

Volume 8 · Issue 2 · 2022

ISSN 2367-5705 Print  
ISSN 2367-8704 Online

# ENGLISH STUDIES

at NBU

**ENGLISH STUDIES AT NBU**

New Bulgarian University

Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures

**Volume 8, Issue 2, 2022**, ISSN 2367-5705 (Print); 2367-8704 (Online)

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## EDITORS' MESSAGE



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Stan Bogdanov,  
Managing Editor

### New Year, New Hopes in Times of Trouble

At the end of this hard year, we send our Season's Greetings to all our authors, reviewers, and readers, and best wishes for holidays and the New Year!

We are delighted to introduce this Issue 2 of Volume 8 of *English Studies at NBU*!

It features articles on translation, foreign language teaching, including approaches to teaching English to students with autism spectrum disorders and internally displaced students, literature, and political science.

We complete the issue with a book review published in 2022, still hot off the press.

Stay safe in the New Year!

And keep those manuscripts coming!

Cheers and Happy 2023!

Boris and Stan

# SEMANTIC INTERPRETATIONS OF PROPER NAMES IN LITERARY TRANSLATION: TERRY PRATCHETT'S "WYRD SISTERS" IN BULGARIAN

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## Abstract

Name crafting has been and still is of importance when devising a literary character with certain traits and features that are meant to outstand a character's personality. Thus, literary names serve as a handy tool in any piece of writing, since they complete their bearers in a discrete, yet a vivid way when given an appropriate name by the author of a piece of writing. As far as fantasy is concerned, the choice of literary names is freer, but still requires more creativity, given the fact that fantasy names can be translated. When rendered from one language into another, names undergo various structural alterations, semantic modulations, or even syntactic reconstructions. Therefore, the current paper aims at analysing literary names in Terry Pratchett's fantasy novel "Wyrd Sisters" with focus on their rendering into Bulgarian. Etymology and semantic interpretations are to be sought for as well as morphological and syntactic structure of names in both languages of interest in favour of the hypothesis that literary names carry meaning which, when revealed, gives a more concrete idea of a personage in a novel.

**Keywords:** literary onomastics, charactonyms, interpretation, fantasy, translation

## Article history:

Received: 31 March 2022

Reviewed: 10 May 2022

Accepted: 03 September 2022

Published: 20 December 2022

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**Citation:** Manova-Georgieva, Y. (2022). Semantic Interpretations of Proper Names in Literary Translation: Terry Pratchett's "Wyrd Sisters" in Bulgarian. *English Studies at NBU*, 8(2), 167-182.  
<https://doi.org/10.33919/esnbu.22.2.1>

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### Names – nature and meaning

Names serve as denotative signs. They generally designate the object they refer to without attributing any specific features to the referent. Consequently, they are not to possess a certain meaning, yet only seen as common referring expressions (Kearns, 2011, p.3). As such, names are subject to research within the boundaries of general onomastics which deals with conventional names that bear no semantic load, yet only possess wishing or protective nature concealed in their etymology (Ilchev, 1969, p.11). This branch of onomastics accepts proper names as 'originally devoid of semantic meaning' (Hamon (1992) cited by Windt, 2006, p.115). In defining proper names, Motschenbacher (2020, p.92) claims that they possess lexical and proprial meaning. He further clarifies that non-transparent names are those that possess proprial meaning, whereas the ones pointing to a specific entity and having homonymous nature hold lexical meaning. General proper names are attributed to people and serve the mere function of pointing at a specific referent. Even though they are sometimes endowed with lexical value, this lexical value is not deemed significant for the personality of the name-bearer.

Another branch of onomastics, namely literary onomastics, is mainly interested in literary names, or the so-called 'charactonyms', a term coined by Fowler (2012) to refer to meaningful semantically loaded names of literary characters. Cavill (2016) also distinguishes between *Cratyllic* and *Hermogenean* names having originated from Plato's dialogue with Cratylus on the truthfulness and the meaning of names. Cratyllic names in his view are not seen as 'merely patterned appellatives', but as meaningful units in the sense that they represent something important for the person or place they denote. Hermogenean names, on the contrary, are accepted as 'the conventional application of syllables to identify a person or place' (Cavill, 2016, p. 2). Fowler (2012) at hand presents the idea of what literary names are, also giving proof with the famous Plato's *Cratylus* and his dialogue with Hermogenes, whereby Cratyllic names are perceived as natural and meaningful, whereas Hermogenean names are found to be arbitrarily assigned. Consequently, the terms Cratyllic and Hermogenean have started being used out of this argument, contrasting the moral-loaded meaningful Cratyllic and the ordinary meaningless Hermogenean names. Following the discussion on the meaningfulness of names, charactonyms can thus be regarded as Cratyllic names. Windt (2006, p. 114), supporting Barthes' theory of 'The Realism Effect' of 1968, views literary names as 'the

author's most important instruments in the construction of an illusion of reality and credibility'. Coates (2015, p.32) further distinguishes between three ways of literary naming – arbitrary, cultural and semantic. He sees intended naming as the core of literary onomastics and the purposefulness of name choice in literature. The cultural process of inventing a meaningful name strives to decipher implicit meanings that can be fully recovered in context. The semantic aspect of naming in literature, in his view, encompasses the apparent senses or lexical meanings of a certain charactonym. All of the above-mentioned gives grounds to further analyze and attempt to find the semantic value of literary names in Terry Pratchett's 'Wyrd Sisters' as well as to seek for the translation equivalents of characters' names discussing the choice of the translator.

### **Fantasy literature, fancy naming**

Fantasy is the genre that has been gaining popularity in the last years, yet still posing difficulties when defined and analyzed. As far as the straightforward definition of the term is concerned, Encyclopedia Britannica sees 'fantasy' as 'imaginative fiction dependent for effect on strangeness of setting (such as other worlds or times) and of characters (such as supernatural or unnatural beings)'. Although not clearly considered 'high' literature, the fantasy genre intertwines the supernatural, alternative worlds and creatures outside of reality whereby the supernatural serves as the base for characters, plot, and naming practices, which makes it an interesting and fruitful field for research.

When a name in fantasy is created, there are several stages that the name undergoes as to serve the purpose of being identified as a charactonym and its possible semantic interpretations to be sought for. Gibka (2015, p.84) classifies these stages limiting them to five steps which include, as follows:

- 1) Creation of the object in a literary work, namely the character and invention of a name,
- 2) Finding motivational features that can be attached to the object, the situational context or to the name itself,
- 3) Turning these features into inspirational, which is the moment when the author names the character,
- 4) Entering of the name into the story by means of dialogues between personages in the plot,

- 5) Meeting of the charactonym and the reader upon the publication of the piece of writing.

All stages of name creation show that charactonyms fall in the scope of meaning-related research because they are interesting from a lexical point of view, given that the etymology of a name might lead to the character's personality. In addition, the semantics of a charactonym is also crucial, especially when fantasy literature is concerned, because literary names in fantasy can be translated, as mentioned above. Fernandes (2006, p. 45) sees names as mono-referential carriers of semantic, semiotic or sound symbolic meaning, which gives grounds for a more detailed investigation of charactonyms in a literary work. The semantic meaning is closely related to the denotation of the name, whereas the semiotic meaning is found in the intercultural or intertextual relations the name provokes when seen as meaningful. Fernandes associates the sound symbolic meaning with the onomatopoeic nature of names. Consequently, translation procedures and theory of translation in general are also of help when a decision is made as to whether a name is semantically loaded and needs translation, or it is conventional and can be transcribed or transliterated. Therefore, the current analysis is focused on the names of characters in Terry Pratchett's sixth *Discworld* novel 'Wyrd Sisters', which is developed along the storyline of the consequences of a murder. King Verence I of Lancre is murdered and the main characters – the three witches *Granny Weatherwax*, *Magrat Garlick* and *Nanny Ogg* – are given the king's son *Tomjon* to take care of until he grows up. The three witches decide to give the baby to a passing group of actors and thus allow time to decide what will happen with the baby until he is old enough to become a king and defeat his father's murderer *Duke Felmet*. The genre of the novel being fantasy, a lot of absurd and funny scenarios are developed within the main story – a play is being prepared and love is experienced by one of the witches. Apart from the intriguing plot, what draws the attention of the reader is the choice of names for the characters in the novel.

### **Translation Procedures with Literary Names**

When rendered from a source to a target text, names undergo changes which, although mostly conventional, at times change the perception of the name itself. For the hereby presented study, the translation procedures related to names proposed by Fernandes (2016) have been used. Fernandes, quoting Hermans (1988, p. 88) divides names in two groups when their translation is discussed, namely conventional and



loaded names. Conventional names are seen as devoid of any semantic value and therefore their phonology and morphology do not need any adaptation in the target text apart from transcription or transliteration. He claims that loaded names are 'motivated for translation' (2016, p. 49) and range from 'faintly 'suggestive' to 'overtly expressive' names and nicknames' (ibid). Therefore, certain translation procedures are to be applied when a semantically loaded name is analyzed and consequently translated.

Fernandes distinguishes between ten translation procedures concerning the rendering of charactonyms, namely: rendition, copy, transcription, substitution, recreation, deletion, addition, transposition, phonological replacement and conventionality. Some of the presented procedures share similar value with Newmark (1988), Vinay and Darbelnet (1995), Catford (1965), etc., yet some specificity is added exceptionally attributed to charactonyms.

**Rendition** is the procedure used when a name is semantically motivated and transparent. It is in fact the process of translating a name so that the characteristics of the name-bearer become visible in the target text as well. This is a procedure especially valuable when children's literature is concerned. **Copy** is seen as the simplest approach to rendering names which resembles Vinay and Darbelnet's idea of 'borrowing'. With the procedure of copying, names are reproduced in the target text the way they appear in the source text with no orthographic adjustments or alterations. **Transcription** is applied on the level of morphology, phonology, or grammar and complies with the target language rules. Transcription and transliteration are by far the most common procedures used with conventional names. Fernandes points out that he accepts the term *transcription* as synonymous to *transliteration*. The next procedure is used with names which are not semantically related in the source and the target text, yet a source name is rendered into any existent name in the target text. This procedure is **substitution** and focuses on names existing in their own language systems without bearing exact similarity to the ones in the target text. **Recreation** is used when a name is somewhat 'invented' in the target text with the purpose of rendering the semantic load of an existing name in the source text. The next procedure is **deletion**, the meaning of which is self-explanatory. The name of a character is omitted in the target text and no explanation of its meaning is provided. The **addition** procedure is the contrary to the previous one, and is used when a name is added extra information to that can lead to the better understanding of the semantic significance

of the charactonym. The **transposition** procedure is borrowed from Vinay and Darbelnet's translation methodology and presents the replacement of one word class with another without changing the meaning of the literary name. Fernandes adds Chesterman's understanding (1997) of transposition as well by adding structural and word class changes in the core of this translation procedure. The last two procedures are **phonological replacement** and **conventionality** respectively, the first of which is seen in the phonetic transfer of sounds from the source to the target text and the second is applied with names of historical value and geographic significance. With the phonological replacement Fernandes points to the difference with transcription in that the latter involves adaptation of a source language name to the phonology/morphology of a target language one while the former involves the replacement of a source language name with a target language name which is phonemically/graphologically analagous to it (2016, pp. 50-55). Although not all translation procedures are applicable to literary names, Fernandes proposes a relatively detailed approach when coping with the meaningful nature of semantically loaded names. There are, however, a few flaws to the proposed categorization of translation procedures when it comes to literary names. Firstly, as the most common method of translating names has to be rendition, still the most frequently used ones are transcription and transliteration. Fernandes uses both terms as synonyms, which, when English and Bulgarian are concerned, is not quite correct. Vlahov and Florin (1990) suggest that transcription is the phonological replacement of certain structures from a source to a target text, whereas transliteration is the process of graphological transfer of letters, which, in fact, are two different procedures with different outcome in the target text, it being English or Bulgarian. I also consider the unification of transcription and phonological replacement adequate, since they cover almost the same methods of rendition. Apart from that, all remaining procedures, although originally applied to children's literature, are fully compatible with the fantasy genre and can serve as the basis for further classification of translation procedures concerning charactonyms.

