circumstances are present, learners may easily develop adaptability to new circumstances. However, if learners do not understand or relate classroom circumstances, teachers and teaching methodologies, only chaos will result, preventing learning success. Heraclitus observed similar conflicts in human behaviour already 2,500 years ago, as he pointed out: "A lot of learning does not teach (a person the possession of) understanding" (Robinson, 1991, p. 31). Thus, no matter the length of time and the flood of English material to which learners are exposed, if the teaching methods and material are unrelatable, learning success will not occur. However, as outlined in this article, combination of proper direction, validation, metacognition and autonomy can transform the learning experience in its entirety. By implementing the here offered strategies, learners will flourish in new circumstances and transform their understanding of learning altogether. Nevertheless, further research is needed on motivation. In particular, the healthy boundaries of motivation need to be investigated. This is very important, as nowadays external motivation is often enforced on individuals in an unrelatable fashion and indigestible quantity. This could lead to learners and teachers being so overwhelmed that it could result in motivational immunity. This should be avoided at all costs as language learning is very important for millions of people worldwide. Their learning experience should be a meaningful one, connected to personal growth and better opportunities.

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English L2 thematic vocabulary acquisition through graded readers: A single-participant study

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This paper investigates multiple aspects of incidental vocabulary acquisition through a series of thematically connected graded texts (crime stories) designed for English L2 learners. In line with some of the main trends in L2 extensive reading research, the study focuses on the effects of extensive reading on vocabulary growth, contextual and syntactic use of target items, and the enhancement of L2 associative networks. The pre-test/post-test research design employed multiple measurement instruments, including a lexical familiarity assessment scale and a sentence production task. Results indicate improvement on all the three measured aspects of vocabulary acquisition, with vocabulary growth and associative recall being the most salient benefits of the reading process.

Keywords: L2 vocabulary acquisition, L2 reading, reading for pleasure, thematic networks

1. Introduction[2]

Over the past few decades, there has been considerable research dedicated to the effects of extensive reading on L2 proficiency, most studies focusing on vocabulary acquisition and comprehension. Results suggest that extensive reading programs using graded readers yield generally positive results in terms of lexical gains and reading skills (e.g. Hafiz & Tudor, 1990; Paribakht & Wesche, 1993). Related case studies also confirm these conclusions, adding that one salient facet of lexical enhancement appears to be increased accuracy in spelling (Pigada & Schmitt, 2006; Hu, 2013). Earlier studies on the lexico-grammatical and narrative properties of graded readers also underline the fact that these texts provide a good source for incidental vocabulary learning, and higher-level readers can be considered as the ultimate step to non-simplified fiction (Wodinsky & Nation, 1988; Uden, Schmitt & Schmitt, 2014). At the same time, the exact benefits and drawbacks of incidental vocabulary learning through comprehension are not yet fully understood as it is a complex psychological process (Gass, 1999; Waring & Nation, 2004; Webb, 2020).

The aim of the present single-participant case study is to measure the extent to which extensive reading of graded texts (a collection of crime stories) can contribute to different aspects of L2 English thematic vocabulary acquisition, notably, comprehension, contextual and syntactic use, and the amplification of associative networks related to the topic of the readings. A pre-test/post-test design relying on multiple data collection instruments was adopted. The

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research serves as an attempt at viewing incidental vocabulary learning from a holistic perspective which regards vocabulary as complex conceptual and linguistic phenomena.

2. Literature review

2.1 Extensive reading and incidental vocabulary learning

It has been a long-held view that L2 extensive reading can enhance comprehension, boost vocabulary, and have a positive impact on grammar. In one of the earliest studies measuring the effects of extensive reading programs, Hafiz and Tudor (1990) found that L2 learners reading a series of graded texts made significant improvement with regard to both fluency and accuracy. Paribakht and Wesche (1993) conducted experimental research on how topic-specific extensive reading classes, complemented with four skills courses, can contribute to increased language proficiency among higher education students. They adopted a comprehension-based perspective on learning, and focused on learners' encountering language in meaningful and diverse contexts. Besides reading a variety of texts, the experimental group was also given some training on reading strategies. Results suggest that the combined effect of extensive reading with explicit instruction, strategy learning and learner introspection (Vocabulary Knowledge Scale) leads to noticeable gains in vocabulary and to some improvement in grammatical accuracy. The positive correlation between extensive (graded) reading and vocabulary expansion was further confirmed in a pilot study by Horst (2005), where extensive reading was complemented with computer-assisted corpora extracted from the readings. In a small set of case studies (n=4), Uden, Schmitt and Schmitt (2014) investigated the question whether highest level graded readers (3,800 headwords) can ensure upper-intermediate and advanced learners a smooth transition to reading authentic English novels. It was assumed that three main criteria need to be met to reach this goal: sufficient vocabulary coverage for near-complete comprehension, adequate reading speed and finding pleasure in the reading. The results of the case studies showed that higher level graded readers with a headword count closer to that of ungraded novels generally appear to be a good springboard into reading authentic fiction as the lexical gap between the two text types can be relatively easily overcome by the motivated learner.

Investigations into the lexical, structural and narrative properties of graded readers (Bamford, 1984; Wodinsky & Nation, 1988; Nation & Wang, 1999) have also pointed out that the extensive reading of graded texts is likely to lead to incidental vocabulary learning. Bamford (1984, pp. 218-219) sees L2 pleasure reading as the "free practice" of in-class intensive reading, an activity which enables the learner to employ the strategies acquired in formal education. In his review article, Nation (2015) considers repetition and varied contexts of occurrence to be among the greatest benefits of graded readers (p. 137). Encountering the same word in different contexts can also facilitate guessing from context, which in turn contributes to incidental learning (p. 137, see below). Extensive reading through graded readers was incorporated into a quasi-experimental study on the effects of integrating extensive reading into university-level L2 curricula for English Studies majors (Suk, 2016). Suk designed a 15-week reading program to measure the impact of extensive reading on three variables, namely, reading comprehension, reading rate, and vocabulary acquisition. Participants (Korean English L2 students) were divided up into two control groups (intensive reading classes) and two experimental groups (intensive reading combined with extensive reading). Participants in the experimental groups

had to choose ten graded readers of varied topics and difficulty levels (out of 155 available titles). The pre-test/post-test results suggest that a combined intensive-extensive reading program leads to greater improvement in all three areas than intensive reading in itself. In another study focusing on extensive graded reading, Chang and Hu (2018) found that graded readers do contribute to considerable vocabulary gains as well as higher learning rates. Related Hungarian L2 research also promotes the inclusion of extensive reading in L2 classes and the regular use of graded readers in vocabulary enhancement (Borsos, 2014; Kárpáti, 2015). Reflecting upon the methodological considerations of L2 Hungarian vocabulary expansion through extensive reading, Borsos (2014) promotes the importance of introducing the corpus-based analysis of simplified readings, suggesting that comparing their lexical make-up with the Hungarian National Corpus (Magyar Nemzeti Szövegtár) as well as with the readings of Hungarian course books could contribute to a better understanding of frequency patterns, which might yield some positive outcomes in vocabulary teaching.

In addition to larger-scale research, single-person case studies (Pigada & Schmitt, 2006; Hu, 2013) support the view that extensive reading in the L2 has observable benefits for overall language proficiency, especially in what concerns receptive skills, as noted in Paribakht & Wesche (1993, p. 25). Pigada and Schmitt (2006) observed a French L2 student's four-week-long extensive graded reader program, and found that the participant made gains in vocabulary and syntax, with the enhanced spelling of words being the most salient feature of his improvement. In another study, Hu (2013) reached very similar conclusions while also pointing out that the participant's form-meaning acquisition, though continuous, was relatively slow. Indeed, numerically speaking, the contribution of extensive reading to vocabulary growth appears to be limited (Pigada & Schmitt, 2006, p. 1), partly because much of the learning that takes place while reading is to a great extent incidental. Gass (1999) emphasizes that incidental learning is a complex issue, and it is impossible to state with certainty that the process lacks all conscious reflection on the learner's part (p. 319). She broadly defines it as a "by-product of other cognitive exercises involving comprehension", by which she primarily means reading, and, to a lesser extent, listening (p. 319). With relation to graded readers and vocabulary acquisition, Nation considers incidental attention to be a form of learner attention where the focus is "on some other aspect of communication besides individual words and phrases" (2015, p. 137). That is, the learner focuses on meaning rather than on form.

It is a generally accepted observation that incidental L2 vocabulary acquisition through reading is a relatively slow and cumulative process determined by various factors, such as learner attention, salience and exposure to input (pp. 321-322). For example, based on participant feedback, Paribakht and Wesche (1993, p. 23) concluded that the majority of unfamiliar words go unnoticed unless learners are required to know them in the follow-up comprehension tasks. Although they did have recourse to contextual inferencing as a reading strategy when encountering unknown lexical items, participants did not seem to have made much conscious effort in the experiment to acquire new words. While Waring and Nation (2004) acknowledge the positive contribution of extensive reading and graded readers in incidental vocabulary learning, they recommend a "balanced" combination of incidental learning and explicit instruction, emphasizing that sustained attention and repetition are fundamental elements of successful acquisition (pp. 19-20). In his systematic review of incidental vocabulary learning research over the past three decades, Webb (2020) offers some recommendations for future directions in the field. Among others, he proposes that, with the

internet and social media having become a principal source of language input, incidental L2 learning studies should start studying the effects of different input types on incidental vocabulary acquisition (p. 232). In instruction, combining extensive reading with extensive viewing will create a substantial amount of meaning-focused input, which provides opportunities for after-school learning (p. 235). Webb contends that the amount of meaningful L2 input might actually be the deciding factor in vocabulary acquisition (p. 235).

Another related question is whether frequency of occurrence has a positive impact on acquisition. Wodinsky and Nation (1988) propose that the average language learner needs approximately ten repetitions of the same lexical item in different contexts for meaningful learning to occur, but factors such as text composition and the spacing of repetitions can influence the rate of acquisition (Nation, 2014). Chang and Hu (2018) observe that although learners might pay conscious attention to high-frequency words in graded readers, retention rate is proportionate to frequency of occurrence. Generally speaking, however, there appears to be no decisive evidence about frequency being directly proportional to successful vocabulary acquisition (Pigada & Schmitt, 2006). Also, Hu (2013) found evidence for frequency negatively influencing the participant's knowledge of the grammatical properties of the target items; in other words, frequency might turn out to be detrimental to the learning process when the word (or its syntactic makeup, as Hu observed) is not sufficiently salient. Many lexical items go unheeded in the process, especially when they are embedded in a rich context that provides cues to their meaning and no conscious noticing of form and meaning takes place (Hu, 2013, p. 488). It is, however, widely assumed that there should be a positive link between repetition and learning.

2.2 Lexis and associative networks

The idea that vocabulary acquisition extends beyond simple form-meaning connections has become increasingly adopted in L2 vocabulary research. Pigada and Schmitt (2006) point out that earlier studies investigating L2 vocabulary acquisition through extensive reading do not seem to account for all the facets of lexical competence as they often fail to take properties like spelling, contextual and syntactic use into consideration (p. 6). Hu (2013) enumerates three distinct but interrelated characteristics of word knowledge, grounding her theory in Nation's (2001) categorization (p. 489):

- meaning (form-meaning pairings, conceptual and associative structures)
- form (spoken vs. written, morphological properties)
- use (syntax, collocations)

The fact that lexical items are now being increasingly regarded as complex linguistic phenomena reflects the methodological need to treat syntax and semantics together in L2 vocabulary research (Gass, 1999, p. 326). In fact, these considerations tie in with applied cognitive linguistic approaches to second language acquisition promoting a conceptually motivated, meaning-focused and emergent view of language and language learning (see, for example, Ellis & Robinson, 2008; De Rycker & De Knop, 2009; Pütz, 2010). One fundamental principle of cognitive linguistic theory is that meanings are organized in network structures, that is to say, each and every category is understood only in relation to other categories. Experience and encyclopedic knowledge continuously shape and are shaped by our conceptual architecture.

Categories are parts of larger conceptual units structuring our mental representation of the world, called frames or idealized cognitive models (Fillmore, 1976; Kövecses & Benczes, 2010). Simply put, categories and frames make up an intricate and dynamic system of associations in the mind.[3] In the domain of foreign language learning, frames can translate into thematic units or topics having a specific vocabulary. Although there has been no comprehensive research in this field up to now, findings so far have suggested that organizing L2 vocabulary in thematic rather than simple semantic clusters can facilitate acquisition (Tinkham, 1997), or its efficiency is on a par with semantic clustering (Hippner-Page, 2000). One criticism towards semantic clustering (i.e. listing words of the same word class belonging to one common superordinate category, such as *fruit* or *furniture*) is that the items appear to be too similar, which creates a possible ground for confusion (Tinkham, 1997, p. 140).[4] Related research in experimental psychology by Zareva (2007) has revealed that L2 learners' association patterns are both quantitatively and qualitatively different from those of L1 speakers, especially at lower proficiency levels. Zareva's earlier research on the assessment of L2 lexical knowledge (2005) suggests that the receptive-productive aspects of knowing a world and vocabulary size can indeed be important predictors of a learner's actual lexical repertoire (Zareva, 2005, p. 560).[5] Even though the L2 conceptual system is a new and relatively untapped research area (mostly dealt with by applied cognitive linguists studying the lexico-conceptual properties of the bilingual mind), it is a promising field with a scope extending to several aspects of L2 competence, including vocabulary and fluency. Some recent findings in L2 reading research suggest that narrow reading can be an effective way to enhance thematic vocabulary as it ensures repeated exposure to target items through a series of connected texts and makes them therefore salient to the L2 learner (Krashen, 2004; Kang, 2015). By definition, narrow reading is a form of extensive reading directed towards one given genre, topic or author (Cho, Ann & Krashen, 2005, p. 58). It is postulated that familiarity with the topic lowers the cognitive burden of having to deal with too much novel information at a time (Kang, 2015, p. 167), and this creates room for processing recurrent linguistic input (Han & D'Angelo, 2009 [cited in Kang, Promoting L2 Vocabulary Learning, 2015, p. 167]). Kang's (2015) experimental research appears to underpin the assumption that narrow reading contributes to greater incidental learning, but this strand of L2 reading studies is still a largely unexploited area that needs further experimental data. This complex nature of lexis reaching beyond questions related to form-meaning connections creates a just ground for investigating L2 associative networks as a component of L2 vocabulary acquisition processes. In an attempt to integrate the relevant considerations of research on L2 vocabulary acquisition through extensive graded reading with

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[3] Marvin Minsky's schema and frame theory, based on a revised version of Bartlett's original concept, laid down similar principles in artificial intelligence research. Minsky's findings on integrating new information into already existing schematic representations have been successfully implemented into reading research as early as the 1980s.

See William F. Brewer's review article on the subject: Brewer, William F. *Learning Theory.* https://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/2175/Learning-Theory-SCHEMA-THEORY.html

[4] Boers (2011) voices similar concerns about teaching idiomatic phrases in semantic sets.

[5] The methodological considerations of Zareva's study were grounded in Henriksen's three-dimensional global-trait model, with the three dimensions of vocabulary knowledge being receptive-productive dimension, breadth (size) and depth. Henriksen, B. 1999. Three dimensions of vocabulary development. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 21, 303–317. In Zareva 2005: 548-549.

the study of thematic associative networks, the major objective of this study is to measure whether graded readers can enhance the incidental learning of thematic vocabulary and, consequently, the expansion of the related associative network. The results will also be evaluated in light of frequency of occurrence to see whether there might be any correlation between the number of repetitions and lexical improvement.

3. Research questions

(1) To what extent do graded readers contribute to an increased learning of thematically related L2 vocabulary?

(2) In what ways can graded texts improve the syntactic and contextual use of the given target items?

(3) In what ways can reading graded texts trigger the expansion of L2 associative networks?

(4) What degree of correlation can be established between frequency of occurrence and acquisition?

Throughout the research, the focus will be placed on studying the effects of extensive reading on meaning comprehension, thematic networks and contextual use.

4. Methodology

4.1 The participant

The participant of the study is a 15-year-old Hungarian L1 speaker who attends grammar school in Szeged, Hungary. She has been learning English as her L2 for six years (5 classes/ week) and Italian as her L3 for three years (3 classes/ week). The student shows keen interest in learning foreign languages and regularly reads fiction in her native language. Besides school, she attends extracurricular English classes once a week. A recently administered placement test measuring all four skills (grammar/use of English, reading, writing, and speaking) shows that her current proficiency level is B1+, and she demonstrates strong reading skills and a solid lexical foundation. Her motivation and fondness for extensive reading made her an ideal candidate for the case study, for which she kindly volunteered.

4.2 The reader

The simplified material selected for the study is a stage 6 graded reader from the Oxford Bookworms Library, entitled *American Crime Stories*. Stage 6 is the highest level in this series, counting approximately 2,500 headwords. The book includes seven short crime stories, the lengths of which vary between 5 and 26 pages (11.8 pages per story on average). The primary reason for selecting this reader is that it contains thematically connected texts, which ensures the regular repetition of the target lexical items, and might therefore better contribute to incidental learning.

Prior to starting the reading program, the participant was asked to count how many unknown words she finds on one random page of the book to see if she can read the stories without any serious obstacle to comprehension (see Pigada & Schmitt, 2006, p. 8). She reported that she had encountered 5 unknown words (one page equals app. 300 words without images). This ratio corresponds to the 95-98% coverage that is estimated to be necessary for effortless comprehension (see Hsueh-Chao & Nation, 2000, Waring & Nation, 2004; Laufer & Ravenhorst-Kalovski, 2010; Schmitt, Jiang & Grabe, 2011). It was therefore assumed that the participant would have no significant difficulties reading the short stories.

The participant was given two stories per week, with the exception of week 3, where she had to read three due to pre-fixed commitments in her summer schedule. She was instructed to use a dictionary only as a last resort. Every week, she had to submit a short summary (10-12 sentences) of each text in English to make sure she progressed according to the pre-fixed schedule. Together with the pre- and post-tests, the whole study lasted for four weeks. It is necessary to mention at this point that the research procedure definitely bears some resemblance to narrow reading in the sense that the texts the participant was assigned to read revolve around one specific genre, but owing to the fact that the materials were limited to one graded reader and the duration was relatively short, this case study should not be considered as an example of narrow reading studies.

4.3 The target items

The target words of the study (n=45) were selected in a way that they are both thematically related and have a frequency of at least 3 occurrences throughout the seven short stories, except for four words which had a frequency count of 2: *alibi*, *heroine*, *murderer* and *trigger*, and one word with a frequency count of 1: *trigger*. Inflected and conjugated forms were considered to be occurrences of the same word.[6] The highest frequency words were *witness* and *cop* (19 and 18 occurrences, respectively), and almost half of the target items had a frequency of 3 or 4 (see Appendix B).

4.4 Measurement

The test materials and scales were designed in a way that they are sensitive to partial gains (Pigada and Schmitt 2006, 5). The pre-test consisted of three tasks (see Appendix A). In the first task, the participant had to list her L2 lexical associations to the expression 'crime and justice', which served as the lexical stimulus. The goal of this component was to estimate the size of her L2 semantic and lexical association network in the topic. The second task was the self-assessment vocabulary knowledge scale. The participant had to mark on a 1-5 Likert scale her perceived degree of familiarity of the 45 target items. The scale was based on Paribakht & Wesche's Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS 1993), but the researcher made some modifications to the original design to create some more nuanced links of transition between zero and good familiarity of a word by equating certainty of knowledge and use with 5 on the scale in contrast with the VKS, where this phase corresponded to 4 on the scale. In addition to

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[6] Target item occurrences in the story titles and in the *Glossary* of the reader (pp. 103-105) were not included in the frequency number calculation.

this, the participant was also asked to give her best guess for the items she marked 3, and to write a sentence each with the items she marked 4 or 5 on the scale. By doing so, the researcher was able to gain some insight into how the learner uses these words in context, i.e. she could gain information about the participant's knowledge of the syntactic properties of the items she evaluated as familiar or well-known. As the third and last task, the participant was given a set of pictures covering a topic largely different from the main theme of the study (animals). This component served as the distractor to divert her attention from the target items and therefore minimize noticing effect. The idea of the distractor task was adopted from Pigada and Schmitt (2006), who asked the participant of their single case study to think of five words he knew in his foreign language (French) and then to write a sentence with each of them in order to avoid his direct noticing of the target items (p. 11). My reason for introducing a speaking task as the distractor was the intention to make my participant focus on a different topic in a different medium so that she would have to focus on something other than the target items.

The post-test was identical to the pre-test, the only difference being that the distractor task was not included in it due to its having become unnecessary. In addition, the researcher conducted a short retrospective interview in which the participant was asked to evoke what strategies she had used to decipher the meaning of unknown words and to reflect on her perceived improvement at the end of the program.

5. Results

5. 1 Results of the pre-test

The properties of the measurement tools precluded substantial statistical analysis of the data as they focused on qualitative rather than on discrete numerical changes. In the task measuring semantic association network, the participant listed six items in response to the L2 word stimuli 'crime' and 'justice': *jail, bad people, law, prison, safety* and *policemen*. For this component, the instructions were given only in English (the other two task instructions were bilingual to make sure she understood what she has to do, see Appendix A), and all communication related to it was conducted in English. The rationale for this decision was to minimize external L1 influence as much as possible.

The scarcity of answers provided for task 1 indicates that the participant's representation of the concept CRIME is underdeveloped. Looking at the results of the vocabulary familiarity scale might, however, suggest otherwise. In almost half of all cases (49%), she estimated her degree of familiarity with the lexical item to be 5, the majority of these words being core elements of the conceptual frame (e.g. *murder, guilty, fingerprint*). Furthermore, she marked 9% of the remaining items with 4, 10% with three, and 31% with either a 2 or a 1. Apart from some exceptions (4 out of 24, 18%), the sentences she created with the words she marked with 4 and 5 reflected actual semantic knowledge of the items; in some cases, however, she was asked to clarify the exact meaning in Hungarian in speaking as the sentences she provided in English were vague. Despite the fact that almost all her sentences were syntactically well-formed, she used little grammar and the sentences were limited to demonstrating the meaning of the target items rather than placing them into a broader context (see Appendices D and E).

5.2 Results of the post-test

For task 1, the participant listed 18 items in response to the lexical cues 'crime' and 'justice'. These were (in the original order): *evidence, witness, gun, robbery, robber, bandit, murderer, murder, suicide, detective, policeman, prisoner, prison, jail, police station, suspect, investigation,* and *explosion*. Out of the six words she gave in the pre-test, three were included in the post-test list as well. It is worth noting that many of the above words were rated 4 or 5 in the pre-test familiarity assessment task. In this component, the participant marked 80% (36 out of 45, which indicates a 27% growth) of all target items with 5, and a further 11% (5 items out of 45) with 4. She did not mark any of the items with 1. These numbers suggest visible improvement in the participant's vocabulary repertoire, at least in what concerns recognition and comprehension (see Appendix C). Interestingly though, two items, *suppose* and *path*, were downgraded from 5 to 4 in the post-test. In order to see whether the extensive reading program had any visible effect on the syntactic and contextual properties of the target items, we have to analyze the sentences the participant created with the words marked with 4 and 5.

The comparison of pre- and post-test sentences for the same lexical item (see Appendices D and E) reveals certain changes in the participant's treatment of some of the target words, especially with regard to their collocational patterns. Table 1 presents the pre-test/post-test sentence pairs for target words *cop, executed, guilty*, and *trial*.

Table 1. A comparison of pre- and post-test sentences (sample)

Pre-test	Post-test
The cops caught him.	I called the cops when I saw two men with knives.
The executed died.	He was executed because he killed four people.
I'm sure he's guilty.	She was found guilty.
The trial will be tomorrow.	He won the trial because there wasn't evidence against him.

As can be seen from the above examples, the participant appears to have learnt some of the most typical topic-specific phrases ('call the cops', 'be executed', 'found guilty', 'win a trial') through a repeated exposure to the target items in different contexts in the readings. It is worth noting, however, that the collocations 'call the cops' and 'win a trial' did not figure in any of the texts; their emergence in the participant's lexical repertoire might be the result of L1 influence, these two collocations being the same in Hungarian as in English. Also, in some cases, she provided a more detailed, contextually rich example sentence than on the pre-test. Table 2 presents the answers given to target items *victim, innocent,* and *identify*.

Table 2. Pre- and post-test sentences demonstrating contextual richness (sample)

Pre-test	Post-test
Don't act like a victim.	His victims were young and beautiful ladies.
He has evidence that she's innocent.	I think she's innocent. She was with me during the robbery.
Identify: *fails to provide a sentence but explained the meaning in Hungarian*	It was hard to identify her because she was wearing a mask.

It has to be added, however, that the opposite of the above tendency can also be observed in the data. For example, the participant failed to provide a relevant sentence for 'fool' and 'lawyer' in the post-test even though she reported knowing their meanings on both tests.

6. Discussion

Research questions (1) and (2) focused on incidental L2 vocabulary learning through the extensive reading of thematically related short stories. Besides word recognition and comprehension, the study also aimed at investigating any possible gains in the syntactic and contextual knowledge of the target items. The comparison of the pre- and post-test vocabulary familiarity assessment task indicates considerable lexical uptake by the end of week 4. Moreover, the participant has shown improvement in the collocational use of several of the target items as well as in their contextual build-up, suggesting that the reading improved her ability to create meaningful and more elaborated sentences with the target words. Nevertheless, with a smaller set of target items there was no observable improvement, and, in a few cases, participant response revealed some deterioration in comparison with the pre-test. It is also important to add that some of the sentences the participant produced on the post-test were syntactically questionable (e.g. *The gutting of the city is a hard thing to plan*).

Overall, the above results imply that repeated exposure to the same target items in different but familiar contexts facilitated incidental learning. Research question (3) enquired about the potential contribution of graded texts to the enrichment of L2 associative networks. Based on participant answers given to Task 1, we might conclude that reading several texts on the same topic (i.e. in the same genre, in this case) can contribute to an enhanced activation of L2 semantic networks. It is important to note that many of the words listed on the post-test were reported as highly familiar in Task 2 on the pre-test, but were not recalled by the participant when she was asked to produce a list of associations. Such incongruity between comprehension and production suggests that recalling certain elements of a larger concept in the L2 needs external stimulus to activate familiar vocabulary. It appears that targeted input can strengthen L2 conceptual and lexical associations and enable quicker recall.

The purpose of research question 4 was to see whether it is possible to establish any correlation between frequency of occurrence and acquisition. The data suggests that the participant showed highest gains on target items with a frequency of occurrence between 6 and 17. For instance, she marked items *witness* (19) *nod* (9) and *inquest* (16) either 1 or 2 on the pre-test, and then marked all these items 4 and 5 on the post-test. These results suggest that there might be a positive correlation between degree of acquisition and frequency. On the other hand, there were some relatively low frequency (2-5) words on the test which followed the same

pattern. In the brief follow-up interview focusing on the reading process, the participant reported that she had herself noticed improvement in her vocabulary range. As for the vocabulary learning strategies she employed to decipher unknown words in the readings, she mostly had recourse to in-context guessing and, occasionally, she consulted the dictionary when the context was not indicative of the meaning. She also reported that reading texts covering the same topic helped her reinforce the newly acquired lexical items and that seeing familiar words in different contexts ("sentences", as she formulated it) provided her with cues as to the correct usage of those words.

7. Conclusions and limitations

The present case study aimed at investigating the effects of reading a series of thematically connected graded texts on L2 vocabulary acquisition at multiple levels. Results indicate that familiarizing the learner with a given topic (or genre) through a number of linguistically and structurally similar texts generally enhances uptake, and has a positive influence on the contextual use of the target words. Frequency appears to be conducive to acquisition considering the fact that the most noticeable comprehension gains were observed with the most frequently occurring words. Moreover, concentrating on one specific topic in reading also appears to be an efficient strategy to activate and develop L2 associative networks.

It has to be emphasized, however, that the results of this case study cannot be generalized to the larger population, and individual factors probably play a role in the rate and quality of learning. The participant of this research was a highly motivated learner who enjoys reading in her free time. A cross-sectional study comprising a small but diverse set of participants would provide us with a more nuanced picture of how motivation and personal reading preferences influence incidental acquisition. Furthermore, findings related to L2 associative networks will need experimental support to see the actual contribution of thematic reading to the numerical enhancement of L2 associative networks.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Task sheet for pre- and post-tests (Part 3 was not included in the post-test)

Part 1. What words and ideas do you associate with the words "crime" and "justice" in English?

Part 2a. Below is a list of English words. Your task is to decide how well you think you know them. Mark the number that best corresponds to your estimated level of familiarity with each item. // *Az 1-től 5-ig terjedő skálán jelöld be, megítélésed szerint mennyire ismered az alábbi szavakat!*

Explanation:
1 - I have never seen this word and I don't know its meaning.
2 - I have seen this word before, but I don't know its meaning.
3 - I have seen this word before, and I might have some ideas about what it means.
4 - I think I know what this word means/I can guess its meaning.
5 - I know the meaning of this word (I can explain it and/or provide its Hungarian equivalent).
1 - Sosem láttam ezt a szót, és nem ismerem a jelentését.
2 - Láttam már ezt a szót, de nem ismerem a jelentését.
3 - Kicsit ismerős ez a szó, és lehet, tudom, mit jelent.
4 - Szerintem tudom, mit jelent ez a szó, vagy ki tudom következtetni a jelentését.
5 - Tudom, mit jelent ez a szó (el tudom magyarázni/meg tudom adni a magyar megfelelőjét).

inquest	1	2	3	4	5
gutting	1	2	3	4	5
murder	1	2	3	4	5
suppose	1	2	3	4	5
crutch	1	2	3	4	5
nod	1	2	3	4	5
guilty	1	2	3	4	5
suicide	1	2	3	4	5
path	1	2	3	4	5
license	1	2	3	4	5
innocent	1	2	3	4	5
fool	1	2	3	4	5
robbery	1	2	3	4	5
heroine	1	2	3	4	5
sane	1	2	3	4	5
evidence	1	2	3	4	5
bullet	1	2	3	4	5
stare	1	2	3	4	5
trial	1	2	3	4	5

property	1	2	3	4	5
prisoner	1	2	3	4	5
coroner	1	2	3	4	5
witness	1	2	3	4	5
murderer	1	2	3	4	5
suggest	1	2	3	4	5
pile	1	2	3	4	5
mugging	1	2	3	4	5
explosion	1	2	3	4	5
executed	1	2	3	4	5
accident	1	2	3	4	5
victim	1	2	3	4	5
verdict	1	2	3	4	5
fainted	1	2	3	4	5
wipe	1	2	3	4	5
lawyer	1	2	3	4	5
identify	1	2	3	4	5
fingerprint	1	2	3	4	5
pump	1	2	3	4	5
alibi	1	2	3	4	5
bandit	1	2	3	4	5
cop	1	2	3	4	5
mourning	1	2	3	4	5
scared	1	2	3	4	5
trigger	1	2	3	4	5
wig	1	2	3	4	5

Part 2b.
Give your best guess for the words you marked 3. // *Add meg az általad gondolt jelentését azoknak a szavaknak, amelyeket 3-mas értéken jelöltél.*
Write a sentence each with the words you marked 4 or 5. // *Írj egy-egy mondatot azokkal a szavakkal, amelyeket 4-es vagy 5-ös értéken jelöltél.*

Part 3. Picture description (oral). Look at the pictures below. What topic do they depict? What are the most important issues related to the topic? Give a detailed answer (3-5 min).

(source of images: www.unsplash.com)

Appendix B

Table 3. Frequency table of target items in decreasing order

Target item	Frequency	Target item	Frequency
witness	19	explosion	6
cop	18	wig	5
inquest	16	trial	5
murder	16	property	5
stare	13	wipe	5
bandit	13	lawyer	4
suppose	12	executed	4
bullet	12	accident	4
fool (n+adj+v)	11	pump	3
crutch	10	mugging	3
robbery	10	gutting	3
nod	9	victim	3
guilty	9	verdict	3
innocent	8	fainted	3
path	8	identify	3
license	8	fingerprint	3
suicide	7	scared	3
prisoner	7	mourning	2
sane	6	heroine	2
evidence	6	murderer	2
coroner	6	alibi	2
suggest	6	trigger	1
pile (n+v)	6		

Appendix C

Table 4. Pre- and post-test participant answers of the familiarity assessment test

Target item	Pre-test mark	Post-test mark	Target item	Pre-test mark	Post-test mark
inquest	2	5	murderer	5	5
gutting	1	5	suggest	3	4
murder	5	5	pile	2	5
suppose	5	4	mugging	1	5
crutch	1	2	explosion	3	5
nod	1	4	executed	5	5
guilty	5	5	accident	5	5
suicide	5	5	victim	5	5
path	5	4	verdict	1	5
license	3	5	fainted	1	3
innocent	5	5	wipe	2	5
fool	5	5	lawyer	5	5
robbery	5	5	identify	5	5
heroine	4	5	fingerprint	5	5
sane	4	5	pump	2	2
evidence	5	5	alibi	5	5
bullet	5	5	bandit	3	5
stare	4	5	cop	5	5
trial	5	5	mourning	1	3
property	4	4	scared	5	5
prisoner	5	5	trigger	3	5
coroner	2	5	wig	2	5
witness	2	5			

Appendix D

a) Participant sentences for items marked with 4 or 5 (indicated in the upper index) on the pre-test

accident[5]: I saw a car accident.
alibi[5]: She has a really strong alibi.
bullet[5]: There was a bullet in the chest of the dead body.
cop[5]: The cops caught him.
evidence[5]: She has evidence against that person.
executed[5]: The executed died. (? semantically questionable)
fingerprint[5]: They found his fingerprint on the weapon.
fool[5]: I hope I'm not a fool. (translates 'fool' as 'stupid, ignorant' [buta] into Hungarian)
guilty[5]: I'm sure he's guilty.
heroine[4]: Heroine is a drug. (incorrect meaning)
identify[5]: *fails to provide a sentence but explained the meaning in Hungarian*

innocent[5]: He has evidence that she's innocent.
lawyer[5]: He has a really good lawyer if he wins the trial.
murder[5]: Someone murdered Ann.
murderer[5]: I have evidence that he's a murderer.
path[5]: My path is different from yours.
prisoner[5]: I will visit a prisoner tomorrow.
property[4]: He wants his own property.
robbery[5]: There was a robbery in the supermarket.
sane[4]: Sane people don't murder anyone.
scared[5]: I am scared of that person.
stare[4]: A group of people were staring at me.
suicide[5]: He committed suicide.
suppose[5]: He lies, I suppose.
trial[5]: The trial will be tomorrow.
victim[5]: Don't act like a victim.

b) Participant sentences for items marked with 4 or 5 (indicated in the upper index) on the post-test

accident[5]: No-one died in the accident.
alibi[5]: He had a strong alibi.
bandit[5]: There were five bandits at the shopping center, and they all had guns.
bullet[5]: There wasn't a bullet in his gun.
cop[5]: I called the cops when I saw two men with knives.
coroner[5]: The coroner went to see the dead body.
evidence[5]: There's evidence against him.
executed[5]: He was executed because he killed four people.
explosion[5]: *Explosion is really loud and scary.
fingerprint[5]: They found a fingerprint on the dead body.
fool[5]: I think I'm not a fool.
guilty[5]: She was found guilty.
gutting[5]: The gutting of a city is a hard thing to plan.
heroine[5]: The girl rescued a child. She became a heroine.
identify[5]: It was hard to identify her because she was wearing a mask.
innocent[5]: I think she's innocent. She was with me during the robbery.
inquest[5]: The inquest is over, but there is no evidence.
lawyer[5]: A lawyer is well-paid. ? (The participant then gives a Hungarian equivalent)
license[5]: He drives without a license.
mugging[5]: Mugging is when somebody steals something from another person.
murder[5]: It wasn't suicide, it was a murder.
murderer[5]: The murderer's weapon was a knife.
nod[4]: He didn't answer my question, he just nodded.
path[4]: We went on different paths.
pile[4]: the participant mistook it for 'pale'
prisoner[5]: I met a prisoner in the jail.
property[4]: He wanted to make his own property.
robbery[5]: I survived a robbery.
sane[5]: *Sane person doesn't kill others.
scared[5]: I'm scared of ? the heights.
stare[5]: He stared at me. It was really scary.
suggest[4]: I suggest you *to get an easier job.

suicide[5]: She committed suicide with a gun.
suppose[4]: It was an accident, I suppose.
trial[5]: He won the trial because there wasn't evidence against him.
trigger[5]: I pulled the trigger.
verdict[4]: The verdict was that it was an accident.
victim[5]: His victims were young and beautiful ladies.
wig[5]: She wore a blonde wig.
wipe[4]: He wiped his face with a handkerchief.
witness[5]: There were two witnesses, but they couldn't recognize the murderer.

Appendix E

Table 5. Comparison table of target item sentences on pre- and post-tests

Target item	Pre-test	Post-test
accident	I saw a car accident.	No-one died in the accident.
alibi	She has a really strong alibi.	He had a strong alibi.
bullet	There was a bullet in the chest of the dead body.	There wasn't a bullet in his gun.
cop	The cops caught him.	I called the cops when I saw two men with knives.
evidence	She has evidence against that person.	There's evidence against him.
executed	The executed died.	He was executed because he killed four people.
fingerprint	They found his fingerprint on the weapon.	They found a fingerprint on the dead body.
fool	I hope I'm not a fool.	I think I'm not a fool.
guilty	I'm sure he's guilty.	She was found guilty.
heroine	Heroine is a drug.	The girl rescued a child. She became a heroine.
identify	fails to provide a sentence but explained the meaning in Hungarian	It was hard to identify her because she was wearing a mask.
innocent	He has evidence that she's innocent.	I think she's innocent. She was with me during the robbery.
lawyer	He has a really good lawyer if he wins the trial.	A lawyer is well-paid.
murder	Someone murdered Ann.	It wasn't suicide, it was a murder.
murderer	I have evidence that he's a murderer.	The murderer's weapon was a knife.
path	My path is different from yours.	We went on different paths.
prisoner	I will visit a prisoner tomorrow.	I met a prisoner in the jail.
property	He wants his own property.	He wanted to make his own property.

robbery	There was a robbery in the supermarket.	I survived a robbery.
sane	Sane people don't murder anyone.	*Sane person doesn't kill others.
scared	I am scared of that person.	I'm scared of the heights.
stare	A group of people were staring at me.	He stared at me. It was really scary.
suicide	He committed suicide.	She committed suicide with a gun.
suppose	He lies, I suppose.	It was an accident, I suppose.
trial	The trial will be tomorrow.	He won the trial because there wasn't evidence against him.
victim	Don't act like a victim.	His victims were young and beautiful ladies.