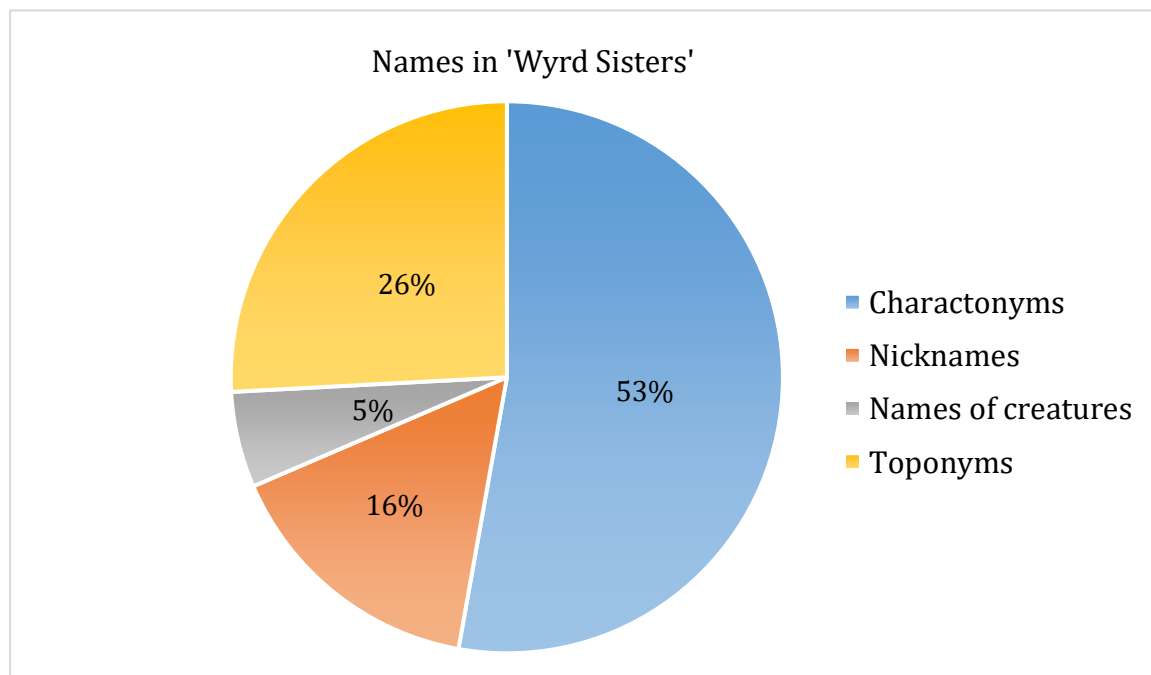
### **Data analysis and interpretation**

A total of 89 anthroponyms and toponyms have been excerpted, out of which 47 charactonyms (53%), 14 nicknames (16%), 5 names of creatures (5%) and 23 toponyms (26%) (fig.1). The percentage as well as the prevailing number of semantically loaded names proves the tendency of preference for meaningful literary names in fantasy

literature. Since the study is focused on the etymology and meaning of charactonyms, toponyms and creatures fall out of the scope of discussion. In order to analyze the way literary names have been interpreted, the semantic meaning as well as their translation equivalents in Bulgarian have also been excerpted. The novel is translated by Elena Paskaleva in 2001.

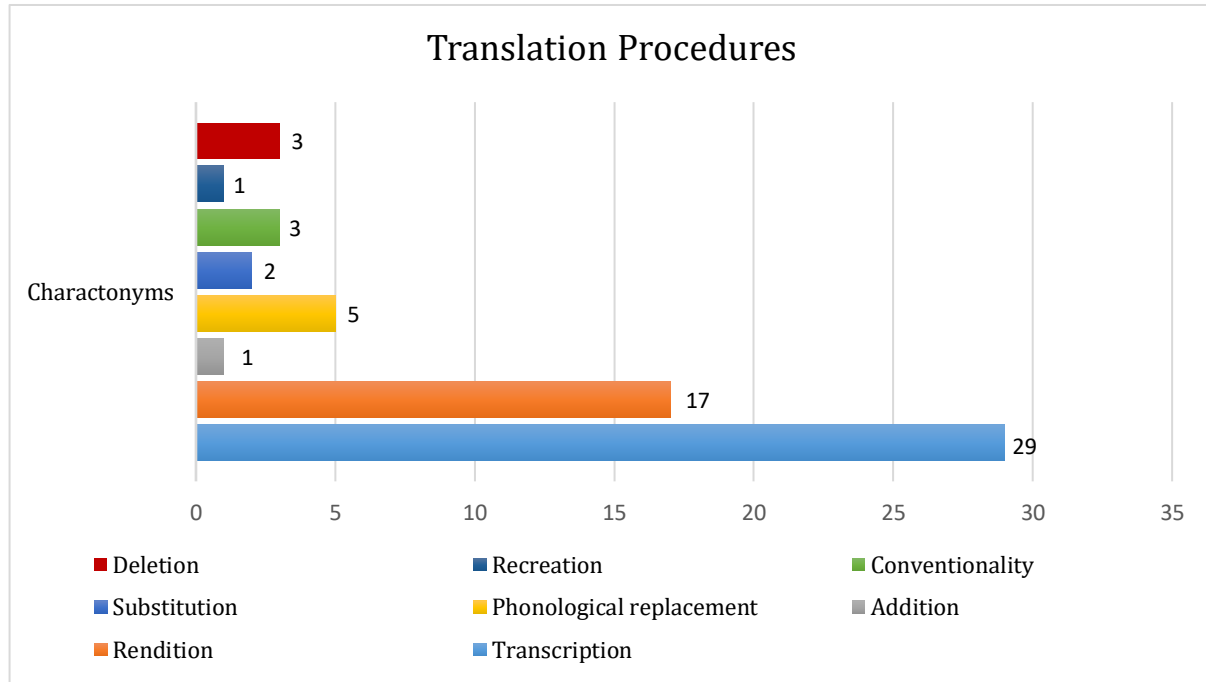
**Figure 1**

*Names in 'Wyrd Sisters'*



Since the purpose of the current study is focused on charactonyms, only semantically loaded names of people as well as nicknames are included in the qualitative analysis. Their translation equivalents are also sought for as to cast light on the semantic interpretation of literary names as well as the translation procedures used when they are rendered from English into Bulgarian. The overall number of charactonyms and nicknames in the novel is 61, whereby the literary names are 47, and the nicknames are 14. When translation procedures are applied, charactonyms and nicknames are analyzed together because the approach towards these two types of meaningful units is similar.

The data analysis reveals eight translation procedures, following Fernandes, based on charactonyms and nicknames' semantic interpretation and rendering into Bulgarian. Figure 2 signifies the overall superiority of the **transcription** procedure (47%), followed by **rendition** (26%), **phonological replacement** (8%), **substitution** (5%), **addition** (2%), **conventionality** (5%), **deletion** (5%), and **recreation** (2%).

**Figure 2***Translation procedures*

In detail, the most common translation procedure is **transcription**, although I do not consider it a translation, yet a rendering procedure. The prevailing percentage in favour of transcription can be explained by the fact that the fantasy genre is referred to as adult literature, and it is natural for adult literature not to have a large number of translated names but transcribed ones. However, the names falling in this category deserve a point in the discussion because of their semantic significance. Examples of semantically loaded names falling in this first category are *Goodie Whemper*, *Neshely Whipple*, *Young Wimsloe*, *Millie Hipwood*, etc. These names are transcribed, yet in some cases it would have been better they to be rendered in the target text by means of recreation or rendition. A literary name which would have benefited translation is the one of *Goodie Whemper* rendered in Bulgarian as *Гуду Уимпър*. Her name is transcribed although it is clearly meaningful. The first part of the name can be seen as a diminutive form of *someone good*, whereas the family name *Whemper* is a structural transformation of the verb *whimper*, which, following Cambridge Dictionary, can be interpreted as 'to make a series of small, weak sounds expressing pain or unhappiness'. *Goodie Whemper* teaches Magrat Garlick how to make magic, she likes theatrical plays and might even cry at some.

In the case of *Neshely Whipple* the direct dictionary check of the family name reveals the meaning of *whip* as 'a piece of leather or rope that is fastened to a stick, used for hitting animals or people', whereas the *-le* morpheme produces the effect of numerous consecutive repetitions of an action. Verbs having the same morpheme are defined in a similar way (*cripple, chuckle, giggle, etc*). All names in the first category are transcribed following the regulations of the phonemic transfer of the Latin alphabet to the Cyrillic equivalent.

The second group in the quantitative analysis is the **rendition procedure**, where most of the nicknames fall. Examples reveal the names and nicknames of *Granny Weatherwax* (Баба Вухронрав), *Death* (Смърт), *Grabpot Thundergust* (Пълнихалба Гръмотевична), *Brother Prankster* (Брат Шегобиец) as well as the nicknames *Black Aliss* (Черната Алис), *Blind Io* (Слепия Йо), *Herne the Hunted* (Херне Преследвания), etc.

Concerning the etymology and semantic interpretation of the names, the charactonyms falling in the category are clearly meaningful and thus translatable units. If the name of *Grabpot Thundergust* is taken as an example, the personage is a dwarf who looks fearful, yet keeping a big secret – he runs a cosmetic factory. From an etymological perspective, the family name represents a compound noun whereby the first part originates from Old English *punor*, Proto-Germanic *punraz*, Proto-Indo-European *(s)tenh<sub>2</sub>*- ('to thunder'). Germanic cognates include West Frisian *tonger* and Dutch *donder*. Other cognates include Irish *torann*, Welsh *taran*, and Latin *tonō*. (Word Sense Dictionary, n.d.). The lexical meaning of the compound noun found in Merriam-Webster Dictionary points to 'the sound that follows a flash of lightning and is caused by sudden expansion of the air in the path of the electrical discharge' or 'a loud utterance or threat', whereas *gust* bears the meaning of 'a sudden brief rush of wind'. The semantic interpretation of the first and the family name of the dwarf completes the psychological image of the personage. He is like a wind, creative, yet caressing and nice. In translation, the morphological structure of the name is preserved, presenting two compound nouns in both the fore and the family name, yet only changing the ending of both names into female equivalents, namely *Пълнихалба Гръмотевична*. This change into the feminine gender might have been influenced by the grammatical gender in Bulgarian, which common nouns have. *Халба* is feminine gender, which presupposes the translation equivalent in

the target text. The surname, therefore, follows the same morphological structure and the family name has also accepted feminine grammatical ending.

As for the nicknames, the rendition procedure also follows the generally accepted rules for translation of nicknames. Those presenting physical characteristics are pre-positioned and in Bulgarian play the role of adjectives (Blind Io – Слепия Йо), whereas psychological characteristics, occupation, etc. are post-positioned and preceded by the definite article in English, preserving the same structure in Bulgarian (Daviss the Butcher – Дейвис месаря).

The category with 8% of the excerpts in the quantitative analysis is the one using **phonological replacement** when rendering literary names from English into Bulgarian. The examples from the group are ordinary names with no specific phonological structure in Bulgarian – *Karen* (Карийн) and *Bentzen* (Бенуен). The names are not rendered following the transcription rules, thus probably creating the purposeful effect of indirect rendition, rather than the transcription of a conventional name.

The fourth category presenting three names is the **substitution** procedure category where *Goodie Filter*, *Mr. Door* and *Nanny Ogg* are found. In the first excerpt, the family name of the character has been transcribed, whereas the attributive to the name has been translated as *баба*. The decision of the translator is unusual, since with another character bearing the same attributive to the name it has been preserved, namely *Goodie Whemper* rendered as *Гуду Уимпър*. As justification for the choice of the translator might have served the idea hidden behind the adjective *good* emphasized by the diminutive form. As far as the second personage is concerned, Cambridge dictionary gives a definition of the attributive *Nanny* as 'a person whose job is to take care of a particular family's children', and the translator has decided to use *леля* as its equivalent. The character fully corresponds to the image attributed to it, since Nanny Ogg is a caring witch, a symbol of motherhood whom everybody likes and respects. The third name in the category is in fact addressed to by the Fool and refers to an object, namely a door. The reason why it has fallen in this category is the decision of the translator to change the neuter gender of the object (clearly an inanimate one) with feminine gender in translation. Thus, *Mr. Door* capitalized in both the source and the target text, has been rendered as *Леличка Вратичка*. Since this is the only appearance of *Mr. Door* in the novel, it remains unclear why the translator has decided to translate the object at first

place, and why she has changed the gender in translation, also keeping the capitalization of the inanimate object.

A category with three representatives is the **conventionality procedure** category whereby *Leonard of Quirm*, *Hwel* and *Young Willikins* are found. The first personage bears graphological resemblance to the great Italian painter Leonardo da Vinci. With his appearance and occupation taken into consideration, the relation to the historical figure is obvious. In Bulgarian, the name is rendered as *Леонардо да Куирм* whereby the transcriptional patterning is preserved. Semantically, the forename bears the meaning of 'as brave as a lion', having derived from the Germanic elements *lewo* (from Latin) and *hard* (brave, hardy). Variations of the name close to the personage of interest are Léonard (French); Leonardo (Italian, Portuguese and Spanish) (Campbell & Campbell, 2022). The other two charactonyms occupying this category are clearly allusive, where the semiotic meaning of names is sought for. *Hwel* and *Young Willikins* are rendered into Bulgarian as *Хуел* and *Уиликинс* respectively. In the case of *Hwel*, the name does not bear clear resemblance to a real personage, yet his appearance in the novel alludes to Shakespeare, since *Hwel* as a gifted playwright just like his allusive character, who is hired to write a play for Leonal Felmet, the Duke of Lancre. As far as the pronunciation of the first name is concerned, /wel/ serves as a slightly changed version of Will, the talent of whom is illustrated by:

Such a one was Hwel. Enough inspirations to equip a complete history of the performing arts poured continuously into a small heavy skull designed by evolution to do nothing more spectacular than be remarkably resistant to axe blows (1988, p.51)

The other representative also alludes to William Shakespeare (young Willikins), which again is visible from the graphological structure of the name. The only difference with this name lies in the fact that the allusion is found in the surname of Pratchett's character and it corresponds to the first name of its real referent. In addition to the allusive nature of the name is the preference of Pratchett's personage to play female roles in the theatre, which can also refer to the early appearances of male actors in female roles during the Elizabethan Era in the Shakespearean theatre *The Globe*.

The sixth category in the quantitative analysis is occupied by a charactonym which is rendered into Bulgarian by means of **recreation**. *Sister Whosis*, *wossname* is a clearly

intriguing example from a semantic and structural point of view, translated into Bulgarian as *Сестра Коя-Беше-Гродли*. The English structure of the name resembles a blended clipped clause without giving the name of the referent in the source text. In Bulgarian, this clipped clause has been transformed into a question clause with the inclusion of the name of the referent. The hyphenation of the name, which also includes the family name of the referent, is a common structure for Pratchett, visible from another charactonym from the world of the Disc, e.g. *Cut-Me-Own-Throat-Dibbler*, whereby the name presents a relative hyphenated clause (Manova-Georgieva, 2020). Concerning the attributive *Sister* to the name, it has been translated and its position has remained unchanged in the target text.

A category with three representatives is the **deletion procedure** category, whereby the names of *Shawn Ogg*, *Jason Ogg* and *Old Norbut* fall. There is nothing specific in the structure of the forenames of the bearers, yet in translation the family names of the first two referents as well as the attributive to the third referent have been skipped.

The last category presenting the **addition** translation procedure includes one name, *Champot, the king of Lancre*, transferred into Bulgarian as *Чампот подли, крал на Ланкър*. This strategy of adding psychological characteristics to the referent is fruitful in unveiling certain traits of the character of the personage. In this case, the meaning of the word *подли* in Bulgarian is added to the name of the bearer to complete the image of the character as being *mean*.

### Final Remarks

When charactonyms are rendered from English into Bulgarian, the analysis of the fantasy novel 'Wyrd Sisters' revealed transcription as the most common procedure applied. However, judging by the quantitative analysis, another procedure is also gaining popularity, namely rendition. Consequently, semantically loaded names benefit translation, since the meaning behind the name has been revealed in a delicate, yet funny way. The variety of the other translation procedures presented in the quantitative and qualitative analysis point out that not all charactonyms are to be translated, because in this way the craft of name-creating would somehow be turned into an ordinary transformation of linguistic units. Although literary names are interesting and discursive signs from a semantic viewpoint, they still need to remain unveiled to a certain extent,



thus creating mystery, wordplay and further analysis. However, the presented study shows a preference of the rendition procedure over the other translation strategies, which leads to the assumption that literary names, when seen as symbolic units can be rendered by means of translation-friendly structural procedures by preserving the meaning behind each charactonym and completing the image of a personage.

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## APPENDIX

Name in English	Name in Bulgarian	Translation Procedure
Nanny Ogg (Gytha; Nan)	Леля Ог (Гита)	substitution
Goodie Whemper	Гуди Уимпър	transcription
Granny Weatherwax; The Ice/ Iron Maiden; Esme	Баба Вихронрав (ледената девица) Есме	rendition
Magrat Garlick	Маграт Чеснова	partial rendition
King Verence	Крал Верънс	transcription
Death	Смърт	rendition
Champtot, the king of Lancre	Чампот подли, крал на Ланкър	addition
Duke Felmet (Lionel)	Дук Фелмет (Лионел)	transcription
Lady Felmet	Лейди Фелмет	transcription
Bentzen	Бенуен	phonological replacement
The Fool	Шутът	rendition
Olwyn Vitoller	Госпожа Олвин Витолър	phonological replacement
Tom John; Tomjon Vitoller	Томджон	transcription
Hwel	Хуел	conventionality
Young Willikins	Уиликинс	conventionality
Queen Bemery	Кралица Бимъри	transcription
Greebo	Грибо	transcription
The key	Ключът	rendition
Goodie Filter	Баба Филтър	substitution
Beldame	Белдами	transcription
Shawn Ogg	Шон	deletion
Jason Ogg	Джейсън	deletion
Wane	Уейн	transcription
Darron	Дарън	transcription
Daviss the butcher	Дейвис месаря	rendition
Old Cakebread	Кейкбред	transcription
Old Norbut	Норбът	deletion
Hron	Хрон	transcription
Champett Poldy	Чампет Полди	transcription
Reet	Рийт	transcription
Sharleen	Шарлийн	transcription

King Grunerweld	Крал Грюневелд	transcription
Sister Whosis, wosname	Сестра Коя-Беше-Гродли	recreation
Neshely Whipple	Нешели Уипъл	transcription
King Murune	Крал Мурин	transcription
Queen Grimmir, the Impaler	Кралица Гримнир Недоклана	rendition
Aliss Demurrage (Black Aliss)	Черната Алис	rendition
Blind Io	Слепия Йо	rendition
Herne the Hunted	Херне Преследвания	rendition
Brother Prankster	Брат Шегобиец	rendition
Brother Jape	Брат Джейп	transcription
Karen	Карийн	phonological replacement
The Patrician, lord Leonard of Quirm	Патрицията, Леонардо да Куирм	conventionality
Timkin Rumbleguts	Тимкин Гърмящото черво	rendition
Ron	Рон	transcription
J.H. Flannelfoot Boggis	Дж.Х. Богис Тихата стъпка	rendition
Grabpot Thundergust	Пълнихалба Гръмотевична	rendition
Chrystophrase the Troll	Трола Хризопрас	rendition
Young Dafe	Младият Даф	transcription
Young Wimsloe	Уимслоу	partial phonological replacement
Old Miskin	Стария Мискин	transcription
Shirl	Шърл	transcription
Daff	Даф	transcription
Brattsley	Братсли	transcription
Corporal Walkowski	Ефрейтор Валковски	partial phonological replacement
Millie Hipwood	Мили Хипууд	transcription
Wilph	Уилф	transcription
Billem	Билем	transcription
Gumridge	Гъмридж	transcription
King Gruneberry the Good	Крал Грюнебери Добрия	rendition
Mr. Door	Леличка Вратичка	substitution

# RENDERING UKRAINIAN HISTORICAL TERMINOLOGY OF THE OLD RUS' PERIOD INTO ENGLISH

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## Abstract

The article presents a study that focuses on approaches to rendering Ukrainian historical terminology related to the Old Rus' period into English selected *en masse* from Ukrainian and English academic texts on history, with a special focus on culture-specific terminology. Historical terms for translation purposes are categorised into non-culture-specific historical terminology reflecting universal concepts of historical science, and culture-specific historical terminology. The purpose of the article is to determine specific methods for Ukrainian-English translation of historical terminology of the Old Rus' period. The paper discusses approaches and methods used by English-speaking academics to secondary term formation, taking place when rendering concepts denoting Ukrainian original culture-specific terminology into English. Different groups of historical terms are described with a special focus on onomastic terminology. It is demonstrated that the historical context should be taken into account for the correct designation of a historical concept. Non-culture-specific historical terminology is predominantly rendered by existing equivalents, which were formed through phonological adaptation and/or calque translation. The most appropriate technique for rendering culture-specific Ukrainian historical terminology is shown to be combined renomination, the method that uses both a transcription and a description of a historical concept.

**Keywords:** historical terminology, translation techniques, culture-specific historical terms, secondary term formation, historical concept, onomastic terminology

### Article history:

Received: 16 May 2022

Reviewed: 30 October 2022

Accepted: 05 November 2022

Published: 20 December 2022

### Contributor roles

Conceptualization, Writing - original draft, Validation, Formal Analysis M.V. (lead); Supervision, Project Administration, Writing - review and editing, Methodology L.S. (lead), Visualization, Data Curation, Investigation M.V, L.S. (equal)

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**Citation:** Vozna, M. & Slavova, L. (2022). Rendering Ukrainian Historical Terminology of the Old Rus' Period into English. *English Studies at NBU*, 8(2), 183-202. <https://doi.org/10.33919/esnbu.22.2.2>

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The issues of specialised terminology and its translation have gained greater interest among scholars recently: (Sager, 1990; Nagy, 2014; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Hoffman, 1985; McArthur, 1998; Raffensperger, 2017; Kiyak et al., 2006; Slyvka, 2016; Panko, 1994; Kovalenko, 2011; Tomilenko, 2013). Their relevance to the topic can be explained by rapid scientific and technological progress. Terminology exists on the borderline of two academic disciplines, firstly linguistics, and secondly, the specific academic discipline or professional area which it serves. It is the latter that ascribes a certain semantic volume to each specific term, providing its strict definition that corresponds to a particular concept in this field. The development of field terminological systems is impossible without taking into account the changes in the system of concepts of the specialised field. Dealing with such changes is not exclusively a task for field specialists, but also for translators. This process was described by Sager as secondary term formation, which takes place when new or revised knowledge must be transferred to another linguistic community (Sager, 1990, p. 80). The linguistic aspects of term formation become even more important for translators as they very often become namers and/or neologists (Valeontis & Mantzari, 2006, p. 3).

Ukrainian medieval history in English translations unfortunately belongs to less represented subjects in world academia (Raffensperger, 2017, p.44). In this respect, the comparative translation analysis of historical terminology in Ukrainian and English academic texts is relevant for both the theory and practice of translation studies in field terminology, specifically that of historical science. Such comparative analysis of the designation of historical concepts in original academic texts in both languages helps to understand the correlation between the primary term formation, including the revision of concepts designated by such terms, and secondary term formation, which may be otherwise described as translation methods used for translating terminology. Focus on the categorisation of historical terms helps to understand its nature and the prevalence of certain translation methods for certain terminological groups.

The purpose of the article is to determine the basic approaches and specific methods to Ukrainian-English translation of historical terminology by comparing designations of the same historical concepts in the original Ukrainian and English academic texts covering a specific period in history, i.e. the Old Rus' period.

## **The Present Study and its Methods**

Historical terms selected en masse from Ukrainian and English academic texts on history describing a single period in Ukrainian history, specifically that of Old Rus' period served as material for our research (Davies N., 1997, 2001; Dimnik, 1981, 2003; Magocsi, 2010, 2012; Raffensperger, 2012, 2017; Nahaylo, 1999; Wilson, 2002; Hrushensky, 1994, 2009; Kotlyar & Rychka, 2008; Kotlyar, 1991, Slavova & Vozna, 2022; Tolochko & Tolochko, 1998; Tolochko, 1997). The total number of pages of academic texts from which terminology was selected amounts to 1017 pages in Ukrainian and 958 pages in English. The total number of non-repeated linguistic units identified by us as historical terminology in Ukrainian texts is 260 with 230 instances of use of corresponding English terminology in English texts. Corresponding terminology is understood as being either translated terms in those instances, where translations were available, or terms designating the same or similar concepts identified by the method of alignment, i.e. matching of terminological units that may be considered as translations of one another in similar contexts. The procedure took place manually as neither a digital form corpus on Ukrainian history or processing software are available. Other methods of research included descriptive and comparative methods, as well as elements of translation analysis.

A descriptive method allowed determining theoretical aspects of specialized terminology, either culture-specific or non-culture-specific. The techniques that were used to render historical terminology of the given period were established through comparison of the Ukrainian and English historical terms in the relevant texts. The translation techniques were identified for translating culture-specific and non-culture-specific historical terms.

It should be admitted that for the language pair of English-Ukrainian and Ukrainian-English there exist significantly less translated academic texts on history than for any other academic field. Ukrainian translations of substantial English language works (Davies, 2001; Magocsi, 2012) and from Ukrainian into English (Hrushensky, 1994) in this area are infrequent. It should also be noted there is an insignificant amount of linguistic works devoted to the nature of historical terms and principles of their classification (Poteryayeva, 2009), and historical discourse (Pleknova, 2016). Translation issues for the discussed pair of languages related to this stratum of lexis were also only partially researched (Slyvka, 2016; Lazarev, 2016).

## Theoretical Background

Historical terminology is understood as being a system of lexical and semantic units of a certain language to designate concepts which are specific for the historical science. In our research we differentiate between historical terminology as a system of lexical units of a certain language to designate specific concepts of this discipline, and historical culture-specific words as a concept of translation studies. The latter is understood through the binary opposition of the source and target language and not related to single-language academic texts on history. From the translation point of view, the corpus of historical terms was divided into two groups: non-culture-specific historical terms and culture-specific historical terms.