The use of multimodal narratives to explore English language learners' identity construction and re-construction

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The present paper aims to provide an insight into English language learners' beliefs, their ideal foreign language self and their language learner identity formation and transformation presented during the analysis of a set of visual and written narratives. The research involved 56 pupils who were asked to draw two portraits of themselves, one before being able to use English and one after, when they can already use the language. In order to better understand and interpret the drawings, students were also asked to provide a short, written description or explanation of their drawings. Results show that development in English as a foreign language comes with physical, professional, relational, experimental and psychological changes. Moreover, students' answers suggest that they consider English language knowledge to be valuable and needed for understanding different applications, movies, TV-series, songs, books and other cultures. They believed that lack of English language knowledge excludes them from participating in such activities.

Keywords: learner identity, multimodal analysis, ideal self, envisioning, EFL

1. Introduction

There is an extensive body of research on learner identity, identity construction and learner beliefs (see e.g., Wenger, 2000; Danielewicz, 2001; Luk & Lin, 2007; Kalaja & Barcelos, 2013; Dufva et al., 2011; Inözü, 2018). Wenger refers to identity as a "lived experience of belonging (or not belonging). A strong identity involves deep connections with others through shared histories and experiences, reciprocity, affection and mutual commitments" (Wenger, 2000, p. 239). Learning other languages involves the construction of new identities, since using a foreign language will re-construct and shape the individual's sense of self (Benzehaf, 2021).

According to Danielewicz, identity is "our understanding of who we are and who we think other people are" (Danielewicz, 2001, p. 10). Identity defines how individuals understand their relationship to the outside world, and how this relationship is constructed across time and space. Identity is not seen as something fixed and finished, but it is seen to be in constant change, therefore it is unstable and complex. It is inevitable for individuals to compare themselves to other individuals within the broader society, and to adapt themselves to specific rules, behaviour and principles that a culture or a society holds. This means that one's identity is in constant negotiation and formation (Norton, 2013; Trent, 2012).

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What is learner identity? This concept is defined as the process of becoming and being a learner. Learner identity is all about understanding how learners' emotions, motivations, actions, thoughts and learning are interconnected (see e.g., Barcelos, 2006; Dufva et al., 2011; Kalaja & Barcelos, 2013; Inözü, 2018). Dufva and her colleagues (2011, p. 72) state that "in articulating their beliefs about languages and language learning, people draw on, first, their own personal experiences (their unique "language learning history"), second, socially and culturally available (verbal and visual) representations, and third, various situational factors that are present in the situation at hand (including the task and the modality of the expression)".

Luk and Lin emphasize, a person's identity is "highly fluid, sometimes incoherent, fragmented, multiple, and conflicting" (Luk & Lin 2007, p. 21). Moreover, Block (2003, p. 4) also claims that being in contact with other languages and "a new and different cultural setting causes irreversible destabilization of the individuals' sense of self". In other words, it is impossible for a learner's identity not to change while acquiring an additional language, therefore a possible construction and reconstruction happens during learning and acquiring this foreign language. Inözü best summarizes the content of current research studies pointing out that "beliefs bear traces of these multiple contexts, revealing thus their contextual, dynamic and social character" (Inözü, 2018, p. 179).

A number of studies have used interviews, questionnaires, and students' written accounts to discover learner identity and learners' beliefs towards foreign languages. Among these researchers, Ahn (2019) used multimodal analysis to explore students' language learner identity construction and reconstruction. According to her, students' identity changes happen at multiple dimensions, therefore the investigation of their transformations needs to be done through a multimodal analysis, namely to use a combination of different semiotic resources, such as written narratives, images, drawings, even sound or taste, as datasets.

As Brooks (2009) maintains "drawing involves not only one's imagination, but also one's perception of the past and present experiences and observations" (quoted in Inözü, 2018, p. 177). In addition to drawings, written narratives and other modes of communication also help the creation of meaning, through which a student's language learner identity formation can be followed.

In a similar effort, the present research also uses multimodal analysis to discover Hungarian native speaker students' English foreign language learner identity construction, motivations and beliefs. Through the examination of students' self-portraits and their written descriptions, we can get a deeper insight into students' future self (regarding English language use) which mirrors their expectations, needs, attitudes, and motivations. Exploring the way students create their language learner identity clearly gives clues to language teachers on how to understand their motivations and attitude towards a second language. In our opinion, this motivation and desire that a language learner carries and his/her vision about himself/herself when the second language is acquired can be captured using multimodal analysis. Moreover, the task itself, to draw their future selves, might help students to create and establish their vision of the future, which might contribute to their motivation in learning and becoming more proficient in the language.

2. The use of narratives and multimodal analysis

The use of narratives as a research tool has been an important part of humanities and social sciences. Narratives have a fundamental role in the construction of the human self and in the construction of identities. De Fina and Johnstone (2015, pp. 159-160) speak about a "narrative turn" (see also Kalaja, 2015; Barkhuizen, 2011, 2013; Benson, 2014; Barkhuizen et al., 2014), which took place in the 1970s as a challenging alternative to quantitative research methods prevalent in research methodology. From the 1990s narrative-based studies have exponentially grown across the different fields of social sciences, anthropology, psychology, education and applied linguistic research. Although using narratives as methods of collecting data has received several criticisms, its impact "has been generally positive, as it has opened the door to more in-depth qualitative-oriented analysis" (De Fina & Johnstone 2015, p. 160).

In analyzing narratives, the focus can vary from establishing facts to understanding personal, subjective experiences or identity discursive constructions as produced by learners or teachers during their talk, writing or other modes of communication (Kalaja et al. 2013 p. 106).

Current research trends focus on how using narratives can be further developed. One such development suggestion is multimodality, namely the use of a multimodal narrative analysis that takes into account and captures different forms of communication, the interaction of different semiotic modes (such as texts, sounds, images, etc.) combined in a given discourse.

According to van Leeuwen (2015, p. 447) "multimodality designates a phenomenon rather than a theory or a method – the phenomenon that a discourse is almost always multimodal". Multimodal analysis thus focuses on the similarities and differences of these different semiotic resources and the way they are combined and integrated in multimodal texts. Current interest in multimodality is a result of current ways of communication, making use of multimodal resources such as graphics, images, illustrations etc. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) explained that each semiotic mode – written and visual – has its possibilities but also limitations as some things can only be expressed visually, while others rather verbally. Therefore, they suggest that "it might be advisable to complement one type of narrative data with another type or by other types of data altogether, such as interviews, questionnaires and classroom observations" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 46).

Kalaja and Pitkänen-Huhta also underpin the effectiveness of multimodal analysis; as they claim, "visuals are often thought to offer participants an alternative to verbal means to express their experiences and feeling and to reflect on their language practices, identities and learning and teaching processes" (Kalaja & Pitkänen-Huhta, 2018, p. 3).

When reviewing studies using narratives and/or multimodal analysis as a method of research in learners' language identity and learner beliefs we need to take into account the work of Paula Kalaja and her colleagues from Finland, as well as research conducted by So-Yeon Ahn in South Korea.

Kalaja, Alanen and Dufva (2008) explored the possibilities offered by visual narratives by studying first-year university students. Students were asked to draw a portrait of themselves as learners of English (This is what I look like as a learner of English) and they were also asked to interpret their drawings in a few sentences. Later the same research team, Kalaja, Dufva and Alanen (2013) also used drawings and self-portraits "as a less traditional research methodology" (2013, p. 105) in order to examine the learning and teaching of English.

Ahn and West (2016) explored how South Korean learners depict and construct their vision of the identity of good English teachers. The authors used both written and visual narratives to investigate teacher identity and the ideologies related to the notion of a good English teacher. Asking for learners' comments along with the use of visual narratives ensured that the interpretation of the drawings was accurate. Later, Ahn (2019) used multimodal analysis to explore language learner identity construction of university students in South Korea. Data collection involved the drawing of 2 self-portraits, before studying English and what they would look like after mastering the language, both portraits were complemented by written commentaries. Ahn (2019) draws the conclusion that multimodal analysis proves to be effective in getting valuable insights into "the complex dimensions that comprise the English learner identity and the meaning of learning English" (2019, p. 134).

Kalaja (2015) conducted a study among Finnish university students but this time she focused on envisioning the future rather than recollecting past events and experiences. In this study visual narratives were used for envisioning, an issue related to motivation (see Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014). At this point, it is necessary to explain the connection between vision and motivation, the motivational dimension of vision. The current socio-dynamic period of foreign language learning motivation research is framed by Dörnyei's self-system theory (2005, 2009). Within this dynamic approach the human self and human action is linked and "the notion of possible selves offers the most powerful, and at the same time the most versatile, motivational self-mechanism" (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014, p. 11). Dörnyei's self-system (2005, 2009) is a complex theory comprising the future/futuristic ideas learners have about themselves, what they would or wouldn't like to become and how the target language can help them in attaining their ideal future self. From an educational perspective, learners' ideal self, which represents their hopes and aspirations, are of utmost importance. As Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014, p. 12) state "someone who has a powerful ideal self […] can use this self-image as a potent self-guide with considerable motivational power", thus the envisioning of the ideal future self has the capacity to motivate action.

Narratives can therefore be used not only to talk about past events and memories but also to imagine and visualize the future. They help individuals to recall and preserve memories, to connect people with their past and present and envision their future (Barkhuizen, 2013, p. 4).

According to the Oxford Learner's Dictionaries online a vision in this sense is "the ability to think about or plan the future with great imagination and intelligence"[2] or, based on the Oxford powered Lexico site, it also carries the meaning of "a vivid mental image, especially a fanciful one of the future"[3]. Based on Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014, p. 9), it is "this directional nature of the vision, the pull towards an imagined future state that makes the concept useful within the context of human motivation, because the attractive visionary target mobilizes present potential in order to move in the preferred future direction, that is to change in order to appropriate the future". This is how vision and drawing future-self portraits might capture the psychological concept of possible selves or changing learner identity (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014, p. 20).

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[2] https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/vision?q=vision
[3] https://www.lexico.com/definition/vision

3. Data collection procedure and analysis

In order to explore the construction and possible reconstruction of Hungarian native speaker students' English foreign language identity, their self-portraits and written accounts were analysed.

A total of 56 elementary school students participated in the research: 20 students from the 8th grade, 18 from the 9th grade and another 18 from the 10th grade. All the students are Hungarian native-speakers and learn in one of the prestigious schools in Csíkszereda (Miercurea-Ciuc). All the students started learning English as a foreign language in the 3rd grade, so by the time of the research they had been studying English for 5 to 7 years. All the participants have two English classes a week. Based on their teachers' account, the students' level of English ranged between pre-intermediate and intermediate, therefore when the students were asked to provide a written explanation of their drawings, they were allowed to use either English (the target language) or Hungarian (their mother tongue).

Data collection was carried out during April and May 2021. Unfortunately, in this period, due to the COVID-19 situation, most of the schools in Romania were required to perform education online. Therefore, in all cases the form masters were contacted and asked for help in distributing the task. The instructions were sent online to the students and they were asked to complete it, and then, take a photo of it and send it back. A document was prepared with two columns and students were asked to draw self-portraits to present themselves 'before' and 'after' mastering (being able to use) the language. The instruction was the following: *Please draw how you see yourself before you learnt English/when you couldn't speak English and how you see yourself in the future when you have already learnt English* (*Me when I didn't speak English* and *Me in the future, when I can speak English*). No clues were given to students how to complete the task; anything they drew was done based on their personal beliefs and experiences throughout the years of learning the language. When the self-portraits were done, students were asked to give a detailed written explanation of the two self-portraits.

We took into account the size, the posture and the salience of figures and items in the self-portraits and the all the associated objects in the picture as well as the narratives embedded in bubbles or without bubbles. Self-portraits were analysed based on the multiple dimensions discussed by Ahn (2019), namely: emotional, physical, vocational, relational and experimental. First, the differences between the 'before/after' drawings were examined in an effort to identify those territories where change can be detected, then self-portraits were also checked for common features that might shape a general belief that these students hold. After analysing the self-portraits, the students' narrative accounts that were to explain their drawings were also examined. Some additional information could be decoded regarding their experiences and beliefs and how they see themselves as English language learners. Through this multimodal analysis, we could get a deeper insight into the students' vision, future language-self and their beliefs regarding the use or non-use of English as a foreign language.

4. Results and discussion

In what follows results will be presented and discussed along the multiple dimensions listed above: emotional, physical, vocational, relational and experiential ones (see Ahn, 2019). The aforementioned dimensions refer to their everyday meaning, while the data analysis aims to exemplify and clarify them below.

4.1 Emotional or psychological changes

The most predominant change was emotional or psychological, as most students expressed their mood changes from sadness to happiness. Out of the 56 respondents, 22 students expressed emotional changes in their self-portraits (eleven 8th graders, seven 9th graders and four 10th graders).
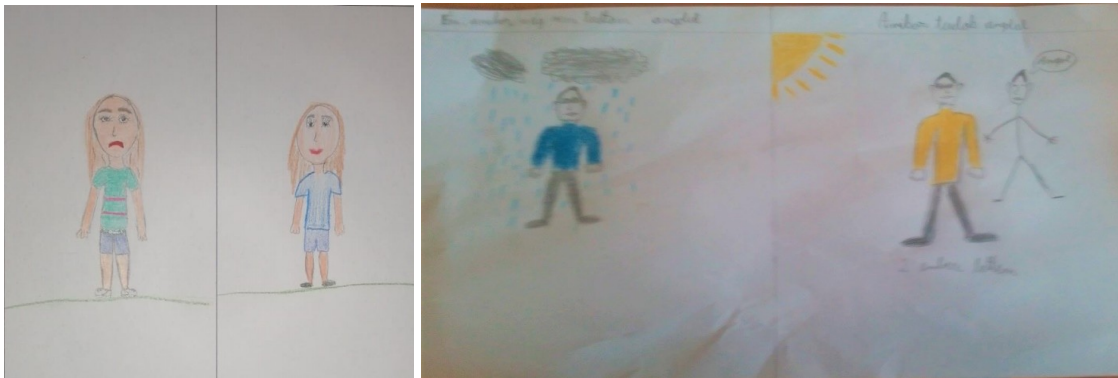
Figure 1 & 2. Emotional changes from sad to happy

In Figure 1 and 2 above you can see some examples in which emotional changes predominate. While Figure 1 is simpler, the student's face changing from sad to happy, in Figure 2 a student expressed his emotions by the means of weather conditions. His past or current language learner identity is expressed with the use of dark clouds and rain. We can see how colours also add to the meaning-making process, as the student used dark colours to present how he feels about not knowing English. As opposed to the 'before' part, in the second picture we can see the use of bright colours to express the happiness of the student. The sun and sunshine mirror the satisfaction that is the result of his being able to speak English. From his written explanation we could find out that the image of the student accompanied by another ghost-like person in the back was meant to suggest that he has basically two identities, one Hungarian and one English, which unite in one person. The caption written by the student "I have become two people" also suggests that being able to speak two languages means having double identity. If we take a closer look at the portrait, some physical changes can also be detected, namely, in size, expressing physical growth and the fact that acquiring a language takes time.

4.2 Physical changes

Regarding the size of the body and the clothing, many students drew themselves taller in the 'after' part and their appearance suggested a more mature person. Out of the 56 participants, 19 students indicated some kind of physical change in their 'after' portraits.

Figure 3 & 4. Physical changes associated with language learning

As shown in Figure 3 and 4, both students see themselves as children or youngsters when they did not speak the language; they see themselves as people with limitations, doubts and questions. This is expressed by the use of many question marks around their body and in the thought bubble as well. In the after pictures, when they are able to use the language, they are depicted as mature people, with their hair arranged, wearing make-up, elegant clothes and even high-heels (see Figure 3). These after pictures also suggest, similarly to Figure 2 above, that language learning takes time and brings about developmental changes – from a young childish identity to a mature grown-up person. The question marks also disappear from the after parts suggesting that instead of being lost and insecure, they are more self-confident adults who can address the audience or their conversation partner in English. Examining the written accounts, it also turned out that the stylish, classy look, in case of Figure 4, also referred to the students' language knowledge. As she explained: "It is more stylish and classier to use well elaborated English sentences". Besides the self-portraits depicted in Figure 3 and 4, many other learners presented their identity construction through physical growth and becoming adults dressed in business-style clothes. Therefore, changes in age, hair-style, look and clothing might also be related not only to growth in terms of age, but also professionally.

4.3 Vocational changes

Respondents' written accounts helped us better understand their self-portraits. Out of the 56 participants, only 2 students indicated the importance of English in their life in terms of an easier life, profession and job, writing that "English takes you forward in life", "you can get a job more easily", "you can get a job abroad". The small number of students reflecting on the job or work-related advantages of speaking English can probably be explained by the respondents'

age. The age of participating students ranged between 14 and 16 and it might be possible that the use of English from a vocational perspective is not among their utmost concerns.

The two students whose self-portraits include such a vocational dimension were 10th graders. One of the students drew and wrote that when he did not know English, it was out of the question to think and plan outside of school (see Figure 5 'before' part). In the 'after' part of the self-portrait, he drew himself sitting in an office at a table and working with computers and papers. He also explained that he imagined himself as an employee of the Apple company where he had a good position and was a respected person (see Figure 5 'after' part).
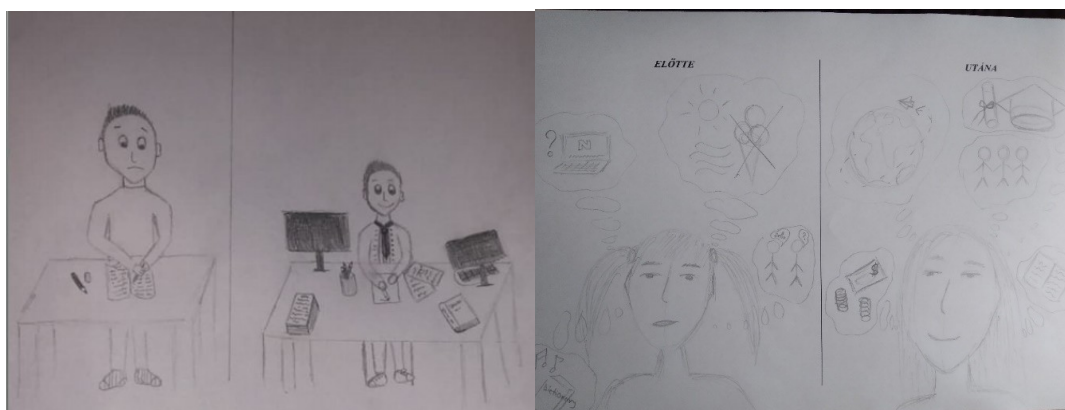
Figure 5 & 6. Vocational changes

The girl, whose self-portraits can be seen in Figure 6, drew a rather complex picture which suggests that before learning English she couldn't understand online contents when surfing the internet, couldn't buy ice-cream while on vacation (possibly abroad), couldn't have a conversation with foreign people and needed to dictionary to understand song lyrics. The more mature woman, as she presented her future-self, is shown as having money (or a well-paid job), being able to travel all over the world, graduating university, having friends or being among (possibly foreign) people and being able to read books, probably in English. Therefore, being able to speak English, in the girls' perspective, means traveling, relations, money, studying, and success in education.