The requirements of term neutrality, strict definition and accuracy put forward by many academics (Kiyak et al., 2006, p.38) are to be met in the use of historical terms. Failure to display accuracy is demonstrated by the example of the historical concept “князь” (knyaz), which is traditionally translated as “prince” or “duke”. An eminent American historian Christian Raffensperger discusses the origins of the traditional wrongful designation of “князь” as “prince”, showing how the concept of medieval kings, who were a multitude in each particular land, transformed into that of a monarch, i.e. a single supreme ruler with others subordinate to him in later history, thus prompting the wrong translation based on later understanding of “князь” as a subordinate or member of a royal dynasty, where “king” should be used for rulers in the Old Rus lands (2017, p. 79). This revision in traditional translation helps to uproot “an ahistorical view of the medieval world” (Raffensperger, 2017, p. 77), thus duly presenting Old Rus’ rulers as kings equal to others European rulers of that time, and Rus’ as a kingdom in its own right (ibid.). This view has long been a cornerstone in understanding the Kievan Rus’ status on the world arena of the time by Ukrainian academics, who, along with “князь”, have long been using “король” (king), “государь” (sovereign), and “суверен” (sovereign) (Kotlyar, 1991, p.125; Kotlyar & Rychka, 2008, p. 229), as titlature for Old Rus’ rulers. The discussed example shows to what extent secondary term formation (its translation into another language) should strive to achieve accuracy with the concept behind the original term, taking into account the specifics of the historical and linguistic context.

Neutrality as another requirement to terminology is not always observed in regard to certain historical terms either. One of such examples is the term “Old Rus”



(Pritzak, 1990), and its variations “Old Russia” or “Kievan Russia (Franklin, 2002, p.528; Shepard, 1973, p. 74), the last two being simply offensive for Ukrainian people as they attempt to appropriate Ukrainian medieval history centered around Kyiv by Russia-leaning historians. These examples may be used to demonstrate the theory of “Linguistic Turn” in action, which lays great emphasis on language, and in its extreme equals history lived to history written, i.e. expressed with words (Popescu, 2009, p. 185). “We can confer a plurality of meanings to a subject or to a concept and these meanings change our perceptions concerning the relations between reality and discourses, but the historical reality remains the same” (ibid.). In terms of translation, we must strive to reflect the historical reality in secondary term formation in its contemporary vision as accurately and in as neutral a manner as possible, after having researched all appropriate theoretical linguistic and historical sources.

From the translation perspective, the first big grouping of historical terminology in our study is ‘non-culture specific’ and this includes designations of universal concepts of history, in particular international words, proper names, which refer to concepts known not only to Ukrainian history, but also that of Western Europe and the world. The interconnectedness of European history is reflected in the existence of names common not only for one nation, but for a broader geographic area, for instance, that of the Eastern Slavs, Western Europe, or the Mediterranean. International Scientific Vocabulary (ISV) as a part of this group of historical terms includes words originating in Latin and Greek, as well as other languages, that were borrowed into modern languages to render similar, often more complicated concepts and retaining fully or partially their phonetic form. ISV words are characterized as translinguistic (McArthur, 2007, p. 3-4). Their examples and translation methods are described further down.

Particular focus in our research was given to culture-specific terminology. The concept of culture-specific words or “realia” in Ukrainian is not unambiguous and may be interpreted differently for different purposes. Ukrainian academics in the field of translation studies commonly believe the concept of culture-specific words or “realia” to be a category of translatology, which exists only in the binary opposition of two languages, i.e. the source language and the target language (Zorivchak, 1989)<sup>1</sup>. “Realia” (a culture-specific word) is a one-word or many-word lexical unit, the principle lexical meaning of which

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all translations into English are our own.

contains, as a binary apposition, a whole complex of traditionally ethnic and cultural information ascribed to it, alien for the objective reality of the target language (Zorivchak, 1989, p.58). The scholar also introduces the concept of a culture-specific term or “realia-term” (Zorivchak, 1989, p.69), which points at the existing correlation between culture-specific words and professional terminology both being language signs. Their correlation is down to the fact that sometimes terms may coincide with “realia”, i.e. the existence of culture-specific professional terms (Zorivchak, 1989, p.69). Other terms to denote culture-specific concepts include cultural words (Newmark, 1988), culture-specific concepts (Baker, 1992), culture-specific references (Davies E., 2003), etc.

Culture-specific terms, along with non-culture-specific terms, were identified in the biggest group of historical terminology formed by onomastic terms (approximately 65%). Onomastics is both a linguistic and a historical discipline, as it studies proper names that constitute an inalienable and significant part of the cultural and language heritage of each nation. Proper names carry information on the history of ethnic groups and nations, historical periods and geographic areas where such names appeared, the languages in which they appeared, as well as international relations at certain historical periods. This interconnectedness of European history is reflected in the existence of names common not only for one nation, but for a broader geographic area, for instance, that of the Eastern Slavs, Western Europe, or the Mediterranean.

According to the translation-oriented categorization of historical terms, proper names “inherent to a certain language” referring to culture-specific concepts of Ukrainian history, constitute a part of culture-specific onomastic historical terminology. Various “non-inherent” proper names refer to concepts known not only to Ukrainian history, but also that of Western Europe and the world, and have been borrowed into Ukrainian at different historical periods. They designate commonly known concepts of onym nature, at least for certain geographical areas and regions. From the translational point of view, they are not culture-specific and form the other major group of onomastic historical terminology.

Onomastic historical terminology can be grouped based on the categories of onyms that were named as accepted by many academics studying onyms (Kocherhan, 2005, p.187; Torchinsky, 2009, p.117). The majority of such classes is represented in historical terminology. The most numerous ones are historical toponyms, anthroponyms,

and ethnonyms. Less numerous are chrononyms - names for periods of time, theonyms and mythonyms - names for deities and mythical creatures, ideonyms and chrematonyms - names for objects of spiritual and material culture respectively, as well as sovereignonyms - names for states, federations of states, etc.

### Results and Discussion

The whole corpus of historical terminology was divided into two major groups (Slavova & Vozna, 2022): 1) non-culture-specific historical terms, which include names to designate universal concepts of historical science, in particular ISV, and 2) culture-specific historical terms.

Among non-culture specific groups we have differentiated: 1) terms denoting universal concepts and often represented by ISV words: *християнство* - Christianity, *античність* - antiquity, *феодальний* - feudal, *поліс* - polis; 2) terms designating social and religious phenomena and processes, and objects of material culture: *удільна роздробленість* - feudal fragmentation, *вотчина* - fiefdom, *тризна* - funeral feast, *артефакт* - artefact, *кревна помста* - blood feud, *скарб* - hoard, *погребальна камера* - burial chamber, *поховання* - burial site, *вівтар для жертвоприношень* - sacrificial altar, *святилище* - shrine, etc; 3) onyms: *Папа Іннокентій IV* - Pope Innocent IV, *хозари* - Caspians, etc.

Non-culture-specific onomastic historical terminology can be generally found in bilingual dictionaries. Such proper names have a traditional form in many languages and refer to commonly known historical concepts. The examples include: toponyms *Візантія* - Byzantium, *Мала Азія* - Asia Minor, *ethnonyms* *половці* - Pololvtsians or Cumans, *монголо-татари* - Mongols, anthroponyms *Тамерлан* - Tamerlane, *Карл Великий* - Charlemagne, sovereignonyms *Золота Орда* - Golden Horde, *Візантійський світ* (Папа, 2013, p. 372) - Byzantine Commonwealth (Raffenspeger, 2012, p. 2). Here we may also add names for trade association and similar unions, for instance: *Ганзейський Союз* - the Hanseatic League. This non-culture-specific group of historical terms is predominantly rendered by existing equivalents, which were formed through phonological adaptation and/or calque translation. Such equivalents can often, but not always, be found in bilingual dictionaries and texts on history. Tradition in translation plays an important role for this group of onyms and should not be neglected.

Translation of culture-specific historical terms represents an area of special interest for our study. Types of culture-specific historical terms and the basic techniques for their rendering are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Types of culture-specific historical terms and the basic translation techniques*

Groups of culture-specific historical terms	Techniques of translation	Examples
1. Onyms	Calquing	<i>чорні клобуки</i> - the Black Coats
	phonological and/or morphological adaptation	<i>Данило Галицький</i> - Danylo of Halych
	Descriptive translation	<i>Північне Причорномор'я</i> - Northern Black Sea Coast, Circum-Pontic Region, North Pontic area
2. Terms denoting the social status of different members of society, their military role, titles and positions at the royal court	combined renomination	<i>служилий князь</i> - "sluzhily" prince, a landless member of the Rurik dynasty in service of another prince, a prince for "hire"
	analogous translation	<i>боярин</i> - feudal lord
	Descriptive translation	<i>раби-відпущеники</i> - slaves who had bought their freedom
	calque translation + transcription	<i>напіввільні (закуп)</i> - half freepersons ( <i>zakupy</i> )
	equivalent translation + transcription	<i>раби (челядь/холопи)</i> - slaves ( <i>chelyad'/kholopy</i> )
3. Terms designating social and religious phenomena and processes, and objects of material culture	descriptive translation	<i>береста</i> - birch bark document
	combined renomination	<i>вече</i> - viche, or public town meeting

The research into this major group of culture-specific terms demonstrated the importance of one of its key concepts, namely "*князівство*", the traditional translations of which as "principality" or "princely state" and respectively "*князь*" as "prince" were convincingly proved by Raffensperger to be incorrect (Raffensperger, 2017, pp.25-29). Despite the abundant use of traditional and incorrect translation by many English-speaking academics (Dimnik, 2003, Magocsi, 2010, Davies, 1997), the derivatives of the term "*князь*"

found in English academic sources and in bilingual dictionaries, in fact, often contain other than “prince” morphemes, for instance: *князювання* - reign (Dimnik, 2003, p. 241), *князівство* - kingdom (Raffensperger, 2017), *княжий двір* - royal court, *князівська династія* - royal dynasty or royal house (Wilson, p. 5, p.17), and *княжий палац* - royal palace (Raffensperger, 2017, p. 43). For other such derivatives the realignment method suggests that equivalent or descriptive translation was applied: *вокняжіння* (as the result) - enthronement, *вокзяжіння* (as a ceremony) - inauguration, *великий князь* - high king (Raffensperger, 2017, p. 34), *княжич* - crown prince or heir apparent, *удільний князь* (Kotlyar & Rychka, 2008, p. 298) - under king (Raffensperger, 2017, p.34) or regional ruler (our translation), *племінний князь* - tribal chief (our translation).

For other culture-specific historical terminology the translation method called combined renomination (Zorivchak, 1989) adequately serves the task. It represents a combination of transcribed or transliterated original word with an explanation of its meaning, for instance: *служилий князь* (Kotlyar & Rychka, p. 299) - “sluzhily” prince, a landless member of the Rurik dynasty in service of another ruler (our translation). The appropriateness of this method can be supported by its extensive use by English-speaking historians: *druzhina*, or prince’s retinue (Magocsi, 2019, p.91); *warband* (*druzhina*) (Raffensperger, 2012, p.47); rich merchants (*gosti*) of local Rus’ or foreign origin (Magocsi, 2019, p.92); *viche*, or public town meeting (Magocsi, 2019, p.93); *veche* (assembly) (Dimnik, 1981, p.16), the *viche* system (gathering of nobles) (Wilson, 2002, p.12). It is worth mentioning that the explanatory part of combined renomination may have variations within the same work by the same author: execution of tribute (*poliudie*) (Magocsi, 2019, p.67), foraging trip for tribute (Magocsi, 2019, p. 68); the leading urban official, the *tysiatskyi* (Magocsi, 2019, p. 93), *tysiatskyi*, the commander of the city militia (Magocsi, 2019, p. 93), hereditary possession (*votchina*), land as personal property (Magocsi, 2019, p. 91). In fact, some historians find it necessary not only to provide description in combination with transcription of culture-specific terminology in the text itself but also to supply the reader with a glossary of such terminology used in the text (Dimnik, 2003; Dimnik. 1981). Such explanations are sometimes long and many-fold reflecting a complex nature of job functions which were not codified, for instance: *posadnik* mayor, chief executive official in a town, a prince’s lieutenant (Dimnik, 2003, p.32).