4.4 Relational changes

As it could be seen in Figure 6 above, conversation with and being around foreign people seems to be important for many of the respondents. Next to the emotional and physical changes, relational changes could often be traced among the self-portraits gathered from participants. 22 students' portraits indicate such change. In the vision of numerous students, learning English equals with a wide social network, therefore from our participants' perspective, being able to speak English is shown to offer the chance to establish relationships with people from other cultures. Due to the ability to speak English, the portraits of desperate and lonely students were transformed into confident individuals engaged in active conversations with people from other countries. Relational changes are most often visualized by being alone in the 'before' part and being surrounded by people in the 'after' part of the self-portraits.

Figure 7 & 8. Relational changes

Taking a look at Figure 7 and 8 above, we can have a glimpse of how these relationships with foreign people might form the language learner identity of our students. As we can see in both portraits, the 'before' part presents learners who are alone, searching for words, with the tips of the mouth turned downward, suggesting sadness. In Figure 7 we can see a puzzled girl, stan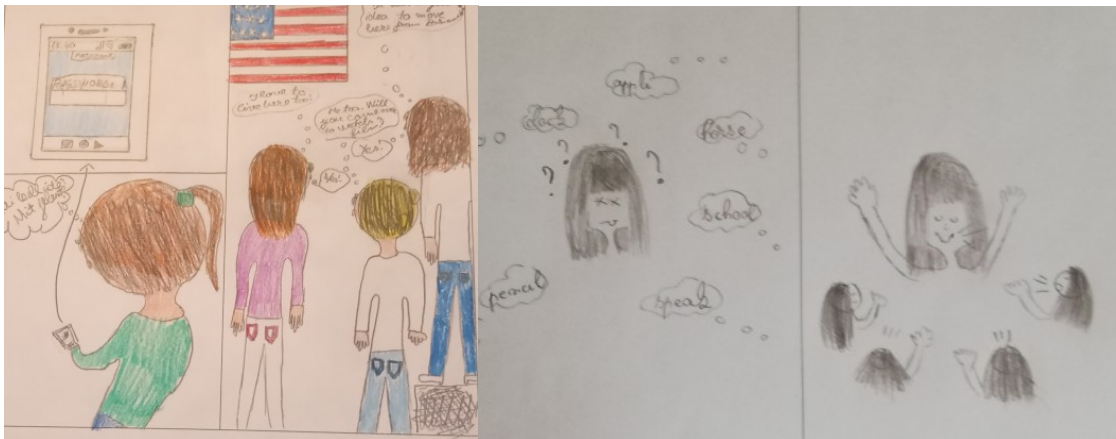ding alone with her back to the audience. She is trying to use her phone but, according to what she wrote in the speech bubbles, she couldn't manage using it. The student presented herself as a person who cannot succeed alone, without English language knowledge. The text she wrote into the speech bubble is: "What do I have to write here? What does it mean?". In the written explanation she stated that she "can't even use an application on her own". However, in the 'after' part of the portrait the student drew herself surrounded by other people and expressed her willingness to move to the USA. She seems confident about establishing relationships in the States as well.

In the second set of portraits (see Figure 8), we can observe the struggle of a school girl. Instead of two open eyes, there are two X letters which might suggest that she is puzzled, as she does not understand the meanings of the words in English surrounding her. As opposed to this picture, in the 'after' section, we can see a happy girl with her arms open and waving. She drew herself as being in the middle of a group of people who are talking with one another.

Self-portraits visualizing these relational changes suggest that the students who drew these portraits perceive the ability of speaking English as access to the world and as a possibility to establish relationships with people from abroad. An earlier study published by Dégi and Kovasch (2021), which analysed university students' motivations for learning English language, found that the participants wanted to become global citizens rather than integrate with a native speaking community (2021, p. 581). Our participants' drawings, especially those in which relational and experiential changes can be traced, also tend to offer an image of global citizens, as students drew their envisioned selves as being surrounded by foreign people, talking to them in English. Moreover, participants' visual and written accounts often contain the image of a globe, or the notion of the world. However, in Figure 7, the student's wish to move to the US might also suggest some willingness to integrate into the native speaking community.

4.5 Experiential changes

The visual and written narratives which were grouped under the experiential category contained images and expressions related to travel, shopping, online and broadcast media consumption, listening to music, surfing the internet, etc. Out of the total 56 narratives received 13 respondents visualized or worded such experiential changes.

Figure 9 & 10. Experiential changes

Figure 9 above was created by a 10th grader. Again, it is a complex drawing in terms of the different dimensions along which changes can be observed. While the 'before' part presents a young girl with a puzzled look on her face, her swirly eyes also suggest dizziness or disorientation. In contrast, the 'after' part show a mature woman with clear eyes, and images in her brain might suggest the things that she can do after being able to speak English, namely travelling, using the internet and reading; the bright lightbulb is suggestive of knowledge, probably active use of her English language knowledge. The student's written account explains that she considers English important, as it offers plenty of new possibilities, such as making new friends, traveling around the world, seeing the sights. In order to have access to these possibilities, she wrote, speaking English is a key factor, as it is necessary in order to build relationships with people speaking other languages. She also mentioned that her biggest dream is to travel the world, however she wants to speak English well not only because of this, but because she would like to develop personally and she would also like to learn another world language.

    As it was previously mentioned, media consumption (watching TV, listening to music, surfing the internet, etc.) was grouped under the dimension of experiential changes. There were respondents who emphasized that speaking English contributes to the understanding and use of different online applications, programs or websites. Figure 10 above is another example visualizing experiential changes. It was done by a 9th grader who, in her written account, explained that speaking English is necessary to understand the lyrics of songs, as well as certain applications. She further mentioned that it is important for one to speak English in order to find his/her own way in life, in order to meet new cultures, make new friends and to read and understand world literature. In the 'before' part we can see a black and white image of a little girl who looks worried and sad. In the 'after' part, however, we can see a young woman surrounded by all the things she can do using English. The objects and symbols around her

suggest what speaking English means for her, the advantages of language knowledge as she perceives them – knowledge (brain), traveling (globe), listening to music (musical notes, guitar, headset, Youtube), new friends and relationships (colourful people).

5. Conclusions

As the self-portraits and their written descriptions have shown, the students who participated in this study have a positive attitude towards the English language. The 'after' parts of respondents' self-portraits express students' beliefs about language knowledge and motivations to speak English. Interestingly, getting a job abroad and thus earning more money was not among the most often occurring topics; rather, the students emphasized traveling and establishing relationships, interacting with people from other cultures. Some of the students pointed out that articles, scientific content and information in general is more accessible in English than in Hungarian, therefore English language knowledge also contributes to the quality of students' essays and home assignments. Another student pointed out that the literature on some subjects is richer in English and many expressions are available only in English. A number of students brought up the topic of holidays; these students would like to become more fluent in English so as to avoid or overcome foreign language speaking anxiety when travelling abroad. A number of students are motivated to learn English by the pursuit of free time and leisure activities such as listening to music, watching movies and videos distributed on several social media sites.

As the above presented results show, our students' language learner identity construction can be traced along multiple dimensions: emotional, relational, physical, vocational and experiential ones. Out of these dimensions, the emotional and relational changes were the most frequently observed; however, as could be seen in the examples above, many self-portraits were rather complex, expressing changes over several dimensions.

A general idea that could sum up the students' visions of their future selves is that being able to speak English makes them happy and confident. Also, the drawings acknowledge the fact that language learning takes time, as presented through the physical changes recorded between the 'before' and 'after' pictures.

The multiple aspects of the development of a language learner's identity recorded in the drawings show the potential of multimodal analysis as a tool for examining the way how students construct and reconstruct their learner identity. As we discussed earlier, visual images accompanied by their written description have allowed us to get a deeper insight and understanding of the students' language learner identity. Especially in the case of the more abstract drawings written accounts helped to understand students' intentions and ideas.

Applying multimodal analysis has not only allowed us, teachers and researchers, to get an insight into students' language identity, as well as to learn about how they envision their future selves and what motivational factors appear in their future self-images. This task – asking students to visualize their future – is also said to have a motivational role, by providing driving force that can encourage the participants to pursue the goals they envision in their future self-images (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014). Multimodal analysis does not only contribute to uncover students' identity constructs and beliefs, but the exercise that the students were given may also help them in creating their vision for the future. This relationship between vision,

language identity and motivation can also offer a fresh perspective on language teaching, where teachers are encouraged to adapt this vision-based approach to their specific classroom contexts.

More and more scholars are involved in this line of research concerning vision, future self-images and the motivational side of vision, however there is a need for more empirical classroom-based research in order to see how theoretical insights and proposals can be turned into action and integrated into the teaching practice. Regarding the present study, it would be interesting to see the reactions of these learners after reviewing their portraits one year later, or at certain time intervals. They might want to update or reaffirm their visions, thus ensuring that their self-image is regularly activated – one of the conditions Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014, p. 14) mention as a prerequisite in generating a vision that has the capacity to lead to action.

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From blended to online: The story of a pre-service teacher training course on integrating information and communication technology into ELT

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The paper describes the process of designing a pre-service teacher training course on the use of information and communication technologies in ELT and shows how the transition to online education caused by the Covid-19 pandemic affected it. The course was originally designed as a blended one with a focus on exploiting ICT for effective skills development in face-to-face lessons and online home assignments. Due to the pandemic in 2020, it moved online, which created an unexpected opportunity for experimenting with ICT inclusion in fully online ELT and modifying the course accordingly. While the original focus on skills development was kept, new content areas, such as online assessment, gamification and interactions in online environments were added. The process described as well as the participating students' post-course reflections refined our understanding of online course design and ICT use and is hoped to provide guidelines for similar experiments in other teacher education contexts.

1. Introduction

Integrating information and communication technologies (ICT) into foreign language teaching has been given considerable attention in most Hungarian pre-service teacher education programmes for the past decade, as it is generally assumed that technology use has the potential for facilitating language learning. Yet, a series of lesson observations made by teacher educators in the EFL teacher education programme at Eötvös Loránd University showed that student teachers often considered ICT a simple add-on to teaching and they used it primarily to entertain their learners – a problem called the 'theory vacuum problem' by Thornbury (2011) and observed by several researchers and teacher educators in a variety of teaching contexts (Graham et al., 2012). Based on these observations and the assumption that ICT inclusion in teacher education programmes, especially in subject-specific methodological courses supports student teachers' meaningful ICT use during and after their pre-service training (Dringó-Horváth & Gonda, 2018; Öveges & Csizér, 2018), a blended course was designed in 2019 at Eötvös Loránd University (Major & Szabó, 2021), the main aim of which was to develop student teachers' understanding of how pedagogically motivated ICT use can contribute to effective language practice with special emphasis on skills development.

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However, in March 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting urge to move online, the blended course was turned into an online one from one day to another. Despite this abrupt change the course proved to be a useful one according to the participating students' end-semester feedback, but it became obvious that real online teaching offering meaningful learning experiences is different from emergency remote teaching (ERT) – a term proposed by Hodges et al. (2020) for courses offered online in response to a crisis - due to the lack of a careful design process responding to the specific circumstances of online teaching (Hodges et al., 2020; Rapanta et al., 2020). The blended course was, therefore, redesigned between June 2020 and February 2021, and it was advertised and taught as an online one in spring 2021. While its structure remained the same, its content was modified according to the perceived needs of EFL teachers teaching essentially online. This meant that the original emphasis on skills development was kept, and new topics, such as online assessment, gamification and interactions in online environments were added.

The main aim of this paper is to give an account of the process of designing and teaching the online course on the use of ICT in ELT. This was motivated by the realisation that though the transition to ERT at the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic posed challenges for teachers and teacher educators (Hodges et al., 2020; Kóris & Pál, 2021; Peters et al., 2020), it also led to plenty of new discoveries and created a huge pool of experience to draw on in the future (Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2020; Ellis et al., 2020; Grek & Landri, 2021; Kidd & Murray, 2020; Peters et al., 2020). The online course is an example for one such 'forced' innovation, and its description will hopefully encourage teacher educators to experiment with their courses and to adopt an 'innovative stance' (Ellis et al., 2020, p. 569) regardless of the presence of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The other aim of the paper is to provide a small-scale evaluation of the course by presenting the participants' feedback and their reflections on their learning. It has to be noted, though, that these comprise the opinion of a small number of students; consequently, the conclusions drawn will be small in scope, even though the ideas that emerged gave useful insights into the students' experience.

To refer to the different tools and technologies explored in the course, the terms 'Information and Communication Technology' (ICT) and 'learning technologies' will be used interchangeably. This is based on the assumption that they are synonyms and both 'refer to any digital technology that can be used in the language classroom to support student learning' (Hockly, 2016, p. 5). The present paper, however, extends this definition to technologies used *in and outside* the language classroom as the tasks in the course are intended to model and enhance out-of-class language learning, too.

2. Background to the study

2. 1 The structure of pre-service English teacher education in Hungary

Full-time pre-service English teacher education programmes at the university where the course was designed prepare students to teach English in 12-grade public schools to learners aged 6 (grade 1) to 19 (grade 12). The programmes are of four different kinds. Three of them comprise 10, 11 or 12 semesters, each leading to a different degree in ELT: the 10- or 11-semester programmes are for prospective primary school teachers teaching in grades 1 to 8, and the 11-

or 12-semester programmes are for prospective secondary school teachers teaching in grades 5 to 12. The fourth programme is a 2-semester MA programme in English Language Instruction for students who will become teachers at language schools.

2.2 The place of ICT in ELT in the curriculum of full-time pre-service English teacher education programmes before 2020

At Eötvös Loránd University courses focusing on the methodology of English language teaching are offered from the 5th semester on the 10-, 11- or 12-semester programmes, and they are part of the 2-semester MA programme quite intensively in both semesters. However, before 2020, no methodology courses had ICT inclusion in their focus, though some ICT tools were occasionally used in some courses. The two learning management systems (LMSs), Canvas and Moodle, provided by the university were also quite commonly used, and even if many of their features were never exploited, students were familiar with them. In this period the only learning session with a direct focus on the use of ICT in ELT was one 45-minute lecture given as part of a methodology lecture series in the secondary and the MA in English Language Instruction programmes. Students studying to become primary school teachers did not have any opportunities to take a course on ICT use in ELT.

3. Course design: The blended course as the foundation for the online one

As it was explained earlier, a blended course on the use of ICT in ELT was designed in 2019 by two teacher educators (Major & Szabó, 2021) to fill in the niche posed by the apparent lack of sufficient ELT-specific ICT training in the pre-service teacher education programmes they were teaching for. After one month of being taught in a blended form, the course became a fully online one in March 2020. Though the online course was different from the blended one in several ways, it owes its design to the blended one, which will be overviewed in the following section.

3.1 Environment analysis

Environment analysis was carried out by identifying the most important factors inherent in the specific environment in which the course was designed. These were related to the students, the teachers and the teaching situation, all fundamentally affecting the design of the course (Nation & Macalister, 2010). Four such factors were identified, out of which the first two clearly indicated the need to introduce the course into the curriculum, while the third and the fourth ones created a framework for the course. The first such factor was the apparent lack of focus on pedagogically motivated ICT integration into ELT in the EFL teacher education programmes at Eötvös Loránd University. Even though students had courses on ICT use as part of their general pedagogy studies, subject-specific methodological training, found to be essential by research on the effective use of ICT (Öveges & Csizér, 2018), was missing from their programme. Therefore, it seemed quite likely that though technology is used in a variety of ways for recreational and other purposes by them, they are not prepared to use it for teaching and learning. This was confirmed by the second factor, which emerged from a series of lesson

observations by teacher educators who found that student teachers primarily considered ICT to be a tool to entertain their students in their lessons.

The third factor was the course designers' approach to teaching and learning, which, together with other contextual elements, determine to a large extent how ICT is integrated (Lim, 2002). This approach was, therefore, informed by the constructivist view of education and Vygotsky's sociocultural approach (1978), according to which teaching and learning are seen as a collaborative building process in which teachers and learners actively construct knowledge through discussions and social interactions. In this framework for effective learning to occur teachers should provide students with a range of opportunities to meaningfully engage with the learning tasks, thus encouraging their deep approach to learning (Biggs & Tang, 2011). From the perspective of the course design in focus, and, more specifically, from that of task design, this meant that in order for effective deep learning to happen, ICT use had to be embedded in collaborative and interactive tasks.

Finally, the fourth factor affecting the design of the course was the designer's approach to foreign language teaching. According to this, foreign language teaching aims to help students develop complex abilities to interact effectively and appropriately which requires them to develop their intercultural communicative competence involving their linguistic, pragmatic, discourse and strategic competence as well as their fluency and their ability to communicate effectively in cross-cultural situations (Fantini, 2020). Apart from that, they have to master language systems, such as vocabulary grammar and pronunciation, and have to develop their language skills (Hedge, 2000).

The complexity of language development and the diverse needs of the students meant that a narrower segment of language development had to be selected for modelling meaningful ICT use. It was, therefore, decided that the focus of the course will be narrowed down to the role of ICT in developing language skills. This was thought to fit into the existing framework of ELT methodology teaching in the EFL teacher education programmes at Eötvös Loránd University, which explores ELT from the perspective of skills development in the first semester of the methodology course. Though the course emphasizes an integrated development of skills, it also acknowledges that a direct focus on the improvement of one skill at a time might be beneficial, as it equips student teachers with a better understanding of the development of the individual language skills if, in the long run, an integrated skills approach is adopted and 'several skills are combined in one lesson […] to redress this artificial separation' (Thornbury, 2017, p. 258).

3.2 Students' needs

In order to identify what student teachers in a pre-service course on the use of ICT in ELT need, a variety of small-scale procedures were used. The *necessities*, or 'what the learner has to know to function effectively' (Nation & Macalister, 2010, p. 5), emerged from

- the relevant literature on important methodological guidelines for integrating ICT into ELT (Dudeney & Hockly, 2007; Hockly, 2016; McCarthy, 2016; Sharma & Barett, 2007)
- the course designers' familiarity with diverse tools which originated from various in-service courses on the purposeful integration of ICT as well as from their own search for tools,

- a constant exchange of information with colleagues experimenting with technology in different ELT and ELT methodology courses,
- websites and blogs on learning technologies, such as eModeration Station (https://www.emoderationskills.com/), Nick Peachy's videos (https://www.youtube.com/user/NikPeachey/videos), Nick's Learning Technology Blog (https://nikpeachey.blogspot.com/), and Russel Stannard's Teacher Training Videos (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKjOFIFE0q71IJ4GFx4brng).

The *lacks*, or 'what the learner knows and does not know already' and the *wants*, or 'what the learners think they need' (Nation and Macalister, 2010, p. 5) were collected in student teachers' lessons where the observation focused on what pedagogical knowledge underlies students' ICT use and which ICT tools they are familiar with, as well as in the post-lesson discussions in which the students were invited to reflect on their own technology use and their perceived gains from their studies on the use of ICT.