Onyms as the largest group in our research may be both culture-specific to different degrees and non-culture specific. An example of the former is discussed below and has demonstrated that the narrower the geographic area to which certain historical concepts and their designations relate, the more difficult their rendering becomes. It is mostly achieved through the combination of descriptive and calqued translations, sometimes using ISV morphemes. The toponym “*Північне Причорномор'я*”, important not only for the Ukrainian antiquity and Middle Ages, but also for the whole Mediterranean region, was found to be translated in a variety of ways: Northern Black Sea Coast (Wilson, 2002, p.34), Circum-Pontic Region (Wilson, 2002, p.34), North Pontic area (Kazakevich, 2006, p.257). Its derivatives tend to be rendered through the Old Greek-borrowing Pontic, for instance: Pontic colonies, Pontic Steppe. A descriptive translation was also found for this concept, for instance: the lands to the North of Asia Minor” (Wilson, 2002, p.23). Another onym of regional importance is the famous trade route “*із варяг у греки*”, which has a traditional calqued translation “the route from the Varangians to the Greeks” (Raffensperger, 2012, p.12).

The more culture-specific onomastic terminology is, the more variable its rendering becomes. An interesting example is represented by the sovereignonym “*Київська Русь*” (Kievan Rus’) and the related onym of “*Давня Русь*” (Old Rus’). The former term was formed by the combination of a Slavic root morpheme and an English suffix. The root morpheme was transcribed using the Russian spelling of Kiev, and not the Ukrainian formally accepted one of Kyiv. This can be explained, firstly, by tradition in translation, and, secondly, by the fact that the latter spelling appeared relatively recently and according to some native speakers is read with a diphthong [ai], and not the monophthong [i], the former not matching its Ukrainian phonological form. The variation Kyivan Rus’ was only found in English texts by some Ukrainian academics (Tolochko O. & Tolochko P., 1998, p.345; Zalizniak, 2013, p.40). The research also showed that some English-speaking academics tend to use either Kievan Rus’ or Rus’ to match both “*Київська Русь*” and “*Давня Русь*”, not differentiating between the two, as the concept behind them is perceived to be more of the time period than geographic reference. Thus, speaking about Kievan Rus’ Robert Magocsi includes the territory and history of the Galicia-Volhynian state (Magocsi, 2010, p.89), and Martin Dimnik equals the notions of Rus’ to Kievan state (Dimnik, 1981, p.19, p.191). Ukrainian academics use “Kievan Rus’” to designate the concept of a medieval state, that emerged in the 9<sup>th</sup> century in the middle

Dnipro river valley and existed to the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century featuring characteristics of a unified state with the centre in Kiev (Tolochko & Tolochko, 1998, pp. 9-11). The preferred spelling option for native English speakers is Rus' with a diacritic at the end (Davies, 1997; Dimnik, 2003; Magocsi, 2010).

"Rus' is a label that requires an explanation. It even has an odd diacritic at the end that some, but not all, scholars use in English to represent an Old East Slavic character (a "soft sign") that does not exist in English. Even more confusingly, the adjectival form of Rus' is "Rusian", which most people, and most spell-check software, want to convert to "Russian" (Raffensberger, 2017, p. 3).

Other variations of this adjectival derivative can also be found, for instance: Rus'sian (Dimnik, 1981, p. 114) and Ruthenian (Davies, 1997, p. 591). The latter adjective Davies derives from the word "Ruthenia", when he speaks about "White Ruthenia (now Belarus)" and "Red Ruthenia (or Galicia)" (Davies, 1997, p. 591). He also calls the populace "rusini" or "Ruthenes" (Davies, 1997, p. 592), which from our point of view, is inappropriate, as this Latinised name was applied throughout history not only to the populace of the Kievan Rus' but was associated in Western Europe with all East Slavs well beyond the discussed historical period. In addition, modern "русини" or Rusyn people is a name for a particular ethnic group also known as Carpatho-Ruthenians living mostly in a particular region of Western Ukraine called Zakarpattia.

Another culture-specific sovereignonym of "Галицько-Волинське князівство" usually follows the same secondary term formation pattern where the Slavic roots may be transcribed based either on the Ukrainian phonological form Halych-Volynia (Raffensperger, 2017, p. 30) or the Russian phonological form Galicia-Volynia (Raffensperger, 2017, p. 17). The second element is rendered depending on the preferred author's approach as either "principality" (Dimnik, 2003, p. 20) or "kingdom" (Wilson, 2002, p. 17).

Anthroponyms together with anthropomorphic formulars and ethnonyms constitute the biggest group of onomastic terminology (77%), with the described toponyms being the second largest (23%). Anthroponyms in academic texts name either single individuals or whole royal dynasties. Names for individuals who left their trace in history are comprised of usually two elements, the first being their given name and the second that of the land where they ruled, for instance Danylo of Galicia (Magocsi, 2010,

p.87) or Danylo of Halych (Wilson, 2002, p. 17) or their ascribed characteristic, for instance Yaroslav the Wise (Wilson, 2002, p. 12). Historical characters may also be referred to by their first name and family name, for instance Volodymyr Monomakh (Magocsi, 2010, p. 70) and their first name and patronymic, for instance, king Vsevolod Olgovich (Raffensperger, 2017, p. 18). Names and patronymics are always transcribed, not without inconsistency and mistakes. The Slavic name “Володимир”, a favourite of Slavic rulers, obviously because of its semantic meaning of “the ruler of the word”, may be found in its Russian form “Vladimir” (Raffensperger, 2012, p.34) and its Ukrainian form Volodimer (Raffensperger, 2017, p. 13) even with the same author, or sometimes in other transcriptions based on its Ukrainian form, for instance Volodymyr the Great (Magocsi, 2010 p.70). Certain sounds of Ukrainian and Russian have turned out to be of difficulty in transcribing for some authors of English academic texts. The difference between the [i] sound and [j] sounds seems to have escaped the attention of many known academics, who write Iurii Dolgorukii (Raffensperger, 2017, p.17) instead of Yurii, or Evpraksia (Raffensperger, 2017, p. 17) instead of Yevpraksia, or Iaropolk (Raffensperger, 2017, p. 15) instead of Yaropolk, or Iaroslav (Magocsi, 2010, p.70) instead of Yaroslav. The [tʃ] sound is also sometimes wrongly transcribed: Halicz (Davies, 1997, p. 507) instead of Halych, and Daniel Romanowicz (Davies, 1997, p.1939) instead of Romanovich. Some historians may add a Westernised form of the name in addition to its Slavic transcription, for instance: Oleg, also known as Helgi (Raffensperger, 2017, p. 13), Sveinald/Sviatoslav (Magocsi, 2010, p. 68) to bring Rus’ rulers closer to the English-speaking audience. The diacritic signalling the softening of a consonant is usually neglected, but sometimes still may be found, for instance: Askol’d (Magocsi, 2010, p.60), the Ol’govichi (Dimnik, 2003, p. 9). Traditional dynastic names (often given in the forms of a patronymic as “sons of”) may also be given either according to the Western tradition or purely Slavic naming, or sometimes even both, for instance: the Riurikids or Volodimerovichi (Raffensperger, 2017, p. 13). This somewhat chaotic transcribing is an understandable result of no single-transcription rules applied by English academics and their individual preferred approaches based on either Russian or Ukrainian pronunciation, and possible lack of language and linguistic knowledge in certain rare instances. This problem can be easily overcome by Ukrainian translators who should base their transcription of existing transcription rules and Ukrainian forms in an attempt to achieve consistency.



Rendering anthropomorphic formulae is almost always achieved through combined renomination, which is the best possible approach, for instance, Volodymyr the Great (Magocsi, 2010, p. 70), Mstislav Mstislavich “The Bold” of Galich (Dimnik, 2003, p. 30). In certain cases, the descriptive second element may be also transcribed to give readers the flavour of the described period, for instance: Vsevolod ‘the Red’ (Chermnyi) of Chenigov (Dimnik, 2003, p.29), Vsevolod Bol’shoe Gnezdo, (Dimnik, 2003, p. 29).

Slavic ethnonyms when translated into English undergo morphological adaptation through the addition of English suffixes to Slavic root morphemes, for instance: *слов’янські племена* - Slavic or Slavonic tribes (Wilson, 2002, p. 10), *деревляни* - Derevlans (Raffensperger, 2017, p. 50), *уличі* - Ulichians (Magocsi, 2010, p. 67), *в’ятичі* - Viaticians ((Magocsi, 2010, p. 68), *половці* - Polovtsians (Wilson, 2002, p. 3), *поляни* - Polianians (Wilson, 2002, p. 9), *дрезовичі* - Drehovichians (ibid.), *волжські булгари* - the Volga Bulgars (Magocsi, 2010, p. 68). Occasionally instances are found of morphologically non-adapted forms of ethnonyms, for instance: Polovtsy (Raffensperger, 2017, p. 15). Combined renomination may also be applied to certain ethnonyms if the name carries in it a certain semantic meaning. For instance, Magocsi writes: “Referred to in the Rus’ chronicles as Chorni Klobuky (Black Caps), the Karakalpaks ...” (2010, p. 79), whereas the same ethnonym was rendered as “the Black Coats” by Wilson (2002, p. 28).

Different combinations of literal translation, transcription and description are applied to render ideonyms naming works of spiritual culture, which include unique and the most important historical written sources and, in particular, literary work, for instance “*Слово о полку Ізгоревім*”, for which different translations were found: “The Song of Ihor’s Campaign” (Wilson, 2002, p.336) or a more poetic version using obsolete words: “The Lay of Ihor’s Host” (Wilson, 2002, p.1). Other examples of this group include law codes and chronicles of the period in different redactions: “*Повість временних літ*” - the Rus’ Primary Chronicle (also known by its opening phrase as the “Povest’ vremennykh liet, “Tale of Bygone Years”) (Magocsi, 2010, p.56), “*Руська правда*” - “Law of Rus” (Ruska Pravda) (Wilson, 2002, p.9), “*Іпатський літопис*” - “The Hypatian Codex” chronicle (Wilson, 2002, p.9) or the Hypatian redaction (Raffensperger, 2012, p.6), “the Laurentian redaction of the PVL (Povist’ Vremennykh liet), dating from the later 14<sup>th</sup> century and named for its copyist, the monk Lavrentii, who worked for Dmitrii Konstantinovich of Suzdal (Wilson, 2002, p.9).

For instances where no specific semantic meaning is carried by an onomastic term, phonologically adapted transcription is used for different groups of onyms, for instance: toponyms of historical towns of “Тмуторокань” - Tmutorokan (Wilson, 2002, p.3) or T'mutorakan/Tamartarka (Davies, 1997, p. 976), “Галич” - Halych, “Путівль” - Putivl, “Владімір” - Vladimir(city), ethnonyms “чудь” - Chud, “весь” - Ves, “мурома” - Muroma (Wilson, 2002, p. 11), Khazars (Magocsi, 2010, p. 55), teonyms “Перун” - Perun (Wilson, 2002, p. 32), “Хорс” - Khors, “Дажбог” - Dazhboh, “Стрибог” - Striboh, “Мокоша” - Mokosh (Magocsi, 2010, p. 74), mythonyms “Киї” - Kyi, “Щек” - Shchtek, “Хорув” - Khoryv, and “Либідь” - Lybid (Wilson, 2002, p. 32).

Research into non-onomastic historical terminology has demonstrated a preference of combined renomination in translation. One such big group identified in our study was terminology behind social and military concepts, specifically to refer to the social status of different members of society, their military role, titles and positions at the royal court, which is essential for any historical description. Given the nature of the period described in the researched texts, the concepts of a title, position or a job held at the royal court, and a social status are inseparable from military roles played at such societies, which prompted us to combine such terms into one group. For instance, close ties between “the druzhina” (royal troop) and the ruler of the Old Rus' state at its earlier stages were reflected in the special term “дружинна форма держави” (Kotlyar & Rychka, 2008, p. 187), which may be translated as “the druzhina State organisation”. The existence of this Ukrainian term substantiates the idiosyncratic nature of military and social status concepts for the described period. The approach favoured in English academic texts for rendering this group of terminology is to give both the phonetic form and a description of the concept, often a very detailed one. For instance: warband (druzhina) (Raffensperger, 2012, p. 47) or “druzhina”, a prince's private detachment of troops, bodyguard” (Dimnik, 2003, p.32). Sometimes the description may be quite extended, for instance: “The druzhyna, or prince's retinue, was made of the leading Varangian warriors, who were closely connected with the Kievan realm” (Magocsi, 2010, p.92). Then the author describes in detail the composition of the “druzhina” in a whole paragraph. The analogous translation as “militias (druzhyna)” (Wilson, 2002, p.9), which can be found in some English academic texts, is, in our opinion, incorrect, as in English the word “militia” mostly signifies quasi-military formations, unauthorised by the central authorities, as opposed to the regular army.