It has to be noted, though, that the course designers were aware of the heterogeneity of learning all groups due to the numerous individual differences between students in terms of their needs, familiarity with ICT tools, and attitudes to using technology (Benini & Murray, 2014). It was, therefore, expected that no matter how carefully the lacks and the wants are observed, the individual members of any groups studying about learning technologies will always represent a wide spectrum as far as their background and their resulting needs are concerned. In line with this, it was found that students' lacks and wants differ tremendously. It seemed that students who were enthusiastic about technology included more ICT tools in their lessons, which confirmed earlier findings that positive attitudes to technology lead to a more likely ICT integration (Benini & Murray, 2014; Liu, 2009; Sang et. al., 2010). Though the number of lesson observations did not allow for generalizing, it was still observable that the majority of the students felt they needed more training in order to become more confident when selecting the appropriate ICT tool for a specific language learning objective.

3.3 Main course aims

The main course aims rest on the assumption that technology use should always be embedded into a sound pedagogy of ELT (Hockly, 2016; Kárpáti et al., 2015) which can be ensured by a systematic development of the three major teacher knowledge types, required for successful ICT inclusion. This is captured by the TPACK model (Mishra & Koehler, 2006) representing seven distinctive components in constant interaction with each other. Figure 1 shows the three major knowledge types - content knowledge (CK), pedagogical knowledge (PK) and technological knowledge (TK) – as partly overlapping circles, and their four intersections – pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), technological content knowledge (TCK), technological pedagogical knowledge (TPK) and technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK).
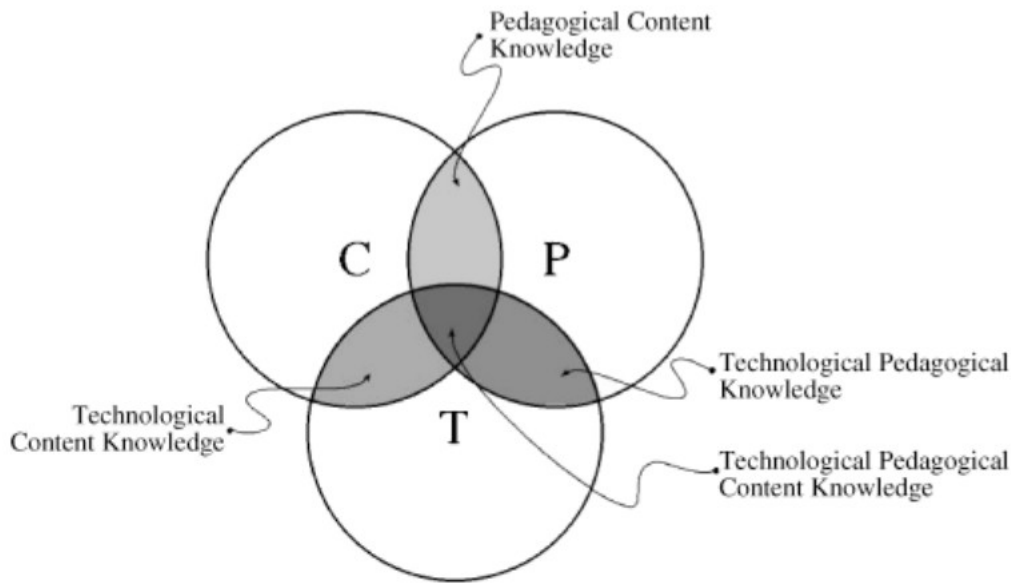
Figure 1 Teachers' technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) (Mishra & Koehler, 2006, p. 1025)

In order for meaningful ICT integration to take place, it is essential to build teachers' technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) made up of their knowledge of the content of the subject they teach (CK), their knowledge of pedagogy allowing them to apply instructional strategies that help learners learn best (PK), and their knowledge of technology involving hardwares and softwares (TK) (Mishra & Koehler, 2006).

In accordance with the TPACK model, the main aim of the course was

- to develop student teachers' technological pedagogical content knowledge so that they can select and use the appropriate learning technologies to facilitate the learning of specific content for their learners; namely, to help their learners develop their language skills.

The aim shows that the course was primarily concerned with developing the pedagogical skills required for effective ICT inclusion, and not merely with familiarizing students with the available tools. This was based on the understanding that ICT is in constant change, and new tools appear while old ones disappear regularly. What was seen as being of key importance in this context is to encourage students to be open to experimenting with any tools, to evaluate their efficacy and to use them meaningfully for language development purposes. This leads to the other main aim of the course, which, in accordance with the finding that an open mind and positive attitudes towards technology inclusion encourage effective technology use (Liu, 2009; Sang et. al., 2010), is the following:

- to develop student teachers' positive attitudes towards ICT inclusion as a result of experimenting with it in a safe environment so that they can autonomously develop their TPACK during their teaching career.

3.4 Course objectives and learning outcomes

Formulating the main course aims, analysing the situation and the student teachers' needs led to identifying the objectives and the learning outcomes of the course. The objectives referring to the specific changes the course intended to bring about and the learning outcomes showing what the students could do as a result of what they had learnt (Richards, 2017) were the following:
a) In order to achieve the main aims of the course, students will

- develop a critical view of when and why to use ICT for developing language skills
- learn about the available resources for ICT inclusion for developing language skills
- gain hands-on experience while experimenting with ICT and will reflect on the experience
- learn about ways of creating and evaluating teaching materials with a focus on language skills development using ICT

b) After completing the course students can

- make pedagogically informed decisions on when and why to use ICT tools for developing language skills
- use a wide range of ICT tools and different resources effectively for developing language skills
- plan and manage lessons using ICT
- create and evaluate their own teaching materials for language skills development using ICT

3.5 Content areas

The structure of the course reflected the course designers' intentions to exploit the possibilities of blended courses. On the one hand, the course aimed to familiarize the participants with various ways of using technology in the in-class sessions; on the other hand, it intended to engage the participants in reading and forum discussions related to the topic of the in-class sessions and designing their own tasks in the form of out-of-class assignments. Arranging the sessions this way had the additional aim of modelling the two learning environments (physical classroom and virtual classroom) and to ensure a link between them through the various tasks done in both, which is found to be an important feature of successful blended learning (Fekete, 2017). Therefore, the course was planned for 13 weeks with seven 90-minute contact sessions taught face-to face and six online modules, each requiring 90 minutes of online work from the course participants. The learning management system (LMS) used in the online modules was Canvas.

Taking the aims and the objectives of the course into consideration, the following content areas were identified:

- ICT in language teaching - Competences, methods, tools
- developing listening skills with technology
- developing reading skills with technology
- developing speaking skills with technology
- developing writing skills with technology

- planning integrated skills lessons with technology

A deeper exploration of the content areas from the perspective of technology use was thought to be possible due to the students' familiarity with principles and methods of developing language skills, gained in their ELT methodology course preceding the course on ICT in ELT – an arrangement of courses found to be useful by Graham et al. (2012), too.

3.6 Materials: Resources and ICT tools

The resources which served as content materials containing information about ICT (Mishan, 2016; Reinders & White, 2010) and the ICT tools regarded as process materials allowing students to collaborate, interact and use their communicative abilities (Mishan, 2016; Reinders & White, 2010) were selected from a variety of sources as mentioned in 3.2. It was decided that the tools had to meet three interrelated criteria, which were the following:

- they can be used for the development of at least one of the four language skills
- they can be used for collaboration and interaction
- they can be used for a variety of tasks used at different points in a lesson or in home assignments (e.g.: Mentimeter can be used in warm-up task, association games and quizzes as well as for introducing a topic, brainstorming and cooperative writing).

The final list of ICT tools included Mentimeter, Padlet, Wordwall, LearningApps, Diigo, BubbleUs, Rewordify, and Puzzlemaker, each being appropriate for a wide range of tasks. Apart from these, the course incorporated various articles on teachers' experience in using technology and examples of good practices. However, to strengthen students' understanding that the range of ICT tools is in constant change, one of the final course tasks was to compile a summary table including all the tools explored along with the aims and the possible task types for which they can be used.

3.7 Requirements and assessment

Students were required to take part in at least five out of the six contact sessions and to do at least three out of the five online modules in order to receive a course grade. Furthermore, as a final assignment, they were required to plan a lesson with a focus on integrated skills development using technology and to evaluate the plan of a peer using a rubric of ten criteria.

3.8 Effects of the Covid-19 pandemic: Challenges and new directions

Following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic the blended course started to be taught as an online one. The transition was not entirely smooth and posed a number of challenges on top of the technological ones, as was reported by studies done in other educational contexts (Hodges et al., 2020; Kidd & Murray, 2020; König et al., 2020; Scull et al., 2020; Tannert & Gröschner, 2021). The most important ones, such as feelings of demotivation, the difficulty to stay focused and to get meaningfully engaged in learning, seemed to be related to the lack of social presence in an online environment, identified as a basic condition for the effective communication of a learning group (Garrison et al., 1999). It was soon realized that the ERT mode of the course is a

somewhat clumsy replacement of the in-person mode, and it does not meet the needs of the course participants. At the same time, experiencing teaching during the ERT period helped to identify certain changes that were necessary for adapting the course to the needs of online teaching. These were the following:

- Digital competences, especially digital literacy and online safety, the importance of which had been acknowledged earlier, too (Dudeney et al., 2013; Redecker, 2017), gained new importance. Though these topics were included in the blended course, it was felt that with education and other activities going on constantly online, they became even more relevant.
- Questions of how to assess students in the online environment became vital (Ghanbari & Nowroozi, 2021; König et al., 2020). As all forms of assessment were to happen online, possibilities of oral and written online testing had to be explored and introduced.
- Students' participation was negatively affected by the online environment. As interactions in online lessons were found to be crucial due to their role in motivating and actively involving students (Castañeda-Trujillo & Jaime Osorio, 2021; Katz, 2021), a direct focus on them seemed to be important.
- Students gained first-hand experience with a wide range of ICT tools as they used them in most of their ELT methodology courses during ERT. It was, therefore, important to explore further tools.

Apart from the observations made by the tutors, the feedback taken after the completion of each online module and at the end of the course provided further guidelines for redesigning the course. On the whole, the feedback was positive, and the participants reported to have gained useful practical knowledge in planning and teaching skills-based lessons using ICT. Among the critical remarks, one made by several students proved to be of special interest, and was, therefore, adopted in the redesign process. According to this, the task descriptions in the online modules were too detailed for an audience who find their way around very easily on the Internet. As one of the students wrote:

(1) *We can discover how to use the tools, there is no need to specify every step in so many details. We do this very often.*

4. The online course on the use of ICT in ELT

Having drawn the conclusions from teaching the course in the ERT period in spring 2020, the course was advertised and taught as an online one in spring 2021. The course participants were 25 students studying on the 2-semester MA in English Language Instruction programme. All the participants were doing their English teaching practice in the same semester and tried out some of the tasks of the course with their own learners. This gave them immediate hands-on experience, which, according to previous research (Dringó-Horváth & Gonda, 2018; Sang et al., 2010), can strengthen future teachers' ICT skills.

4.1 Course objectives and learning outcomes

The main aims and the theoretical underpinnings as well as the structure of the course remained the same as in the blended one (see sections 3.3 and 3.4), but its objectives, the planned learning outcomes and the content were slightly modified. In accordance with the new needs of online teaching (see section 3.8), the following objectives and learning outcomes were added to the ones of the blended course:

a) In order to achieve the main aims of the course, students will

- gain experience in using gamification for enhancing their learners' motivation and assessing their knowledge
- learn about the available ICT tools and their application in online assessment
- learn about ways of encouraging active learner involvement in online lessons by adopting various interaction forms and tasks

b) After completing the course students can

- plan and teach gamified sequences of lessons to enhance their learners' motivation and to assess their knowledge
- use different tools for online assessment and create their own assessment tools
- plan lessons that facilitate the active involvement of learners by engaging them in various interactive tasks

4.2 Course content

The course objectives and the learning outcomes project the three new content areas added to the course, which are linked by two of the most often mentioned challenges of online teaching: enhancing students' motivation and to assess their knowledge(see section 3.8). These were the following:

- Gamification: teaching strategy and assessment strategy
- Digital technology for online assessment
- Active learning and interactions in online lessons

As a result of new content added, further changes needed to be made. The original introductory and final sessions were kept in the same form, but instead of devoting a separate session to the development of each skill, the two receptive and the two productive skills were studied in one session and some of the tasks were taken out to make the online modules less dense. Appendix A and B provide a summary of the new content in terms of weekly topics, tasks and materials in the contact sessions and the online modules.

4.3 Materials: Resources and ICT tools

The online course explored the same types of materials – resources as content materials and ICT tools as process materials (Mishan, 2016; Reinders & White, 2010) – as the blended one (see section 3.6), but new resources and tools were also added. These were online articles related to the new content areas and ICT tools judged to be unknown to the students who were already

familiar with the ones explored in several of their courses. The selection criteria for the ICT tools were the same as in the blended course (see section 3.6). However, on top of the sources mentioned in section 3.2, an extensive list of ICT tools compiled by Dringó-Horváth et al. (2020) was consulted, and new tools, such as BookCreator, Symbaloo and Flipgrid were selected, just to mention a few. These are listed in Appendix C along with the tasks and the aims for which they were used.

4.4 Requirements and assessment

Contrary to the blended course, students were only required to complete three of the online modules: the first and the last ones, plus one more of their choice. The final course assignment was the same as in the blended course (planning a lesson with a focus on integrated skills development using technology), but it was suggested that a gamified task and an explanation on how it fits in the sequence of lessons adopting gamification as a teaching strategy be included. The lesson plans were only evaluated by the course tutor according to the same set of criteria as in the blended course; peer-evaluation did not happen.

5. Students' perceptions of the online course

In order to explore and understand students' perceptions of the course and their learning in it process-focused descriptive course evaluation (Richards, 2017) was carried by looking into the following points:

- how much time was spent on the different modules
- how useful the tasks of the modules were for the students
- how useful the content of the course was for the students
- how much use students were able to make of the course content during their teaching practice
- how students evaluate their own learning gains from the course

The course was evaluated by collecting post-module feedback after each online module and post-course reflections at the end of the semester. The evaluation tool was an anonymous Google Forms questionnaire in both cases. In order to interpret the responses thematic analysis was carried out (Braun & Clarke, 2006) with a firm understanding that they only reflected the opinion of one group of students or only some of them. However, this was not considered a problem, as the aim was not to generalize, but to gain insights into different perspectives.

5.1 Questionnaire used for post-module feedback

The questionnaire for collecting feedback on the online modules had four questions – a closed-ended question and three open-ended questions. These were the following:

1) How much time did you altogether spend on doing the tasks of the module?

    a) 0-60 minutes

    b) 60-90 minutes

c) more than 90 minutes

2) Which task did you find useful? Why?

3) Which task was not useful for you? Why?

4) Do you have any suggestions, or ideas to share about the online module? If so, please share it here.

Question 1 was meant to find out whether the course designers' estimation of 60 to 90 minutes on the successful completion of a module was a realistic one. The other questions, Questions 2, 3 and 4, aimed to look into the individual views of the students regarding the usefulness of the tasks. Responses to these were arranged in groups based on similarity to see if there were common points made by several students which will need to be addressed in a further, in-depth inquiry. Responses that did not match any of the groups were considered to create individual groups in themselves as they were also thought to be insightful.

Knowing that written course feedback can easily result in quite low response rates, special care was taken to convince the course participants to fill in the questionnaires for post-module evaluation. This resulted in receiving feedback from all the 26 students on the first module, but a lower number of responses on the other modules, including the last one, the completion of which was a course requirement for all participants.

Table 1 The online modules and the number of feedback responses received on them

Topics of online modules	Number of students completing the module	Number of post-module feedback responses
Digital technology in language teaching - Competences, methods, tools (compulsory module) (Week 2, February)	26	26
Gamification: teaching strategy and assessment strategy (Week 4, February)	7	6
Digital technology for online assessment (Week 6, March)	12	10
Developing the receptive skills (listening and reading) with technology (Week 8, March)	6	6
Developing the productive skills (speaking and writing) with technology (Week 10, April)	3	3
Active learning and interactions in online lessons (compulsory module) (Week 12, April)	25	12

Table 1 lists the number of students completing the online modules and the number of feedback questionnaires returned. Some of the students completed more than the required three modules, of which one (*Digital technology for online assessment*) seemed to be especially popular. A

closer look at the table also reveals that the modules in the first part of the semester were chosen by more students (*Gamification: teaching strategy and assessment strategy* by 7 and *Digital technology for online assessment* by 12 students) than those in the second part (*Developing the receptive skills* by 6 and *Developing the receptive skills* by 3 students). A possible reason for this might be the usually lighter workload in all courses in February and March, and an increased workload, including thesis submission, in April and May. Another explanation might be that the topics in the first part of the semester might have felt more novel than the topics related to skills development in the second part.

The following sections will give an account of the students' responses. To illustrate the ideas that emerged, some excerpts from the responses will be quoted. These will not be edited but will appear in the same form as in the students' responses.

5.2 Findings of post-module feedback

5.2.1 Time spent on doing the tasks in the online modules

When designing the course, the aim was to compile a set of tasks that would take 60 to 90 minutes to complete in every online module. According to the feedback

- 1 module required more than 90 minutes (3 out of the 6 students reported this after the module *Gamification: teaching strategy and assessment strategy*),
- 3 modules required 60 to 90 minutes (7 out of the 10 students reported this after the module *Digital technology for online assessment*; 4 out of the 6 students reported this after the module *Developing the receptive skills (listening and reading) with digital technology*; 8 out of the 12 students reported this after the module *Active learning and interactions in online lessons*);
- 2 modules required less than 60 minutes (17 out of the 26 students reported this after the module *Digital technology in language teaching - Competences*, methods, tools; 2 of the 3 students reported it after the module *Developing the productive skills (speaking and writing) with digital technology*).

As the responses show 3 out of the 6 online modules took roughly as much time as it was estimated by the course designers. It needs to be emphasized again that this is based on a low number of responses, and for this reason any kind of conclusion is only valid for the responding students. Still, this suggested that the two modules requiring less than 60 minutes might be supplemented with further tasks when teaching the course again.

According to the responses, only one module (*Gamification: teaching strategy and assessment strategy)* required more than 90 minutes from the students. Considering that only 3 students out of the 6 responding ones in a group of 25 students thought so, this information needs to be handled with care, as it may not even describe tendencies within the group. At the same time, the responses to Question 1 indicate that more in-depth information will have to be collected to find out why students invest more or less time in the individual modules and whether this information can be used when reconsidering the tasks of the modules.

5.2.2 Usefulness of the tasks

The students were very positive about almost all the tasks in the online modules. No task was mentioned as being useless, and the ones requiring students to create their own teaching materials were especially appreciated.

Two tasks, creating a learning quest and designing a test on Redmenta, received comments that stand out from the rest:

> *(2) I really enjoyed creating the learning quest, I would have never thought about doing something like this on my own, and I'm glad I can do such things now. I'll try making one for my students as well.*

> *(3) I liked the Redmenta task a lot, it was useful to see its many features and it was a bit more of a creative task than what we usually have to do. Even though I had to go back to fix some issues, it was still fun to do.*

> *(4) Even though planning a test took quite a long time, I believe it was very useful. I can actually use it with my private student.*

While in the module *Gamification: teaching strategy and assessment strategy* no suggestions for change were made, the module *Digital technology for online assessment* elicited the following ones:

> *(5) It was well put together. Maybe a free choice of the testing platforms for the assignment could make it more interesting.*

> *(6) I would change Redmenta on another assessing tool which might be more universal and suitable for international students.*

Apart from the creative ones, one more task – reading about and discussing flipped classrooms - received very positive feedback. As the following student noted:

> *(7) The reading task [on the flipped classroom] was very informative. I had some ideas of what a flipped classroom was, but the readings helped to understand this concept better.*

In sum, the responses gave insights into a narrow segment of the course, namely the usefulness of the tasks in the online modules as perceived by the students. At the same time, they allowed to see that the students found the tasks useful, especially the ones which engaged them in creating their own teaching materials. The fact that some of the students mentioned that they would use the tasks with their own learners shows a willingness to experiment with ICT in real-life teaching situations, which according to previous studies (Dringó-Horváth & Gonda, 2018; Sang et al., 2010) might further strengthen their ICT skills. As for the content materials, readings about the flipped classroom emerged as being particularly interesting, which suggests that flipped classroom could be explored more in future courses.

5.3 Questionnaire used for post-course reflections

The final course evaluation questionnaire included five open-ended questions, which collected information on students' experience with ICT tools before the course, their ICT integration during the teaching practice and in the future, their opinion on the positive features of the course, and their suggestions for changing the course. The questions were the following:

1) In general, how much are you interested in the use of digital tools in ELT?

2) How much did you know about how to use digital tools in ELT before you took the course? Which were the tools you used then?

3) Which digital tools did you use with your students during your teaching practice? For what purpose did you use them? Did it work well for you and your purposes? Why? /Why not? Please describe the experience and be as specific as you can when answering these questions.

4) Which tools or activity types out of the ones we looked at together do you think you could use in the future? Why?

5) Please describe your feelings with which you are leaving the course: What are you taking away and what would you change?

The end-semester questionnaire was filled in by 25 students. In order to analyze the responses thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was carried out to see general tendencies and potential areas that will require further inquiry. These will be summarized in the following sections.

5.4 Findings of post-course reflections

5.4.1 Initial experience with ICT tools

Though the first session of the course included a 'fact-finding' activity in which students' initial familiarity with the use of ICT in ELT was elicited, it was thought to be useful to do this once again retrospectively, giving more time to everyone to reflect on what they brought to the course, especially in the light of what they learnt during it. The responses to Questions 1 and 2 showed that all students were interested in using ICT in ELT and the tools and the concepts explored in the course were new for them.

5.4.2 ICT integration during the teaching practice and in the future

The responses to Questions 3, 4 and 5 revealed that the majority of the students had used several ICT tools from the course during their teaching practice, which, according to previous studies, can help to consolidate their ICT skills (Dringó-Horváth & Gonda, 2018; Sang et al., 2010). The responses also showed that the most often used tools were Redmenta and Google forms for testing purposes and WordArt for creating a nice class atmosphere. It is interesting to note that while the learning quest task received very positive evaluation in the post-module feedback, no students reported to include it in their teaching (though two students said they had tried it with

their private students). This might be explained with the fact that planning a learning quest requires plenty of preparation, while WordArt can be used without any preparation.

As for which ICT tools from the course students intend to use in the future, the most common answers were Redmenta and Google forms due to their usefulness in online testing. This seems to be in accordance with teachers' general concern with online assessment since the beginning of ERT and online education (Ghanbari & Nowroozi, 2021; König et al., 2020). Apart from that, learning quests and video activities with LearningApps were mentioned as having huge potentials for enhancing learners' motivation, which seems to confirm that motivation is one of the most powerful reasons why teachers turn to ICT (Dudeney & Hockly, 2007; Richards, 2017). Finally, Wordsift, which can be used for analysing the language of a text, was listed by several students as a tool they would like to use in the future. The main reason given for this was its feature to visualize vocabulary in a transparent and attractive way.

5.4.3 Positive features of the course

Students' opinion on the course was very positive. Based on the ideas that emerged from reflections, four groups were identified each representing a strength of the course. These are listed below and each one is illustrated with quotes from the students' reflections.

Boosting creativity

(8) It was wonderful to have a class where we truly had to think and get creative while gaining very valuable skills for our teaching careers.

(9) The most important things I took away from the course are the understanding of endless creative possibilities of digital tools and a firm decision to implement them in my teaching practice.

(10) … when people are presented with the exact same task, they will still end up creating very different things, based on their perceptions, what they are already good at, what they are interested in, and other factors. When I looked through what my fellow students submitted to the various tasks, I was fascinated by how many different topics people picked, and how many ways they solved the same prompts.

Encouraging learner autonomy

(11) I like the idea of learner autonomy with the modules because we can do our homework on our own and learn as much as we can without attending the session.

(12) I was happy that I could choose what I do and do it independently when and how I want it.

Balance of theory and practice

(13) There is a nice balance between reading part and practical.

(14) I read about useful topics and practiced and created activities. The two were good together.

Manageable workload

(15) It was great, manageable.

(16) Secondly, I am also taking away that sometimes less is more. When we looked at these ICT tools and sites there were so many different options when creating tasks[...] But overall, creating something simple yet engaging seems to be best solution in my opinion.

A closer look at the four strengths shows that they represent four kinds of experiences needed to motivate effective ICT inclusion (Dudeney & Hockly, 2007; Richards, 2017). No one reported dissatisfaction or a lack of learning gains from the course. While keeping in mind that any kind of conclusion drawn from this is very small in scope, it can still be said that the students felt they had benefitted from the course, felt motivated to take part and were able to identify the motivational factors contributing to a sense of success. This has the potential of enhancing their awareness of the conditions for successful ICT use and helping them form or strengthen positive attitudes towards technology use, which eventually leads to better use (Liu, 2009; Sang et. al., 2010).

5.4.4 Suggestions for change

Students' responses to Question 5 gave insights into how the course could be improved. Meanwhile, it has to be emphasized that there were very few suggestions made, and it was not possible to identify common points in them. It was, therefore, decided that the four ideas that emerged will be presented in the section below.

Requiring the completion of more online modules with fewer tasks

(17) I like to do the bare minimum, just like everybody else, but I think it would maybe be more beneficial if going forward there was smaller, weekly homework, so that students get a chance to work with every tool discussed for a bit and not just with one for a longer task.

Having more contact sessions and fewer online modules

(18) I felt a bit disconnected from it because of its bi-weekly nature.

Exploring learning management systems (LMSs) from the teacher's perspective

(19) … introduce one or more LMS systems; how it's used, and what are the benefits. For example, Moodle, Canvas, or MS Teams.

Putting more emphasis on collaborative tools

(20) The apps that allow collaboration and group activities, I think create a more productive learning environment. Google Jamboard is one of my favorite applications (and it was not mentioned)

As it can be seen, the first two points refer to the way the course was organized, and the requirements were set. The first suggestion (i.e., requiring the completion of more than one

module outside the first and the last one) is possible to implement. As a matter of fact, in the original plan of the blended course (Major & Szabó, 2021), the completion of every module was compulsory for all students. This was only changed so that students on the very intensive one-year MA course can cope while they are doing their teaching practice and writing their thesis.

The second suggestion (i.e., having weekly contact sessions) however, is more difficult to implement. On the one hand, this would leave too little time for the individual work done in the participants' own time and would deprive them of the opportunity to fully engage with the tasks. On the other hand, as it was mentioned in section 3.5, another reason for arranging the course in bi-weekly contact sessions and online modules was to model the dual nature of most 21st century learning environments where learning is going on in a physical and a virtual classroom (or in synchronous online meetings and asynchronous online tasks if courses are fully online). Giving less weight to the online modules and more to the contact session would mean distorting the balance between the two, which might hinder the success of learning.

The third idea (i.e., exploring LMSs from the teacher's perspective) seems to be a useful one, and will be considered when teaching the course next year. Finally, the fourth suggestion (i.e., including more collaborative tools and tasks in the course) reveals that despite the course designers' intention, collaboration and the use of collaborative tools may not have been emphasized sufficiently in the course. This will require revising course content and introducing new tasks when the course is taught next year.

6. Conclusions and practical implications

The present paper described the process of designing an online course on the use of ICT in ELT. Having outlined the context and the reasons leading to designing the course, the paper focused on the initial course design of the blended course and the results of the shift from blended and emergency remote teaching of the course to teaching it as a real online one in spring 2021. The most important results of this shift are reflected by the new topics added to the online course, such as *Gamification: teaching strategy and assessment strategy, Digital technology for online assessment* and *Active learning and interactions in online lessons,* and the related tasks. According to the reflections shared by the students in their process-focused descriptive course evaluation, the course is a useful one, as it boosts creativity, encourages learner autonomy, ensures the right balance between theory and practice and provides a manageable workload.

Looking at the main course aims, it seems that further research should be carried out to see whether the first aim (to develop student teachers' technological pedagogical content knowledge so that they can select and use the appropriate learning technologies to facilitate the learning of specific content for their learners; namely, to help their learners develop their language skills) and the first objective (to develop a critical view of when and why to use ICT for developing language skills) were reached, as the post-course reflections did not give evidence on how the knowledge gained in the course was implemented in real-life teaching situations. It would be, therefore, worth collecting more data on it, possibly, by observing students' ICT use.

However, the second main course aim (to develop student teachers' positive attitudes towards ICT inclusion as a result of experimenting with it in a safe environment so that they can autonomously develop their TPACK during their teaching career) seems to have been achieved. This is suggested by the post-module and post-course feedback that revealed that the students

had found the experience of experimenting with technology rewarding and left the course with positive feelings, which are important steps towards forming positive attitudes. Observing students' ICT inclusion during their teaching practice to see how open they are to using technology would give more insights into this, too

Finally, it follows from the suggestions above that in the future it would be useful to supplement the process-focused course evaluation with a product-focused one, involving follow-up observations of students' ICT inclusion in their lessons. Meanwhile, from the course designers' perspective, the process of designing and redesigning the course, even if due to the abrupt changes brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, was a valuable learning experience. It was also a great reminder that ICT use, though guided by genuine curiosity in the present case, requires educators to constantly, if not on a daily basis, follow the rapidly changing technologies and to select the ones that can best benefit learning. It is hoped that the present paper gives guidelines to similar experiments and encourages good practices of online teaching even after the Covid-19 pandemic is over.

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Appendices

Appendix A: The online course - Summary of course content: topics and tasks

Topic for Weeks 1 and 2	
Digital technology in language teaching - Competences, methods, tools	
Week 1 – Contact session Tasks: Getting to know each other better with WordArt (https://wordart.com/) Reviewing ICT tools and their applications with Wordwall (https://wordwall.net/) Reflecting on a framework for digital competences (Redecker, 2017)	*Week 2* – Online module Tasks: Testing one's digital skills with an online tests (Cambridge Assessment English, 2018) Forum discussion and reflection about the test and one's own test results
Topic for Weeks 3 and 4	
Gamification: teaching strategy and assessment strategy	
Week 3 – Contact session Tasks: Reviewing initial knowledge about gamification Analysing learning quests (Cameron-Jarvis, 2020) Brainstorming and creating a list of topics and tasks in a learning quest	*Week 4* – Online module Tasks: Reading about gamification (Cameron-Jarvis, 2020; Kolb, 2015; Waterford.org, 2019) Forum discussion about pros and cons of gamification Designing a learning quest
Topic for Weeks 5 and 6	
Digital technology for online assessment	
Week 5 – Contact session Tasks: Reviewing aims, principles and methods of assessment Analysing and trying out Redmenta (https://redmenta.com/) and Google forms for assessment (https://docs.google.com/forms/u/0/; British Council, 2021)	*Week 6* – Online module Tasks: Reading about formative and summative assessment online (Fleming, 2020; Miller, 2020) Forum discussion about ways of formative and summative assessment online Designing a test on Redmenta (https://redmenta.com/)

Topic for Weeks 7 and 8	
Developing the receptive skills (listening and reading) with digital technology	
Week 7 – Contact session Tasks: Introducing the concept of the flipped classroom and the need for sound listening skills (Harrison, 2013) Using a video task for developing listening skills on LearningApps (https://learningapps.org) Looking at ways of storing and filing online reading materials with Symbaloo (https://www.symbaloo.com/) Looking at ways of working with the language of texts using Wordsift (https://wordsift.org/)	*Week 8* – Online module Tasks: Reading about the flipped classroom (Harrison, 2013; Gonzalez, 2014) Forum discussion about the advantages and problems of managing flipped classrooms Designing a video task on LearningApps (https://learningapps.org) Analysing the language of a text with Wordsift (https://wordsift.org/)
Topic for Weeks 9 and 10	
Developing the productive skills (speaking and writing) with digital technology	
Week 9 – Contact session Tasks: Reflecting on developing writing skills online (National Writing Project, 2010; Reading Rockets, 2013) Exploring and trying our Book Creator (https://bookcreator.com/) for developing writing skills Getting familiar with Flipgrid (https://flipgrid.com/) for developing speaking skills	*Week 10* – Online module Tasks: Forum discussion about developing writing skills online Making a short recording on Flipgrid (https://flipgrid.com/) Planning a speaking activity based on the use of an online mindmap - Bubbl.Us (https://bubbl.us/) or MindMeister (https://www.mindmeister.com/)
Topic for Weeks 11 and 12	
Active learning and interactions in online lessons	
Week 11 – Contact session Tasks: Evaluating tips to handle problems related to learner motivation and participation in online lessons based on a collection by an EFL teacher and mentor (J. Tóth, 2020)	*Week 12* – Online module Tasks: Reading about tips to maintain attention in online lessons (Dharmaraj, 2020; Stanley, 2019) Forum discussion and reflection on useful

Collecting digital tools and tasks that can encourage active participation Looking at features of a well-planned lesson	tips Planning an online lesson with interactive tasks
Topic for Week 13 **What is left out: Final steps and finishing the course**	
Week 13 – Contact session Tasks: Question-answer session on the course What's next? Discussing future plans	---

Appendix B: References to materials in the online course

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Appendix C: ICT tools not yet part of the blended course, but added to the online course

Name of tools	Aim for which it was used
WordArt (https://wordart.com/)	Breaking the ice Getting to know each other better (week 1)
Redmenta (https://redmenta.com/)	Assessing students' knowledge (week 5 and 6)
Google forms (https://docs.google.com/forms/u/0/)	Assessing students' knowledge (week 5 and 6)
Symbaloo (https://www.symbaloo.com/)	Storing online readings when developing reading skills (week 7)
Wordsift (https://wordsift.org/)	Activating students' passive vocabulary and learning new vocabulary as a follow-up to developing reading skills (week 7 and 8)
Book Creator (https://bookcreator.com/)	Creating online books when developing reading and writing skills (week 9)
MindMeister (https://www.mindmeister.com/)	Eliciting initial knowledge, generating and summarizing ideas when

	developing any of the four skills (week 9 and 10)
Flipgrid (https://flipgrid.com/)	Developing speaking skills (week 9 and 10)

Use of the *let it pass* strategy among ASEAN English speakers

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This study focuses on the use of the *let it pass* strategy (Firth, 1996) by English speakers from five member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) during interaction with each other. The data was from the video recordings of the participants during their conversations. Close and in-depth analyses were carried out on instances of *let it pass* used by them. Then, retrospective interviews were conducted with each participant. Results showed that *let it pass* was a communication strategy the participants used to make their conversation flow smoothly, and that they used it as long as their non-understanding of what their interlocutor was saying did not cause a communication breakdown between them. This finding leads to the conclusion that the use of *let it pass* systematically facilitates talk when English speakers from ASEAN countries communicate with each other in English. Implications are noted for English language teaching and further research.

Keywords: ASEAN English speakers, English as a lingua franca, *let it pass*, non-understanding, understanding

1. Introduction

English is extensively used as a lingua franca in ASEAN, or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, territories (Kirkpatrick, 2018). The Association of Southeast Asian Nations consists of ten member countries – Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. The ASEAN region is a linguistically and culturally diverse region. There are over 1000 languages spoken in the region (Kirkpatrick, 2020) but there is no one common language which is mutually understandable among all the speakers in the region. Since ASEAN was founded in 1967 with five member countries, English has been used as the common language of communication among ASEAN countries. Later after expanding to ten member countries, English was officially adopted as the working language in the 2007 ASEAN Charter, and since then, there has been a growing emphasis on English in the region, being used among ASEAN countries as well as to communicate with people from non-ASEAN countries.

Many people from ASEAN countries are multilingual, and these multilinguals also use English as their second or additional language and have various levels of English proficiency. Thus, the use of English in this area fits the definition of English as a lingua franca (ELF) as English used between speakers who have a different first language (Seidlhofer, 2005) or, more specifically, as a situation of "higher-order or second-order language contact" where speakers whose English has been influenced by their first language are in contact with the English of

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speakers whose English has been influenced by a different language (Mauranen, 2018, p. 10). Given the varieties of languages which English is in contact with and the varying levels of proficiency among speakers, there is little doubt that English speakers from ASEAN countries need to use a variety of strategies to keep their conversations flowing and to avoid communication breakdowns while communicating in English.

This knowledge of the communication strategies used in ELF communication has practice applications in the teaching of English. In the ELF literature, House (2012) suggests the awareness raising of "speakers' meta-pragmatic knowledge" to the learners and users of ELF, "by developing learners' insights into their own communicative potential—their communicative strengths and deficiencies—in realizing their communicative intentions." (p. 200). Lopriore and Vettorel (2015) also suggest the ELF awareness approach in English language teaching. They mention that most of the ELT textbooks in their 2013 investigation do not include ELF awareness raising or even if included, it was not enough, and that "connections to potential opportunities to use English in the out-side-school environment are very rarely considered" (p. 15). They argue that learners should know not only the language but also how the language works in the real world situation, and so "the diversity of speakers and contexts ….. as of ELF" (p. 28) should be taken into account in English language learning.

Among ELF studies, the use of *let it pass* in ELF interactions in real world situations is an area which has not been extensively studied in the ASEAN region. Thus, the topic of the present study, the use of *let it pass* strategy by ASEAN English speakers while interacting with each other, seeks to use the example of this one strategy to extend research into this area.

2. Theoretical framework

The *let it pass* communication strategy was firstly discussed by Firth (1996) based on his data of business telephone conversations between English speakers whose first languages were different. According to Firth, *let it pass* refers to the situation when "[t]he hearer (…) lets an unknown or unclear action, word, or utterance 'pass' on the (common sense) assumption that it will either become clear or redundant as talk progresses" (p. 243). That is, in a conversation, although a speaker does not understand or is not sure what his/her interlocutor said, the speaker does not signal or interrupt the interlocutor's talk and leaves the unsure or non-understood part as it was, assuming that the message will become clear later or the interlocutor will make it clear as their conversation continues.