The length of the description may vary depending on the author's purposes, which can be demonstrated by the rendering of the concept "бояри", from very short when the concept is just mentioned - "boyars (noblemen)" (Dimnik, 2003, p.21), to a whole definition provided in the glossary attached to the text: "boyar - nobleman, landowner, senior advisor of the prince" (Dimnik, 1986, p.165). To define the same concept Magocsi uses transcribed original phrasing verbatim and its literal translation. He writes: "The boyars are described in the early sources as the "luchshie liudu", "better people" or "muzhi narochitie", "prominent men" (Magocsi, 2010, p.91), thus enabling the reading public to see how the status of boyars was understood by their contemporaries. Some descriptions may be more general, for instance, the concept of "смерд" is explained by Dimnik simply "smerd, a peasant" (Dimnik, 1986, p.162), whereas Magocsi gives a more accurate definition: "smerdy, or rural freepersons" (Magocsi, 2010, p.93), as opposed to half freepersons called "zakup" (Magocsi, 2010, p.93).

The concepts designated by many terms belonging to this group are often complex, and even vague. For instance, "тисяцький" is described by Dimnik as "tysyatskiy - commander of a town militia, police chief (2003, p.34) and by Magocsi as "the leading urban official, the tysiats'kyi, commander of the city militia" (2010, p.93). The prominent Ukrainian historian of that period Kotlyar underlines the existence of two kinds of administrators bearing this title: one is called "zemsky", independent of the king, the role and the title appearing even before the royal administration was formed, the military commander in his land or town, and the other called "knyazhy", appointed by the king and fulfilling the duties of both civil and military administration (2008, p. 271-272). Kotlyar also underscores the insufficiency of written evidence in Rus' historical sources and somewhat different nature of this job in various Rus' kingdoms and time periods (2008, p. 271-272). Another example of the complexity and non-specificity of certain concepts may be "тиун", described by Dimnik as "tiun (tivun) town official, administrator" (2003, p.32). Kotlyar describes "tiun", first of all, as a senior member of the royal household, who may be pointed by the ruler to govern a city or a land (2008, p.313). Kotlyar writes in this respect: "The lack of definition can be explained by the non-specificity of the concept itself, as well as by the fact that tiuns were of different rank and had different job functions" (ibid). This should be kept in mind by translators, who should try to achieve as much accuracy as possible in the descriptive part of their translation depending on the specific understanding of the concept by the author of the original.

Some Ukrainian historical terms, which are included in our corpus, have not been represented in relevant English academic texts. The authors applied the method of combined renomination, and offered their own translation: “*гريدь - княжий воїн, член княжої дружини*” (Kotlyar & Rychka, 2008, p. 307) - hryd, a member of the royal troop, “*отрок - особиста охорона государя*” (Kotlyar & Rychka, 2008, p. 308) - otrok, a personal royal guard, “*міністеріали - нижчі службовці, члени княжого двору*” (Kotlyar & Rychka, 2008, p. 192) - ministerials, junior members of the royal court, “*снужники - звичайна легка кавалерія*” (Kotlyar & Rychka, 2008, p. 305) - snuznyk, a member of the cavalry, “*печатник - хранитель княжої печатки, канцлер*” (Kotlyar & Rychka, 2008, p.278) - pechatnyk, the keeper of the royal seal, a chancellor. The analogous translation by the term “chancellor” seems acceptable in this case given the interpretation of this term by the author of the text, who describes this highest-ranking officer at the royal court as such (Kotlyar & Rychka, 2008).

Translation by analogue though is not always the best approach, as it may be misleading. The latter can be demonstrated by the term “*воевода*”. We suggest translating it exclusively as “the military leader”, as any attempts to apply analogous translation, for instance, using the word “warlord”, inevitably results in misrepresentation of the concept of “*воевода*”. “A warlord” in Middle Ages meant a feudal lord who had absolute military, economic and political control on his lands and might have often been in conflict with the central authorities, which is not the case for “*воевода*” who always acted on behalf of the king and was not necessarily a landowner, just a military leader. In addition, the functions of “*воевода*” could have been performed by at least several high-ranking officers, including the king himself (Kotlyar & Rychka, 2008, p. 293).

Other groups of historical terminology of this period include terms designating social and religious phenomena and processes, and objects of material culture. Much of such terminology is culture-specific. Historians prefer to give descriptions in each case to render such specific concepts. The institute of “*посадничество*” in Rus’ was defined by the Ukrainian historian Rychka as governance of certain territories by persons authorised by the supreme ruler (2008, p.53). In English academic texts the person holding this position is sometimes described as “*posadnik*” - mayor, chief executive official in a town, a prince’s lieutenant” (Dimnik, 2003, p.32). Rendering of the concept as “*posadnik*” - mayor (Dimnik, 1986, p.162), achieved through analogue, seems to be misleading, as mayor is commonly

understood as an elected official, and not an appointed one. The term “governor” would be a better option. Another concept of “*полюддя*” described by Rychka as “gathering of gifts - contributions” (2008, p.27) was rendered in English academic texts by combined renomination: “The East Slavic tribes began to resent the manner in which the Varangian rulers exacted tribute (*poliudie*) from them” (Magocsi, 2010, p.67). In certain instances, the transcribed part may be omitted, for instance: *собор* - a church council, *вече* - local assembly, gathering of nobles (Wilson, 2002, p.9), *шуйна гривна* - torc. For certain Rus’ terminology not identified by us in English academic texts we offer our translations by combined renomination: *племінне князівство* - *pleminne knyazivstvo*, tribal chieftdom, *береста* - *beresta*, a birch bark document, *змійовик* - *zmiyovyk*, an amulet charm of a round shape, *наручник (збруї)* - *naruchnyk*, an armlet (part of warrior’s protection).

### Conclusions

Categorisation of the researched terminology was attempted from the translation point of view, which showed the possibility of splitting the whole bulk of the historical terms into two major groups: non-culture-specific historical terminology reflecting universal concepts of historical science and culture-specific historical terminology. All these terminological groups for the Old Rus’ period were identified in original Ukrainian and English texts and analysed in terms of secondary term formation, which is a major task for translators where bilingual dictionaries are not available.

The first group of terms irrespective of the group of designated concepts uses predominantly translation through traditional equivalents irrespective of the historical methods of their coinage and includes International Scientific Vocabulary, terms designating social and religious phenomena and processes, objects of material culture, and certain onyms.

The culture-specific group includes: 1) onyms translated through calquing, phonological and/or morphological adaptation, combined renomination; 2) terms denoting the social status of different members of the society, their military role, titles and positions at the royal court translated through combined renomination and analogous translation; 3) terms designating social and religious phenomena and processes, and objects of material culture translated through descriptive translation, and combined renomination.

Onomastic terminology (65%) prevails over all other groups of terms. This group of Ukrainian historical terminology, being varied, employs many translation methods, transcription with phonological and/or morphological adaptation and/or combined renomination being the most common. The research also demonstrated the necessity of taking into account the historic and linguistic context in the process of secondary term formation to meet the requirement of accuracy. The requirement of neutrality in secondary term formation was found to be difficult to meet for a number of instances. Attempts at analogous translation in the researched material were rare, and in some cases unsuccessful. This method can be considered only for closely related languages and cultures, which cannot be said about the researched language pair.

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**Reviewers:**

1. Anonymous
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**Handling Editor:**

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## TEACHING ENGLISH TO STUDENTS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS: CHALLENGES AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

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### Abstract

The current study aims at shedding light on the challenges that might be confronted while teaching English to students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and providing remedial teaching strategies that can facilitate teaching English to these special learners. Helping students to achieve their highest potential requires both an understanding of ASD and its characteristics, and the elements of successful program planning required addressing them. Students with ASD are individuals who each has unique strengths and needs. Thus, via analysing the previous literature about the topic and administering a structured questionnaire to twelve (12) English teachers at the University of El-Oued, Algeria investigating the challenges and the teaching strategies that can be used to remedy these challenges, this study attempts to provide a broad lines for a special English syllabus that best meet the needs of students with ASD.

**Keywords:** autism spectrum disorders (ASD), challenge, ELT, syllabus, teaching strategy

### Article history:

Received: 18 September 2022

Reviewed: 25 October 2022

Accepted: 28 October 2022

Published: 20 December 2022

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**Citation:** Ghedeir Brahim, M. (2022). Teaching English to Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Challenges and Teaching Strategies. *English Studies at NBU*, 8(2), 203-214.  
<https://doi.org/10.33919/esnbu.22.2.3>

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Education plays a crucial role in every individual life. Hence, equality and equity in education needs should be strengthened and supported to satisfy the need of giving attention and care to students with special needs. The recognition of this type of learners has been increasing significantly worldwide and in Algeria. The better understanding as well as designing supportive educational programs are urgently needed for learners with special needs (Ni Nyoman & Luh, 2019, p. 159).

One type of students with special needs is the student with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) which is observed to be increasing in Algeria. Autism belongs to the diagnostic category named pervasive developmental disorders (PDDs). It is a complex development disability resulting from neurological disorders which negatively affects brain function and is four (4) times more common in men than in women. This disorder adversely affects areas as social interaction, verbal and non-verbal communication, and imagination (Kerrel, 2010, p. 19).

Learners with ASD have troubles with the following: executive functions, theory of mind, and central coherence. Such students also have trouble with sensory processing. Loud sounds, strong smells, uncomfortable seats, and bright lights will prove to be a great distraction and will have a negative impact on learning. Essentially, ASD is a social relational disorder, and it is important to note that university teachers will usually encounter high functioning students with ASD (Lybarger-Monson, 2017).

In the Algerian context, education policy makers resorted to inclusion policy. Inclusion can be defined as the practice of including students with disabilities alongside with other students in a regular classroom (Gilhool, 1989). Inclusion can be described as including students of different conditions, backgrounds and abilities to be in the same classroom. Thus, special need students frequently discovered in a regular classroom are diagnosed Autism Spectrum Disorders. Learners with ASD require special attention and care.

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes, EFL teachers usually encounter difficulties in teaching students with ASD. The academic year 2020-2021 is remarked by the attendance of two (2) students with ASD to the Department of English, at the University of El-Oued, Algeria. With the adoption of inclusion classes, EFL teachers

should adapt themselves with this critical teaching situation via adopting effective teaching strategies that respond to the psychological and academic needs of this type of learners.

The current study aims at shedding light on the challenges that EFL teachers face while teaching students with ASD, and investigating the appropriate teaching strategies to students with autistic spectrum disorder included in regular classrooms. To achieve these aims, the study attempted to answer the following key questions:

- (1) What challenges do teachers face accommodating learners with ASD in the mainstream classroom?
- (2) What are the academic lacks and needs of students with ASD?
- (3) What are the effective teaching strategies that can be adopted to meet the psychological and academic needs of students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD)?

### **Literature Review**

#### **Features Associated with ASD**

Every person with ASD is unique. However, some characteristics are considered important in the diagnosis. These features fall into four (4) main types (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2003):

- Communication
- Social interaction
- Behavior
- Learning

Other characteristics of behavior and learning of students with ASD can be categorized as:

- Unusual patterns of attention
- Unusual responses to sensory stimuli
- Anxiety

All learners with ASD experience language and communication difficulties. They may seem caught up in a private world in which communication is unimportant. This preoccupation is not intentional, but rather an inability to communicate. On the other

hand, language difficulties may include: difficulties with understanding and using non-verbal communication, repetitive and idiosyncratic speech patterns, echolalic speech; that is, immediate or delayed literal repetition of the speech of others, tendency to perseverate on a topic, that is continually discuss one topic and have difficulty shifting to other topics, difficulty with pragmatics of conversations, and difficulty with language comprehension. All these language features may challenge and face EFL teachers while teaching students with ASD. Therefore, EFL teachers are invited to use effective teaching strategies that facilitate coping with these hinders and lead to healthy teaching and learning atmosphere.

Learners with ASD often demonstrate unusual and distinctive behaviors. Many of the odd behaviors associated with ASD may be caused by factors such as hyper-sensitivity or hypo-sensitivity to sensory simulation, difficulties in understanding social situations and difficulties with changes in routine, all of which may lead to anxiety. Thus, when planning instruction, EFL teachers need to consider the problematic behavior and its function for that particular students in order to manage these challenging behaviors (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2003).

### **Teaching Strategies for Accommodating Learners with ASD in Inclusive Classroom Settings**

According to Bogdashina (2004), being a participant in a normal life gives learners with ASD the opportunity to be included members of the learning process. Teaching English language to learners with ASD may seem to be a controversial idea. Language instruction should be tailored to learners with ASD needs which are in most situations very individualized. Every language teaching context offered to learners with ASD should be carefully planned after thorough investigation of the learners' preferences (Alicja & Marta, 2019).

Students with ASD are special and their uniqueness requires explicit need for teachers to identify individualized approaches to aid them achieve their academic goals (Mayton, et al., 2010; Accardo, 2015). Among the effective teaching strategies for learners with autism is the differentiated instruction. It is the instruction provided to students based on the different needs of the students in the classroom. Implementing a

differentiating classroom is challenging. However, its benefit is therefore being able to provide learning opportunities to all students in an inclusive classroom (Ford, 2013).