In the following extract, Firth discussed *let it pass* among two English speakers. In the conversation, two speakers (B and H as in Firth's original) were talking about a cheese order. Although H did not understand what "blowing" (in Line 1 and Line 4) meant in B's talk, H did not interrupt B at the beginning. Instead, H used *let it pass* and acted as if he understood what B was saying. Only when B asked H what they should do, H started asking B (in Line 9) what "blowing" meant. Firth discussed that although the two English speakers were from different first language backgrounds, they managed to arrive at understanding each other. However, the use of *let it pass* alone was not workable, and the *let it pass* user needed to resolve his non-understanding later to arrive at actual understanding.

Extract 1

```
1    B:     … so I told him not to u::h send the:: cheese after the- (.) the blowing (.) in
2           the ↑customs
3           (0.4)
4           we don't want the order after the cheese is u::h (.) blowing.
5    H:     I see, yes.
6    B:     so I don't know what we can uh do with the order now. (.) What do you
7           think we should uh do with this all ↑blo:wing Mister Hansen
8           (0.5)
9    H:     I'm not uh (0.7) blowing uh what uh, what is this u::h too big or what?
10          (0.2)
11   B:     no the cheese is ↑bad Mister Hansen
12          (0.4)
13          it is like (.) fermenting in the customs' cool rooms
14   H:     ah it's gone off↑.
15   B:     yes it's gone off↓
16   H:     we::ll you know you don't have to uh do uh anything because it's not ...
            ((turn continues))
```
(Firth, 1996: 244, original emphasis)

Further research has been done over the years on ELF communication strategies in general and specifically *let it pass* strategy showing that it is through the use of these and other strategies that ELF communication functions effectively (House, 2010).

In previous literature on English speakers from ASEAN countries, Kirkpatrick (2007b) stated that they use communication strategies to cooperate with other speakers in their interactions for effective communication. It was also stated that the aim of the use of communication strategies is to preserve face among the speakers, and one of the communication strategies English speakers from ASEAN countries use is *let it pass*. For example, in the following extract, Kirkpatrick (2007b) stated that the Thai participant (T1) and the Bruneian participant (B1) used *let it pass* for the Vietnamese participant's (V1) pronunciation of "/tɔtʃ/" (in Line 1) for the word "taught". Kirkpatrick also stated that it was not sure whether the Thai and Bruneian participants understood what the Vietnamese participant said. However, both the Thai participant and the Bruneian participant used backchannels to make the Vietnamese participant continue talking, hoping that they would understand it later.

Extract 2

```
1    V1:    On the first year, um ... those students um will be taught /tɔtʃ/ all
2           the basic er rules
3    T1:    mm
4    V1:    Like … I I mean this, for the er for the sub- for the grammar subject
5           itself, it's not for interpreter skills.
```

6   B1:   mmm
7   V1:   so, er…..

(Kirkpatrick, 2007b: 33, Original emphasis)

Kirkpatrick's study was based on the data from the audio-recordings done at the Regional Language Centre (RELC) in Singapore, and it is not clear whether there was retrospection with the participants after the recordings or not. There is no information on how the speakers resolved their non-understanding later after the use of *let it pass* in their conversation.

There is relatively little literature on the use of *let it pass* among English speakers from ASEAN countries, and it is of interest to ELF researchers and ELT practitioners to document the purposes for the use of *let it pass* by English speakers from ASEAN countries and whether the *let it pass* users resolve their non-understanding later to arrive at actual understanding as in Firth's example above. Thus, the research questions in this present study are as follows:

- 1. Why do the English speakers from ASEAN countries say they use *let it pass* in their communication?
- 2. When they do not arrive at understanding later after the use of *let it pass*, do they resolve their non-understanding to arrive at actual understanding? Why or why not?

The data collected and the analysis of it will allow for the further documentation that the *let it pass* communication strategy is used in ASEAN ELF communication. Furthermore, with retrospective interviews, this study also allows for a more fine-grained analysis than has been done before as to the reasons for the use of the strategy and the ultimate results of its use.

3. Method

This data comes from a larger project by the author of this paper which investigates ELF communication strategies in general in the ASEAN context.

3.1. Participants

In the study, there were 10 participants from five ASEAN countries who were students at a Thai university and Hungarian universities at the time of the data collection. The data was planned to be collected at a university in Thailand and at SEAMEO RELC in Singapore in order to include English speakers from as many ASEAN countries as possible. Unfortunately, a few months after the first phase of data collection in Thailand in December 2019, there were travel restrictions because of covid situations. Therefore, the data collection site was changed, and the remainder of the data was collected in Hungary.

The participants in this study were divided into five groups in which they interacted with each other in English while engaging in a planned task. There were three participants in Group A while there were two participants in each of the other groups. One Indonesian (I4) participant took part in two recordings; therefore, there are only 10 total participants instead of 11 in the study.

The self-reported linguistic background of each participant is shown in Table 1. Although participants did not estimate proficiency levels for the languages they speak, they did indicate the languages they were only slightly proficient in by saying they had "some" ability to use the

language. ELF communication inherently involves multilingual participants (Jenkins, 2015), and this can be seen among these participants by the diverse number of languages spoken by them.

Table 1. Participants according to nationality, their first language and the other languages they reported knowing

Participants		Nationality	First language	Other reported languages
Group A	B1	Myanmar/ Burmese	Burmese	English
	I1	Indonesian	Butonese	Bahasa Indonesia, English
	T1	Thai	Thai	English, some Khmer
Group B	I2	Indonesian	Bahasa Indonesia	Sundanese, English, Russian
	T2	Thai	Thai	English, some Chinese
Group C	C1	Cambodian	Khmer	English, some French, some Hungarian
	I3	Indonesian	Manado Melayu	Bahasa Indonesia, English, German, Spanish, Italian, some Hungarian
Group D	I4	Indonesian	Javanese	Bahasa Indonesia, English, some Hungarian
	B2	Myanmar/ Burmese	Burmese	English, some Hungarian
Group E	I4	Indonesian	Javanese	Bahasa Indonesia, English, some Hungarian
	M1	Malaysian	Malay	English, some Arabic, some Thai, some Hungarian

3.2. Procedure

As mentioned in the previous section, participants were divided into groups which were comprised of different first language speakers and were given one of two different tasks which were centered around the topic of traditional foods and dishes in the region. These tasks involved the discussion of traditional foods or the actual cooking of those foods.

For Groups A and B, it was not possible to do the actual cooking because there was not a kitchen available on the day and at the place of the video recording for data collection. In Group A there were participants from the following nationalities: Burmese, Indonesian, and Thai, and this group discussed the topic *Thai foods they like and Thai foods they don't like*. Participants in Group B were Indonesian and Thai, and they spoke about the recipes for their nationality's traditional dishes.

Groups C, D, and E were engaged in actually directing each other how to cook each other's traditional dishes, live, in the kitchen of the researcher or in one of the participants' kitchens. The participants in Group C were Cambodian and an Indonesian, and they cooked the Indonesian participant's recipe. In Group D, the participants were an Indonesian and a

Malaysian, and they cooked a dish which is common in both countries. Finally, in Group E, the participants were Burmese and Indonesian, and they cooked the Indonesian participant's recipe.

The conversations of each group were not only audio recorded but also video recorded in order to include the gestures and facial expressions of the participants during their conversations. After the recording, retrospective interviews were conducted, assisted by the researcher's observation notes during the video recording. The purpose of the retrospective interviews was to collect data on the thought processes of the participants during the interaction that they were engaged in, a process of data collection which has been used for decades in applied linguistics (Bowles, 2019). During the interviews, each recorded video was watched together with the researcher and the participants, and at each moment when there was a question to each participant by the researcher or when a participant wanted to say or add something, the video was paused. For example, while participants in Group B, an Indonesian (I2) and a Thai (T2), were talking about their recipes, T2 *let it pass* as evidenced by her later indication that she did not understand what I2 was saying. (See Extract 4 in Findings and discussion section.) In this kind of moment, the video was paused and the researcher asked T2 questions like "Why did you *let it pass* instead of asking for clarification here?" Also, while participants in Group E were cooking, the Indonesian participant (I4) said to the Malaysian participant (M1): "Can you put the garlic please?". Actually, I4 wanted to say "Can you take the garlic please?" So, while watching the video, I4 signaled to pause the video during the retrospection and she said she wanted to say "Can you take the garlic please?" Interviews were also conducted individually if one of the participants in a group preferred that the interlocutor not be with them during the interview.

Observation notes were also taken by the author, who observed each conversation taking place. These notes were used to help guide the retrospection sessions and also further served as data themselves in the final analysis of the interaction.

3.3. Data analysis

The data for the study were the transcriptions of the recorded videos, the observation notes during the recordings, and the notes from the retrospective interviews. In the transcripts, the participants' names were coded by the initials of their respective nationalities such as 'I' for Indonesian, and 'T' for Thai. As there were two nationalities of which names start with 'M', 'B' was used for the participants from Myanmar (who are also known as Burmese), and 'M' was used for the Malaysian participant. Then, transcripts were analyzed together with the notes made during the video recordings, and the notes from the follow-up retrospections with participants.

For data analysis, as the emphasis of the study was the participants' use of *let it pass* in their conversations, the extracts related to this research focus were selected. Then, conversation analysis as carried out in Atkinson and Heritage (1984) was employed, also using an adjusted version of their transcription conventions, which can be found in Appendix A.

4. Findings and discussion

In this study, it was found that the participants used *let it pass* accompanied by backchannels as in Kirkpatrick (2007b). In the retrospective interviews, the participants who used *let it pass* said

they hoped that later it would become clear what they did not understand earlier. However, these participants found that it did not always happen this way. It was noteworthy what these participants did when they realized their hopes did not come true. At that time, some participants started using other communication strategies (e.g. clarification requests) which could make more understandable what their interlocutors had said.

In the present study, it was found that there were two types of *let it pass* users: those who used other communication strategies to arrive at understanding, and those who did not try anything to arrive at understanding, and just *let it pass*.

To look at the first type of *let it pass* users, it was found in the study that they first waited for the moment they arrived at understanding. Then, if their interlocutors' following utterances did not make them understand, they used other communication strategies to arrive at their understanding. Extract 3 is an example of the uses of other communication strategies by a *let it pass* user to arrive at understanding. This example is extracted from the conversation of Group A of whose participants were a Burmese, an Indonesian and a Thai. They were discussing Thai foods.

Extract 3

1	B1:	I don't remember it. Sometimes, that smell has: that smell
2		they told me that smell come from the plant.
3	T1:	Umm umm.
4	B1:	Vegetable one kind of vegetable. That has a lot of smell.
5	T1:	Onn.

[Eight lines pass. The full extract can be seen in Appendix B]

14	B1:	I don't know the name.
15	T1:	That's I think it's a kind of celery.
16	B1:	Maybe.
17	T1:	That is the I think is=
18	I1:	Ah:
19	T1:	=*keun-chai*. They call it *keun-chai*.

[Nine lines pass. The full extract can be seen in Appendix B]

29	T1:	But, this one is like green.
30	B1:	Green. Yes. It looks like green and yeah I'm not sure the name.
31	T1:	Hmm hmm.
32	B1:	But, I don't like the smell that that that plant. And they add it.
33	T1:	They put it on the hotpot.
34	B1:	Yeah in the hot-
35	T1:	With the morning glory, pumpkin?
36	B1:	Yeah. The morning glory, pumpkin.
37	T1:	I think it's *keun-chai*.
38	I1:	Ah:::
39	B1:	Yeah. So when they add it, I don't want to eat. ((laughs))

In Extract 3, the Burmese participant (B1) was talking about an ingredient she did not like in Thai foods. Although the Thai participant (T1) did not understand what B1 said, he did not

interrupt her speaking with other communicative strategies. He used *let it pass* accompanied by the backchannels "Umm umm" in Line 3 and "Onn" in Line 5 for the non-understanding, hoping that she would continue the talk till he arrived at understanding. Then, B1 continued talking about in which food that ingredient could be found. B1 gave the information that the vegetable/plant she was referring to was put in the hotpot, together with other vegetables such as morning glory and cabbage. They continued their talk till they achieved the understanding of what B1 was saying at the beginning, i.e., celery which is called *keun-chai* in Thai. In the process of arriving at understanding, first T1 mentioned the name of that ingredient in English as in Line 15 and in Thai as in Line 19. Then, T1 used a confirmation check in Line 29 for the colour of that ingredient, another confirmation check in Line 33 to confirm that the ingredient was included in hotpot, and the third confirmation check in Line 35 to confirm that the ingredient was put in hotpot together with other vegetables such as morning glory and cabbage. After these confirmation checks with B1, T1 realized that the ingredient B1 was talking about was celery. In this example, T1 used *let it pass* at the beginning without interrupting B1 even though T1 did not understand what B1 was saying. Then, after B1's additional information, T1 got an idea that the ingredient B1 was talking about was celery. Then, T1 used confirmation checks to conclude that the ingredient B1 was talking about was definitely celery. Later, in the retrospective interview, T1 said that his confirmation checks made him sure that what B1 was talking about was celery. In this way, the Thai participant in the study arrived at understanding by using confirmation checks even though he had used *let it pass* at the beginning.

In the same extract (Extract 3), the Burmese participant (B1) also used *let it pass* although she did not understand what celery was in the Thai participant's (T1) talk in Line 15. She confirmed later in the interview with the researcher that she did not ask for clarification as she was sure that T1 would point out the ingredient she was talking about as the conversation went on. That's why she said she just used "Maybe" in Line 16.

Another example of *let it pass* found in the study was in Group B's conversation, Extract 4, whose participants were an Indonesian (I2) and a Thai (T2), who were again speaking about traditional food. In the conversation, I2 was talking about the recipe of an Indonesian dish, *pecel*. In Extract 4, I2 started talking about "dough" in Line 2 and she spoke about how to make "dough" in Line 3. Then, I2 mentioned to put some corn in the dough. When I2 said "corn" in Line 4, T2 used a question as a clarification request in Line 5. However, although T2 did not understand what dough was, she did not ask for clarification from I2 and *let it pass*. In the retrospective interview, T2 said that she thought she would understand it later. However, later when she could not imagine what dough was, T2 started asking I2 questions. For example, in Line 20, T2 asked I2 if dough was like boiled rice. Also, in Line 23, T2 asked I2 whether I2 boiled the dough or not, then whether I2 fried the dough or not in Line 25. It was quite a long time that T2 let her non-understanding of the word dough pass. It took 40 seconds between her *let it pass* and her first clarification request in Line 20. Before arriving at understanding for what dough was, T2 also used repetitions as a clarification request in Line 28. Then, T2 understood what dough was in Line 30 after I2 gave her an example i.e. "pancake dough" in Line 29. Later in the conversation, I2 explained that the dough for *pecel* was not that watery as in pancake dough.

Extract 4

1	I2:	And then after that, you can have umm like you need make you need
2		to fry some dough. So, like this dough, ((gesture of making dough))
3		you just put some flour, and mix it with water. And then, you put
4		some corn.
5	T2:	Some what?
6	I2:	Corn.

[13 lines pass. The full extract can be seen in Appendix B]

20	T2:	Umm. Ah: It's a kind of like umm I don't know ah: boil rice?
21		No. But, but it's powder rice? It's it's flour. It's not it's not rice.
22	I2:	Yea-
23	T2:	You boil it? You boil it?
24	I2:	No. No. Not not-
25	T2:	You fry? You fry?
26	I2:	Yeah. So, it's like: You make the dough. So, the dough consists of
27		water and flour.
28	T2:	Dough? Dough?
29	I2:	Dough. Yeah. Dough. Like you know pancake dough.
30	T2:	Ah: OK. OK.

In this example, T2 used *let it pass* at the beginning without interrupting B1 when she did not understand what dough was, hoping that she would understand later. However, later when she did not arrive at understanding for what dough was, T2 started asking questions to I2, and then used a repetition before she got the idea for what dough was. This example shows that even though *let it pass* is used, English speakers from ASEAN countries use other communication strategies when necessary to arrive at understanding.

However, there was an occasion in the study where the same participant, i.e. T2, later on in the task did not use any other communication strategies even though she did not understand what the interlocutor said. In Extract 5, I2 was talking about the vegetable ingredients included in pecel. When I2 did not remember how to say a leaf vegetable in English, first I2 code-switched into Bahasa Indonesia for that leaf vegetable by saying "sawi" as in Line 4, then she said it was "lettuce" as in Line 7. T2 did not understand what lettuce was, and she repeated "Lettuce" as in Line 8, and used backchannels in Line 10, thinking by herself what lettuce was. From T2's repetition in Line 8 and T2's posture and facial expression noted in Line 10, I2 noticed that T2 did not know what lettuce was. So, I2 used a gesture to let T2 know the shape of lettuce. Even though T2 used backchannels in Line 12 and some more backchannels in her response to I2 in Line 14, T2 still did not get any idea for what lettuce was, and she just let-it-pass here, hoping that she would understand later. In the retrospective interview, T2 said that she did not know what lettuce was at the beginning and she used let it pass. Later, she got an idea for what lettuce was by herself, recalling I2's explanation for the colour of lettuce and for the shape of lettuce by saying it was like cabbage.

Extract 5

1	I2:	((laughs)) It's really good. And actually, you just need to bring like
2		the greens, any green leaves you want as long as it- the color is green.
3		So, you can have like spinach, you can have like um what what is
4		*sawi*? ((laughs)) I don't remember. I don't remember.
5		((laughs)) like these these ((gesture for the shape of the leaf)) cabbage.
6	T2:	Cabbage?
7	I2:	Not really not really cabbage. li:- lettuce.
8	T2:	Lettuce?
9	I2:	Yeah.
10	T2:	Hmm hmm. ((posture and facial expression of thinking))
11	I2:	Yeah. Like the white one. ((gesture for the shape of lettuce))
12	T2:	Ah hmm hmm.
13	I2:	You know?
14	T2:	Ah umm. OK. Yeah.
15	I2:	Yeah. You can have that one. You can have like the green leaf of
16		anything with leaf, and anything with green in color.

In this example, although T2 did not know what lettuce was, she just *let it pass* with backchannels. T2 did not interrupt I2's talk with other additional communication strategies like clarification request. T2 tried to arrive at her understanding later by herself by recalling what I2 had said.

In the study, it was also found that there were participants who used *let it pass* but the reason behind their use of *let it pass* was not that they hoped they would understand later what their interlocutors had said. The following extract (Extract 6) was from the Group C conversation between a Cambodian participant (C1) and an Indonesian participant (I3), who were cooking an Indonesian snack.

Extract 6

1	I3:	So, first thing first. What we are going to do is you will start dicing
2		the garlic ((points at the garlic cloves)) in small into small piece.
3	C1:	OK. ((takes garlic cloves and holds in the hand))
4	I3:	Ah.
5	C1:	Where is the cut? ((uses gesture of cutting))
6	I3:	You can use the- you can have a look there.
7	C1:	((goes to the dish drainer and looks for the knife among the utensils
8		put in it, then takes a knife and comes back to the table on which
9		a chopping board already placed by I3))
10	I3:	Yeah. I used to make it into the like a paste
11	C1:	((washes the chopping board))
12	I3:	with the garlic but since we don't have mortar and pestle here, so

13		we can just dice it up
14	C1:	((finishes washing and come back to the table))
15	I3:	into small pieces.