Under the umbrella of differentiated instruction, EFL teachers can use ICTs tools, mainly audiovisual aids in presenting different teaching materials to satisfy ASD learners' needs. It is proved that students with ASD are visual learners (Gladfelter et al., 2019). Hence, using visual mediums enhance students with ASD learning, motivation, and inclusion in the mainstream classroom. Meanwhile, they facilitate teaching this type of learners with special needs.

## **Method**

### **Description of the Research Method**

The current study located itself in an interpretivist paradigm and made use of qualitative research approach aiming at obtaining an individual, in-depth description of the experiences and attitudes of the respondents. The adopted approach involves clarifying the process of interpreting data and analyzing what the participants say in order to understand and describe their meanings.

The study adopted qualitative research method as its aim is to provide rich descriptions of psychological phenomena, as the case of this study. Besides, qualitative research can be inductive as opposed to quantitative research method where data is collected in order to satisfy an existing hypothesis (Babbie & Mouton, 2005). Furthermore, the qualitative research approached the researcher to the data in the analysis and interpreting process.

### **Sampling**

As stated previously, this study used the qualitative research method that implies the selection of a small size population so as to facilitate more in-depth analysis. The sample of the study was selected purposefully and included exclusively twelve (12) EFL teachers who taught the two (2) students with ASD at the Department of English, University of El-Oued, Algeria. As far as the profile of the participants is concerned, nine (9) teachers were males and three (3) were females whose experience in teaching is more than five years.

## Data Collection Tool

To achieve the aims of the study, a structured questionnaire was administered to twelve (12) EFL teachers at the Department of English, University of El-Oued, Algeria during the academic year 2020 - 2021. The data collection instrument is made up of three (3) sections, each includes four (4) elements accompanied with choices for the answers. Section one is devoted to tracing the challenges that can be confronted by EFL teachers to accommodate learners with ASD in the mainstream class. The second section is dedicated to the psychological and academic lacks and needs of students with autism spectrum disorder. Finally, the third axis sheds light on the teaching strategies that can be utilized to meet learners with ASD psychological and academic needs.

## Data Analysis and Interpretation

Below in **Table 2** the results obtained from teachers' questionnaire are presented. The findings of the study demonstrated that EFL teachers agreed upon the idea that teaching students with ASD is a hard task that requires placing them in special classes under the supervision of a psychologist. All the respondents (100 %) asserted that lack of professional training to deal with and teach learners with ASD hinders meeting ASD students' academic and psychological wants.

The results have also shown that a great proportion of the participants (91.66%) highlighted deficits in communication and social interaction, and difficulties in establishing relationships with teachers and classmates as the key challenges that encounter EFL teachers to accommodate ASD students in the mainstream classroom.

**Table 2**

*Results of teachers' questionnaire*

Statements	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
<b>Axis 1:</b> Challenges for accommodating learners with ASD in the mainstream classroom.			
1. Learners with ASD should study in special classes under the supervision of a psychologist.	83.33%	16.66%	00%
2. Students with ASD demonstrate qualitative differences in social interaction and often have	91.66%	08.33%	00%

difficulty in establishing relationships.			
3. Deficits in communication and language usage are seen at varied levels in students with ASD.	75 %	08.33%	16.66%
4. Lack of training of general EFL teachers to deal with this type of learners hinders meeting their psychological and academic needs.	100 %	00%	00%
<b>Axis 2: Psychological and academic needs of ASD students.</b>			
5. Social skill development is essential for learners with ASD.	75 %	16.66%	08.33 %
6. Effective programs for students with ASD should include comprehensive communication assessment and intervention.	66.66 %	16.66 %	16.66 %
7. Much care and attention should be given to students with ASD on the part of EFL teachers.	91.66 %	00 %	08.33 %
8. EFL teacher should note the importance of socialization, communication and language, and behavioral needs for students with ASD in the general education classroom.	83.33 %	08.33 %	08.33 %
<b>Axis 3: Teaching strategies of learners with ASD.</b>			
9. Learners with ASD are usually visual students do lectures should be balanced with audiovisual resources	100 %	00 %	00 %
10. Communication goals should emphasize the functional use of language and communication in various settings.	66.66 %	25 %	08.33 %
11. Peer-mediated instruction and interventions where teachers employ the use of students as instructors for students in their class can be effective in teaching learners with ASD.	58.33 %	33.33 %	08.33 %
12. It is best to present teaching materials in multiple formats (video, audio, and written) to address any student with ASD along with those who may also have learning disabilities.	75 %	16.66 %	08.33 %

The results demonstrated that (75 %) of the participants said that social skill development is one of the crucial academic and psychological need of learners with ASD as it paves the way to language teaching and learning in a healthy atmosphere. Additionally, 91.66 % of the participants in the study that EFL teachers should give much care and attention to the students with ASD in their classes. Furthermore, EFL teachers agreed, with a percentage of 83.33 %, that socialization, communication and language, and behavioral needs for students with ASD in the general education classroom should be given much importance as a part of the central needs of learners with ASD.

Finally, according to the answers received from EFL teachers recommended the use of audiovisual resources to present lectures as students with ASD are visual learners. They also emphasized presenting teaching materials relying on multiple formats (video, audio, and written) to address students with ASD together with other types of learners with special needs. Much details about the findings of the study are demonstrated in **Table 2** above.

### **Recommendations and Pedagogical Implications**

As far as the targeted learners are concerned, the study recommends the use of visual aids as perceived by their EFL teachers. Relevant to this, Büyük, Nizam, Akgül, and Murcu (2019) state that learners with autism learn best through visuals and pictures since they are more drawn to them. Social Stories is a word used in relation to kids with autism .In their research, Ghanouni et al. (2018) noted that social stories play a function as a teaching strategy that facilitates the understanding of the social context that a student can find challenging to interpret, which results in a better learning process for them. Social storytelling can help with comprehending social circumstances, determining other people's viewpoints, and modeling proper behavior. Early intervention, according to Satari et al. (2020), is essential for students with autism in order to help them grasp fundamental skills that are acceptable and suited to their needs.

On the ground of the findings of the study, the following key recommendations are made to guarantee the smooth accommodation of students with ASD in EFL classrooms. Firstly, the current study stresses the necessity of providing training to EFL teachers in inclusive education settings. This in-service professional development



program should focus on developing EFL teachers' skills and knowledge to cope with learners with special needs in general, and learners with ASD in particular. Additionally, collaboration and coordination between Social Sciences Department and the other universities' departments including English Department in providing logistic aid through psychologists to accompany EFL teachers in teaching learners with ASD can be crucial in responding to the different needs of this type of students. The research has shown that the learner with ASD required the support of a number of specialists, including psychologists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, and remedial teachers. Furthermore, team meetings should occur frequently to involve parents and allow for open communication between and among all team members so as to provide the necessary support. Finally, EFL teachers should have sufficient understanding of the specific needs of the learners with ASD in order to accurately support them in the classroom settings. They should strive to continuously update themselves on the academic needs of students with ASD.

### **Conclusion**

The number of students with ASD are increasing at an alarming rate. Hence, addressing this type of learners' academic needs will enhance accommodating them in EFL classroom settings. EFL teachers experience many challenges, such as managing inappropriate behaviors and addressing the individualized needs and supports of students with ASD. Hence, they should receive adequate in-service training to cope with these barriers and address these challenges.

From the explanation above, it can be inferred that the choice to use visual media as the primary medium for instructions has taken into account the tendency of ASD students to be visual learners. The success and motivation of the ASD student in learning the English language has been seen to be significantly impacted by the use of visual media in individualized instruction. This effect was enhanced by the employment of the buddy program, visual support, and co-teaching technique in inclusive classrooms (providing a model of how to behave and act, particularly in matters pertaining to extracurricular activities). By using visual aids or other forms of media, teachers can better capture and hold the student's attention. Besides, the information is presented in a way that the learner can easily repeat. Additionally, the visual aids provide verbal

information clarification and a concrete means of internalizing abstract ideas like cause and effect or sequence. The consistency of the visual information gives the ASD student the necessary amount of time to detach, change, and refocus their attention. As a result, the student's visual interpretation skills appear to be far better than his auditory performance, and he appears to understand what he sees better than what he hears. Even while ASD students are excellent at word identification and phonics, their socialization and reading comprehension skills are still below average. This is probably just how having an autism spectrum disorder would affect him throughout his life.

In the light of the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the tendency of ASD learners to be visual learners should be accommodated by using audiovisual aids in English language teaching. The use of ICTs, and in particular, visual media is beneficial and has an impact on the motivation and success of learners with ASD in English language learning.

It is clear from the findings that teachers and students with autism experience difficulties that need to be considered by relevant parties when it comes to the teaching and learning processes. According to Khowaja et al. (2019), the American Psychiatric Association defined autism spectrum disorder. They claim that autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a neurological condition that can make it difficult for a youngster to communicate with others or exhibit a pattern of repetitive or constrained activities. According to Buyuk et al. (2019), social stories can help learners with autism better grasp social situations, infer other people's viewpoints, and exhibit acceptable behavior. Along with that, it is anticipated that a created module made up of social stories and graphics will aid to raise the motivation and interest of language learners with autism. Notbohm (2005) acknowledged that autism is a highly complicated condition and that individuals with autism do differ from one another in terms of their behaviors and preferences. Additionally, another characteristic of students with autism is that they pick things up through repetition (Skewes et al., 2020).

The researcher hopes that the findings and the recommendations of this study will be used to develop an adequate educational and psychological program for learners with ASD that satisfies their wants and needs.

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**Reviewers:**

1. Anonymous
2. Anonymous

**Handling Editor:**

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## INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATIVE STRATEGIES IN AN ESP CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY

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### Abstract

This paper describes the experience of Ukrainian educators in the promotion of social inclusion for internally displaced students. Attention is paid to the analysis of key notions and concepts of social inclusion in education, and the challenges associated with the implementation of inclusion strategies. This paper investigates the advantages and disadvantages of inclusive communication strategies implementation in ESP courses. The choice justified by its communicative orientation and focus on social interaction. One hundred and ten internally displaced students and fifteen ESP teachers participated in the study. The study presents the results gained from interviews with Ukrainian students and ESP teachers from Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute. A comparative analysis revealed the positive dynamics in internally displaced students' well-being after the implementation of inclusive communicative strategies. The findings support the idea that the well-being of internally displaced students can be improved with the implementation of individualization, diversification, and differentiation integrated into the ESP classroom.

**Keywords:** inclusion, higher education, internally displaced students, communicative strategies, differentiation, ESP

#### Article history:

Received: 16 October 2022  
Reviewed: 25 October 2022  
Accepted: 01 November 2022  
Published: 20 December 2022

#### Contributor roles

Conceptualization Y.L. (lead)  
Supervision, Data Curation, Visualization, Validation -  
Y.L., I.S., K.T. (equal), Resources K.T. (lead); Methodology,  
Formal Analysis, Writing – original draft Y.L. (lead)

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**Citation:** Lavrysh, Y, Simkova, I. & Tuliakova, K. (2022). Inclusive Communicative Strategies in an ESP Classroom: A Case Study at a Ukrainian University. *English Studies at NBU*, 8(2), 215-232. <https://doi.org/10.33919/esnbu.22.2.4>

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Thousands of internally displaced Ukrainian students have been out of their universities due to severe circumstances. They are experiencing the challenge of establishing new social networks, integrating into the academic environment, and overcoming stress and trauma. Still, regardless of the current location, the state guarantees equal opportunities for every student to acquire knowledge and participate in the educational process. Nevertheless, some factors might cause learning barriers for such students in the 'new' host communities – cultural, social background, psychological traumatic experience, new requirements, a lack of resources, etc. The situation is worsened by the loss of house and belongings and separation from a family, as a result, we encounter with vulnerable and sensitive students even within Ukraine and such students require special attention in terms of social inclusiveness.

Considering inclusion, we usually think of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). But all over the world social inclusion is a priority due to the increasing number of other factors for the exclusion and learning barriers: social crises, conflicts, natural disasters, military invasions, migration, etc. Such students are in urgent need of transformative measures to ensure their right to study. Although the situation with internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ukraine is focused extensively, education arrangements for displaced students are still beyond the scope of inclusion.

In this paper, we are concerned with the barriers and opportunities that internally displaced students have on their way toward social inclusion. We consider that English Language classes might contribute to the social learning barriers elimination and students' well-being by developing interpersonal communicative skills. Thus, the study aims to share the experience of social inclusive approach integration in teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course at polytechnic university. For this purpose, we have analysed and adopted the technologies of inclusive education for our realm and carried out the survey to identify the advantages and disadvantages of the implementation of inclusive technologies in the ESP course.