In Extract 6, there were two moments C1 did not understand clearly what I3 had said. The first one was when I3 said: "I used to make it into like a paste" in Line 10, and the second one was when I3 said: "…since we don't have mortar and pestle here, so we can just dice it up into small pieces." in Line 12, Line 13 and Line 15. At these moments, C1 just *let it pass* and did not ask for any clarification request. Later, when C1 cut garlic, it was not in the way I3 had said, but C1 chopped garlic in his own way. During the retrospective interview, C1 said that even though he did not clearly understand what I3 said, he could guess what I3 wanted him to do with his knowledge of cooking.

This example shows that all the *let it pass* users do not *let it pass*, hoping that what they do not understand will be clear later. There are some *let it pass* users who just *let it pass* for what they do not understand, and guess the meaning followed by their own action based on their guess.

The same situation was also found in the conversation of Group D whose participants were a Burmese (B2) and an Indonesian (I4). The following (Extract 7) was from their cooking activity of an Indonesian dish, *opor*. In the conversation, B2 and I4 were talking about galangal, a kind of spice commonly used in some ASEAN countries. When B2 cut galangal, I4 wanted to say that B2 did not need to cut the galangal, but he needed to press it. Then, I4 wanted to say they usually use a pestle in Indonesia to crush the galangal, but I4 did not remember the word and so I4 used the word "pusher" in Line 14. Here, B2 did not understand what I4 meant for the word "pusher" in Line 14. However, B2 did not ask any questions but used backchannels as in Line 16. Even though I4 added the information that the *pusher* was made of stone, B2 still did not understand what it meant, but B2 used backchannels again in Line 18. In the retrospective interview, B2 said that although he did not understand what I4 had said, he did not interrupt I4 and just *let it pass* because he guessed what I4 wanted him to do was to crush the galangal, and he knew how to crush it with knife. Therefore, whether he understood what *pusher* meant or not was nothing related to what he needed to do in their cooking activity, and he did not need clarification for the term. That is why he *let it pass* without any hope that he would understand it later.

Extract 7

1	B2:	((throws away the galangal skin in the bin, washes the galangal and the knife))
2		OK. After that?
3	I4:	Yeah. It's a little bit hard to press. I don't know:
4	B2:	Oh! press?
5	I4:	Yeah. To push-
6	B2:	((starts cutting the galangal into pieces))
7	I4:	Ah no no no. With ah like the garlic, you: [:
8	B2:	[Yeah like XXXXX but I cannot
9		press.
10	I4:	Oh. Yeah yeah yeah yeah. Easily-

11	B2:	After slicing. [Yeah. Yeah.
12	I4:	[OK. I understand
13	B2:	((cuts the galangal into pieces))
14	I4:	Yeah. Usually in Indonesia, we have like pusher you know: ((gesture of
15		pressing))
16	B2:	Aww aww aww.
17	I4:	From stone. ((laughs))
18	B2:	Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yes.
19	I4:	But I cannot find here.
20	B2:	((throws away the skins into the bin)) Yeah. Yeah. OK.
21	I4:	That stuff.

This example also shows that the *let it pass* users who are English speakers from ASEAN countries also use *let it pass* in cases without hoping that what they do not understand now will become clear later. Moreover, this example shows that the *let it pass* users also use the strategy when they do not need clarification at all.

A similar situation was found in the conversation of Group D again. In Extract 8, B2 and I4 were talking about bay leaf during their cooking activity of *opor*. In the conversation, I4 *let it pass* for what she did not understand and did not ask for clarification at all, thinking that she did not need to know about it. In the conversation, I4 was talking about "bay leaves" as in Line 1 which they would be using in their cooking. Actually, the two leaves the two participants were talking about were mismatched. B2 thought that the bay leaf they would be using in their cooking which I4 was saying was the bael leaf he knew. So, he started talking about the thorny bael tree and the difficulty of picking the bael leaf in Line 8. When B2 was talking about the bael leaf he knew, I4 did not interrupt and just *let it pass* till Line 16 although she was not clear about what B2 was talking. Although she knew that there are no thorns around the bay leaf, and she did not understand the content of what B2 was talking, I4 did not ask for any clarification. In the retrospective interview, I4 said that she just *let it pass* at that point because she thought the content of what B2 was talking was not related to their cooking, and so she thought that it was not necessary for her to know about it.

Extract 8

1	I4:	Yeah. In my country, also bay leaves can grow ah everywhere.
2	B2:	Yeah.
3	I4:	Usually everywhere but it's especially in the high-high-high-high place,
4	B2:	Hmm hmm.
5	I4:	like mountains.
6	B2:	Hmm hmm hmm.
7	I4:	Hmm Hmm. ((laughs))
8	B2:	You know, but it's a little difficult to pluck these leaves from
9		the bael tree because it has some spines.
10	I4:	Hmm hmm.
11	B2:	They are very sharpening. You know not very sharp.
12	I4:	Hmm Hmm.

13	B2:	Very pointed.
14	I4:	Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.
15	B2:	That's why very dangerous but it can produce the good smell.
16		That's why I brought I like ((chuckles very quietly)) this bael leaf.

This example shows that the English speakers from ASEAN countries sometimes use *let it pass* when they think they simply do not need to understand what their interlocutor is saying.

Similarly, I4 also *let it pass* for what she did not understand but did not ask for clarification at all in her conversation with another interlocutor in another cooking activity. Extract 9 was from the conversation between I4 and a Malaysian participant (M1) while they were cooking *nasi goreng,* which is one of the most commonly eaten foods in both Indonesia and Malaysia.

Extract 9

1	M1:	Hm: so, I spent a lot of time in Jakarta.
2	I4:	Hm hm. Hm hm.
3	M1:	And the lecturers and also some students there always bring me ah
4		to many good restaurants, and I love the spicy food like *ayam*,
5		*ayam geprek*, *ayam-*=
6	I4:	Ah yeah.
7	M1:	=*ayam ga- gam- gamis garmis*, I don't remember.
8	I4:	Hm hm.

In Extract 9, M1 was talking about which Indonesian foods he had had and liked when he was in Indonesia. At that time M1 code-switched to indicate the Indonesian foods he fell in love with. M1's code-switching in Line 4 and Line 5 made I4 easily understand which Indonesian foods M1 was talking about. However, when M1 said *ayam garmis* in Line 7, I4 did not understand it. As M1 was not sure how to say that Indonesian food, he just pronounced the name as he remembered. Although I4 did not understand it, she used a backchannel in Line 8, *letting it pass*. Later in the retrospective interview, I4 said that she did not know which Indonesian food M1 was talking about but she *let-it-pass* because that was not related to their cooking activity, and she thought she did not need to understand that part. She said although she *let it pass*, they could continue and accomplish their cooking activity. In this example, I4 thought that she did not need clarification for what she did not understand, without hoping that it will be clear later.

This example shows that the *let it pass* users among English speakers in the ASEAN context may use the *let it pass* strategy when they think that their non-understanding will not hinder their communication, and when they think that they do not need clarification at all.

When the *let it pass* users in the study were asked why they used *let it pass* in their conversations, all of them replied that they did not want to make their interlocutor feel embarrassed, and also they wanted their conversation to flow smoothly without interruption. For T1 from Group A and T2 from Group B, they said that first they hoped what they did not understand would become clear later. That's why they *let it pass*, and only when they realized that their *let it pass* did not make their hopes come true, they resolved their non-understanding

by using other communication strategies such as a confirmation check by T1 in Extract 3 and asking for clarification by T2 in Extract 4.

However, not all the *let it pass* users in the study resolved their non-understanding later after their use of *let it pass*. Although T2 resolved her non-understanding in Extract 4, she did not resolve her non-understanding in Extract 5. She just tried to arrive at her understanding later by herself by recalling what her interlocutor had said. Also, as discussed in Extract 6 and Extract 7, C1 and B2 did not resolve their non-understanding after their use of *let it pass*. They said that although they did not understand their interlocutor, they knew what to do from their previous knowledge of cooking and so, they just *let it pass* for their non-understanding.

There was a different reason for the use of *let it pass* and not resolving the non-understanding in Extract 8 and Extract 9. In these two examples, I4 said that she did not need to understand what the interlocutors had said because it was not related to and would not hinder their task of cooking. That's why she just *let it pass* and did not resolve it later either.

To answer the first research question, why English speakers from ASEAN countries say they use *let it pass* in their communication, it was found that the English speakers in this present research thought that their non-understanding part would be clear later as in Firth (1996), and they also did not want to make their interlocutor feel embarrassed. They thought that their interruption with other communication strategies may hinder the smoothness of their conversation flow, and also some interlocutors may feel embarrassed upon the interruption. That's why some English speakers in the study did not interrupt their interlocutors, and tried to arrive at their understanding by themselves by guessing the meaning based on their previous experience and knowledge of cooking.

For the second research question, whether when they do not arrive at understanding later after the use of *let it pass*, they resolve their non-understanding to arrive at actual understanding and why or why not, it was found that some English speakers in the present study tried to resolve their non-understanding by using other communication strategies such as confirmation checks and clarification requests when they realized that they could not arrive at understanding after their use of *let it pass* whereas other English speakers in the present study did not resolve their non-understanding.

The first reason why they did or did not resolve their non-understanding depends on the type of task they were given. For example, participants from Group A and Group B were not doing the actual cooking activity like participants from other groups so there were no ingredients around them. So, when B1 from Group A was talking about the ingredient she did not like, there was nothing around T1 which helped him guess that the ingredient B1 was talking about was celery, and so T1 resolved his non-understanding with some confirmation checks to know that the ingredient B1 was talking about was celery.

Unlike them, when I4 from Group D was telling B2 that people in her country usually use a "pusher" (she meant pestle) to crush the galangal, B2 did not understand what I4 meant but they were cooking in the kitchen and there were the ingredients and the utensils they needed around them. Actually, that was his first experience using the galangal in cooking. But the hardness of the galangal made him realize that he needed to use something to crush it. Therefore, although he did not understand what "pusher" meant, he did not resolve his non-understanding and just put the galangal on the chopping board and crushed it with a big knife.

Another reason whether the English speakers in the present study resolved their non-understanding or not depends on whether the non-understanding part was related to the task they

were doing or not. It depends on topic or content of the non-understanding part. For example, when M1 from Group E was talking about the Indonesian foods he likes, I4 did not understand a food M1 was talking about. But I4 did not resolve her non-understanding, just letting it pass with a backchannel because she thought that it was nothing related to their cooking activity, and her non-understanding would not hinder their cooking activity.

To sum up the findings in the present study, the English speakers in the study used *let it pass* to not make their interlocutor feel embarrassed because of an interruption, and to make their conversation flow smoothly. Therefore, they tried to arrive at their understanding by themselves and only when they could not arrive at understanding by themselves, they tried to resolve their non-understanding by using other communication strategies. There were also times when English speakers in the present study did not resolve their non-understanding because they thought that their non-understanding would not hinder accomplishing their assigned task.

5. Conclusion

Similar to Kirkpatrick's (2007b) observations, the participants in the present study used *let it pass* when they did not understand what their interlocutors had said, hoping that it would be clear later and also to avoid causing embarrassment. Among the *let it pass* users in the study, some used other communication strategies to resolve their non-understanding when they realized that their use of *let it pass* did not make them arrive at understanding. This is in line with Firth's (1996) discussion on the use of *let it pass*. Others did not try anything to arrive at understanding, but just *let it pass*. One reason behind their *let it pass* was that although they did not understand what their interlocuter had said, they knew what to do. Another reason was that the part *let it pass* was used for was not related to the task being done and the non-understanding could not hinder the communication.

In brief, while accomplishing the shared goal, each group in the present study used *let it pass* as a communication strategy to make their conversation flow smoothly while maintaining their politeness as long as their non-understanding of what their interlocutor has said did not affect accomplishing the shared goal. This finding leads to the conclusion that the use of *let it pass* systematically facilitates talk when English speakers from ASEAN countries communicate with each other in English. This should be noted by the English language learners who are potential ELF users, and they should know their own communication purposes.

The present study reflects what House (2012), and Lopriore and Vettorel (2015) have suggested, concerned with how ELF users deal with each other in real contexts. Also, the examples in the present study might to some extent contribute to learners and users of ELF in developing "intercultural competence in ELF" as House (2012, p. 200) suggests. According to Jenkins et al. (2011), English teachers should reflect the ELF research findings and take into account the significance of ELF in real-world situations. One of the examples is Kalocsai's (2009) findings concerning the favourabe attitude of younger English users of ELF, paying attention to arriving at shared understanding without concerning the mistakes they make. Kalocsai's finding is in line with Kirkpatrick's (2007a) argument for using pluralistic approach in English language teaching, paying less attention to language norms but more to communication strategies. This is something which can be explored through analyzing such strategies as *let it pass* in the classroom.

Till now, there has been not much literature on English spoken by ELF speakers from ASEAN countries, particularly very little research has been done on the use of the *let it pass* as a communication strategy. The findings in this present study may contribute some help for ELF learners and users not only from the ASEAN region but also from non-ASEAN regions. Although, it should be mentioned that the data in this study was collected in a specific social setting and if further data is collected in other settings like business or academic settings, participants' use of *let it pass* may be different and thus, findings may vary from those in this study.

Acknowledgments

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Appendix A

Transcription conventions
The video-recorded materials were transcribed according to the following notation system which was an adapted version of Atkinson & Heritage (1984).

=	a continuous utterance, a continuing intonation
,	a continuing intonation
.	a stopping fall in tone
:	an extension of the sound or syllable it follows, more colons prolong the stretch
?	a rising inflection
!	an animated tone, not necessarily an exclamation
[	overlapping
wor-	a halt or cutoff, a word or clause not produced in its entirety
-word-	syllables of a word or strings of words to show stammering
((word))	a non-vocal action, description of conversational scene
word	non-English terms
XXXXX	inaudible sound or utterance

Appendix B

Extract 3

1	B1:	I don't remember it. Sometimes, that smell has: that smell
2		they told me that smell come from the plant.
3	T1:	Umm umm.
4	B1:	Vegetable one kind of vegetable. That has a lot of smell.
5	T1:	Onn.
6	B1:	In the:: You know. Right? At the night market,=
7	T1:	Hmm.
8	B1:	=there is a little hotpot.
9	T1:	Hotpot.
10	I1:	Hotpot. Yeah.
11	B1:	That hotpot has they gave us umm ahh the water glory, cabbage,
12		that-that kind of vegetable.
13	T1:	Yes.
14	B1:	I don't know the name.
15	T1:	That's I think it's a kind of celery.
16	B1:	Maybe.
17	T1:	That is the I think is=
18	I1:	Ah:
19	T1:	=*keun-chai*. They call it *keun-chai*.
20	B1:	Yes.
21	I1:	Not *phakchi*? ((laughs))
22	B1:	((laughs))
23	T1:	Not *phakchi*. Not *phakchi*.
24	I1:	((laughs))
25	B1:	((laughs))
26	T1:	*Phakchi*, *phakchi* is the the green one. *Chiangmai*.
27	I1:	Ah. Yes. Yes. Yes.
28	B1:	Yeah.
29	T1:	But, this one is like green.
30	B1:	Green. Yes. It looks like green and yeah I'm not sure the name.
31	T1:	Hmm hmm.
32	B1:	But, I don't like the smell that that that plant. And they add it.
33	T1:	They put it on the hotpot.
34	B1:	Yeah in the hot-
35	T1:	With the morning glory, pumpkin?
36	B1:	Yeah. The morning glory, pumpkin.
37	T1:	I think it's *keun-chai*.
38	I1:	Ah:::
39	B1:	Yeah. So when they add it, I don't want to eat. ((laughs))

Extract 4

1	I2:	And then after that, you can have umm like you need make you need
2		to fry some dough. So, like this dough, ((gesture of making dough))
3		you just put some flour, and mix it with water. And then, you put
4		some corn.
5	T2:	Some what?
6	I2:	Corn.
7	T2:	Corn?
8	I2:	Yeah. Corn.
9	T2:	Hmm hmm.
10	I2:	You know like they have it here in the can.
11	T2:	Ah: hmm.
12	I2:	Yeah just put it. ((gesture of putting corn into the dough))
13	T2:	Ah yes. OK.
14	I2:	And you can just cut ((gesture of cutting)) carrot.
15	T2:	Carrot.
16	I2:	Just like little-little piece and put it there as well. And mix it.
17		((gesture of putting carrot into the dough and mixing it))
18	T2:	Stir it. OK.
19	I2:	Just stir it. And you can put some salt, and pepper until it tastes good.
20	T2:	Umm. Ah: It's a kind of like umm I don't know ah: boil rice?
21		No. But, but it's powder rice? It's it's flour. It's not it's not rice.
22	I2:	Yea-
23	T2:	You boil it? You boil it?
24	I2:	No. No. Not not-
25	T2:	You fry? You fry?
26	I2:	Yeah. So, it's like: You make the dough. So, the dough consists of
27		water and flour.
28	T2:	Dough? Dough?
29	I2:	Dough. Yeah. Dough. Like you know pancake dough.
30	T2:	Ah: OK. OK.
31	I2:	It will be salty. So, you put the- ah you put water and flour.
32	T2:	Hmm.
33	I2:	It's not really like pancake. It's more like hmm hmm. If pancake,
34		it's like really ((gesture of pouring pancake dough from above)) how to say?
35	T2:	Sticky?
36	I2:	No. It's really liquid. It's not too liquid.
37	T2:	Umm OK.
38	I2:	It's a bit like sticky, but not so sticky. ((laughs))
39	T2:	((laughs)) I see. I see. OK. OK. I will try.
40	I2:	Yeah. So, like water, ah no no. Flour, water, pepper, salt. ((gesture of
41		making dough))
42	T2:	Hmm. ((nods))

Extract 6

1	I3:	So, first thing first. What we are going to do is you will start dicing
2		the garlic ((points at the garlic cloves)) in small into small piece.
3	C1:	OK. ((take garlic cloves and hold in the hand))
4	I3:	Ah.
5	C1:	Where is the cut? ((gesture of cutting))
6	I3:	You can use the- you can have a look there.
7	C1:	((goes to the dish drainer and looks up the knife among the utensils
8		put in it, then takes a knife and comes back to the table on which
9		a chopping board already placed by I3))
10	I3:	Yeah. I used to make it into the like a paste
11	C1:	((washes the chopping board))
12	I3:	with the garlic but since we don't have mortar and pestle here, so
13		we can just dice it up
14	C1:	((finishes washing and come back to the table))
15	I3:	into small pieces.
16	C1:	((starts peeling the garlic cloves))
17	I3:	I'll check the oil. ((murmurs))
18	C1:	((finishes peeling the garlic cloves)) Do you have a bigger knife?
19		((holds the knife being used)) Not this one.
20	I3:	The bigger one is not as sharp as this one.
21	C1:	OK. ((starts mashing the garlic by putting the knife on each garlic clove
22		and pressing the knife with his palm heel))
23	I3:	But if you want, you can try.
24	C1:	((goes to the dish drainer and finds the bigger knife)) Where is it?
25	I3:	It's there.
26	C1:	((looks up a bigger knife in the dish drainer but finds only a small one)) No.
27	I3:	It's not there?
28	C1:	Yeah. Yeah. I saw it. This one. ((takes the knife to the table)) OK. ((looks
29		at the knife carefully)) It's not sharp. ((continues using the knife which
30		was used at the beginning, then starts chopping the garlic)) Is it enough?

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