### **Theoretical background**

It is one of the democratic values that human rights should not be violated for those people whose capabilities and needs differ from generally accepted norms. Equal access to education is critical for the development of an inclusive society. One of the

fundamental principles of creating a single European educational space including Ukraine, is the availability of high-quality consistent education, not only for SEND students but for internally displaced students (IDS) as far as they have special needs and opportunities. Ukraine supports many international conventions that require members to domesticate inclusive education agendas, including the 'World Conference on Education for All (1990)' and 'Salamanca Statement, 1994'. Ukraine's commitment is demonstrated in local frameworks such as the Law of Ukraine on ensuring the rights of displaced people, and the Law of Ukraine on education regarding the peculiarities of access of persons with special educational needs to educational services.

Therefore, representatives of educational institutions are obliged to take into account all the diversity of the characteristics, needs, and requirements of students and meet them halfway to ensure the acquisition of core knowledge and skills. Communication skills are among 21st-century skills that are developed while Foreign Languages learning. General English, as well as English for Specific purposes, are disciplines that enhance not only students' English proficiency but their communicative abilities (Marzukiet al, 2013). Thus, in our opinion, ESP and GE are among the paramount disciplines where inclusive technologies should be implemented. Social interaction and sociocognitive perspectives in language classes facilitate the negotiation of meaning and emotions. Therefore, opportunities to interact through a foreign language, to create their context and pragmatic reactions eliminate the psychological constraints caused by a traumatic experience.

Despite the positive dynamics of inclusive education promotion in all European countries, there is still narrowed perception of its nature as an approach only for disabled students. However, social inclusivity implies the perception of different kinds of diversity, and displacement is one in the range. Social inclusion is defined by Yates (2011) as "valued recognition" that refers to the recognition and respect of difference and diversity in the community but not as a simple inclusion of newcomers into a community as a member with limited opportunities. According to Diversity and Inclusion report (2021), internal or external displacement results in a life crisis and is considered now a global phenomenon. There are no less than a staggering 68 million people around the world now displaced due to conflict or persecution, 40 % of whom are about 18-24 years old. According to Cohen et al. (2018), inclusive education opens equal access to education for

everyone and it involves the creation of adapted programs and teaching methods, taking into account the psychological trauma, new requirements in the new high school system, a lack of resources, loss of house and belongings, displacement to the new region, and fear of changes.

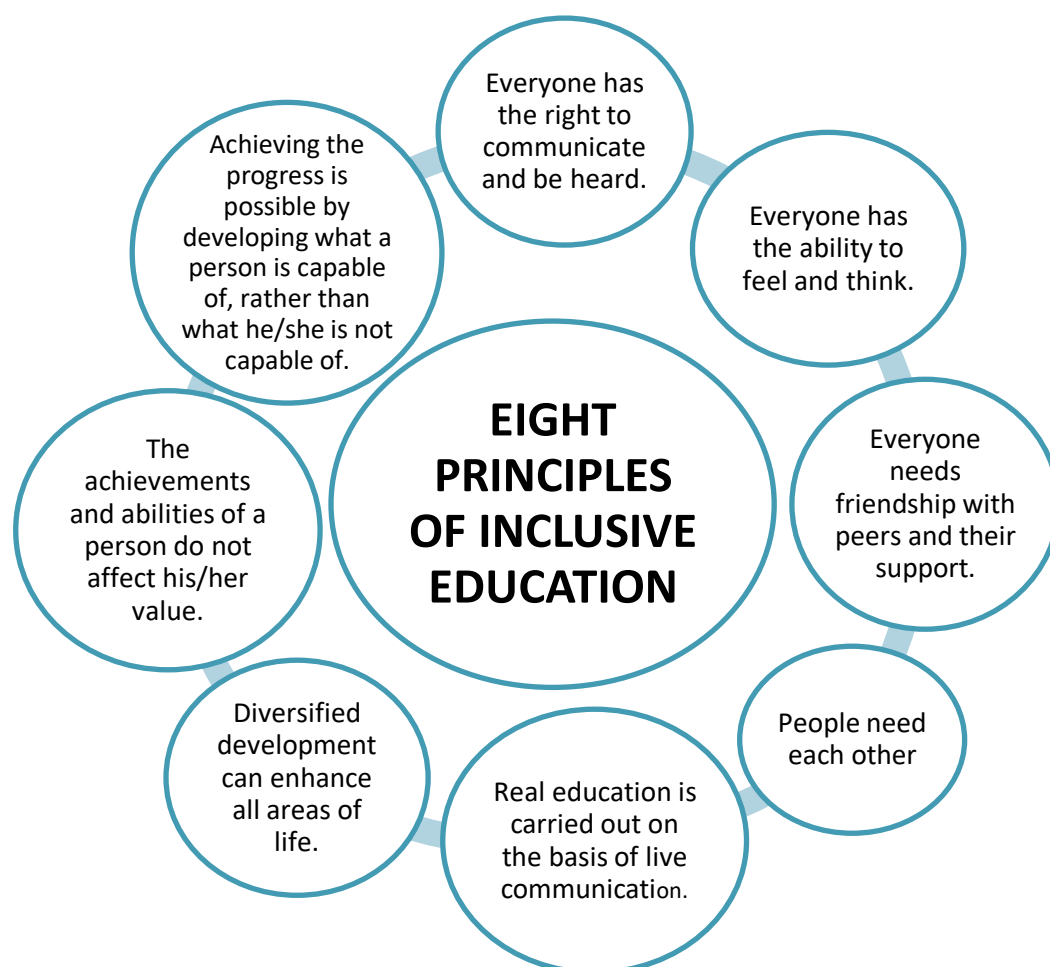
Internally displaced students should be involved in the educational process in its full meaning which is not limited to academic achievements. Meaningful inclusion of displaced students should address not only academic needs but social and emotional needs (Cerna, 2019). We consider that humanitarian subjects such as English Language or ESP might be of great help to satisfy these needs and to overcome separation, trauma, and loss through communication and developing interpersonal skills. Since the socialization of students takes place in educational institutions, it is necessary to create special conditions for internally displaced students so that their social skills develop simultaneously with their peers. ID students may experience exclusionary social-cultural barriers in new institutions and locations and we witnessed cases of physical integration without social inclusion that was described in Dryden-Peterson's research (2011). It might cause feelings of instability and social tension among learners. ID students' feelings of alienation may also develop because of a "cultural trauma", the concept developed by Alexander (2004). He claims that this phenomenon takes place when students' cultural identity and memory are changing in an irreversible way that might cause the atrocity occurrence and perception of it as a consequence of their diversity. Taking part in discussions, listening, and reading bio narratives about people with the same background and problems, the creation of cultural-language projects stimulates displaced students' inclusion and serves as a well-being restorative tool as well.

Having analyzed sources on ID learners' inclusion (Kinsella & Senior, 2008; Mendenhall et al. 2020) we came across eight principles of social inclusive education that resist the infringement of internally displaced students' rights (Figure 1).

These principles are not about the elimination of physical learning barriers, but they highlight the importance of personal values and abilities. Communication skills are regarded as a key tool for the implementation of the principles. Educators should shift from searching students' weak points and mistakes discussion to the identification of strong points and directions for improvement. It will create a positive and safe educational environment that eliminates stress, low self-esteem, and fear of mistakes. From the



perspective of language learning, semantic and pragmatic aspects offer opportunities to use the foreign language for narration and live communication in various communicative situations without being completely personal and thus facilitate learning, motivation, and a sense of self. Communicating in imaginary situations allows students to express their ideas and fears, observe peer reactions, and test communicative strategies to construct safe, real-life communication in the future. If social contacts through foreign languages are



positive, they contribute to the impression of being welcomed.

**Figure 1.** Eight principles of inclusive education

The studies indicate that there is a relationship between social inclusion and language learning that might be regarded as the beneficial synergy for learning barriers elimination.

### **Methods**

The paper represents a case study conducted between April 2022 and September 2022, exploring students' and teachers' perceptions of the learning needs of ID students

and how inclusive pedagogy can be employed in this respect. The study took place in a real-life setting (Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute), facing real-life educational issues (social inclusion of internally displaced students) with follow-up solutions and reflections (inclusive strategies integrated into ESP teaching). To achieve the goals of the study, a complex of interrelated methods of scientific research have been used. The multiphase nature of the research is explained by the stages of the study. We carried out a systematic review of the literature to construct a conceptual framework of the study at the first stage. The second stage involved the empirical study to verify the hypothesis of the study. An interpretive approach disclosing the data sense (Creswell, 2014) was applied in the third stage. The main theoretical methods used in the study are analysis and synthesis of psychological and pedagogical literature to formulate the initial notions and clarify the main ideas that form the theoretical basis of the study. The empirical methods used in the study are the observation of the educational process when inclusive technologies were used during ESP and GE classes; the quantitative and qualitative analysis of experimental data to identify the advantages and disadvantages of the implementation of inclusive technologies during ESP and GE teaching internally displaced students.

### **Participants**

To illustrate the impact of inclusive technologies on the communicative skills development and psychological well-being of internally displaced students, the study was carried out among 110 students at Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute who were internally displaced from different regions of Ukraine. A judgmental sampling technique was applied for the participant selection. Participants from both groups (students and teachers) were chosen based on the authors' judgment and expectations. The key criteria for students sampling were internally displaced students of 2-3 courses and B1 language level. A group of 15 ESP teachers participated in the study. They were also purposively selected due to the presence of educational experience in inclusive technologies implementation such as technologies of individual support (individualization), technologies of differentiation, technologies for correcting educational and behavioral difficulties, and technologies for the development of effective social skills. Students' participation was voluntary and did not lead to any academic consequences in case of exclusion from the study.

## **Data collection tools and Procedure**

The semi-structured interview was chosen based on the idea that it is providing an opportunity to explore additional information about students' and ESP teachers' attitudes and perceptions concerning the implementation and impact of inclusive technologies for the improvement of students' well-being. The participants of the survey were suggested with the following questions (Figures 2 and 3, see Appendix).

We intentionally asked the same questions on advantages and disadvantages to compare the ideas mentioned by students and teachers. The questionnaires were given after the integration of inclusive practices into language learning. Peer-observation teachers' protocols were also applied as an additional tool for the data collection. The integration of practices was performed for 3 months May-June. The data analysis was carried out by using content analysis for open answers and observation protocols. The Likert scale was analyzed by the distribution of responses.

## **Results**

The purpose of the experiment was to find out teachers' and students' attitudes and perceptions of strategies for social inclusivity integration in English Language classes. The analysis of experimental data indicated that approximately two-thirds of the ESP teachers (65 %) agreed that attending training or webinars would be quite helpful for them in choosing proper inclusive technologies to work with internally displaced students. 78% of ESP teachers agreed that the psychological well-being of their students improved after the integration of inclusive technologies. However, the rest of the teachers (22%) expressed doubts (disagreed) regarding immediate improvement and suggested that inclusive strategies might have prolonged action and would be seen in the future. Among the key challenges, educators admitted anxiety (92%), feeling of uncertainty and low self-esteem (84%), low level of motivation to study (88%), problems with emotional control (63%), refusing to communicate and participate in learning activities (51%), and problems with concentration (44%). Answering the question on inclusive strategies, teachers mentioned scaffolding, active involvement in goals setting and reflection, cooperative tasks instead of individual ones, peer assessment, tasks differentiation, provide more social-cultural discourse for communication and negotiation.

Students' answers demonstrated that 93% of students confessed that relocation affected their study and motivation:

*"What is the sense of studying if I lost my house and the sense of stability? I can move tomorrow to another place".*

Ukrainian universities are autonomous and differ in curricula or systems of assessment. However, general academic requirements and rules are similar. Nevertheless, some students (37%) admitted that the requirements were completely different and their university rules were more understandable. 68% of students confirmed that language classes helped them build social networks, communicate with peers, and, thus, adapt to a new university and improve their well-being. Due to the variability of tools and forms for self-expression, students found the process of knowledge demonstration interesting and engaging.

Regarding the answers on advantages and disadvantages, students and teachers admitted that inclusive technologies (differentiated activities for students) contributed to socialization and eliminated the fear of communication, simplified social acceptance, and eased the adaptation of internally displaced students to the learning environment. Teachers added the increasing motivation to study, more willingness to communicate, and higher academic achievements in language study.

Among the disadvantages named by survey participants were the not equal and fair assessment, a stereotype that ID students have a lower level of education. Teachers also added difficulties of working in mixed-ability classes when there were more than 25 students, difficulties with the provision of inclusion online, and the discrepancy between the syllabi and the real possibilities of the students.

Talking about advantages students who participated in the survey emphasized that studying in an inclusive environment provides them with the opportunity to make friends among their peers and adopt social models of behavior. The internally displaced student said:

*"Debating together with my groupmates, they knew me better. And they did not have to ask me awkward questions about me."*

About 80% of students expressed their thoughts that English language classes enhanced adaptation to the learning environment, one of the internally displaced students said:

*“When we discussed the topic of higher education around the world and different types of qualifications, rules, and requirements, we compared them to Ukrainian requirements and rules. It helped me understand new rules at this university. So, it was easier to enter the learning process”.*

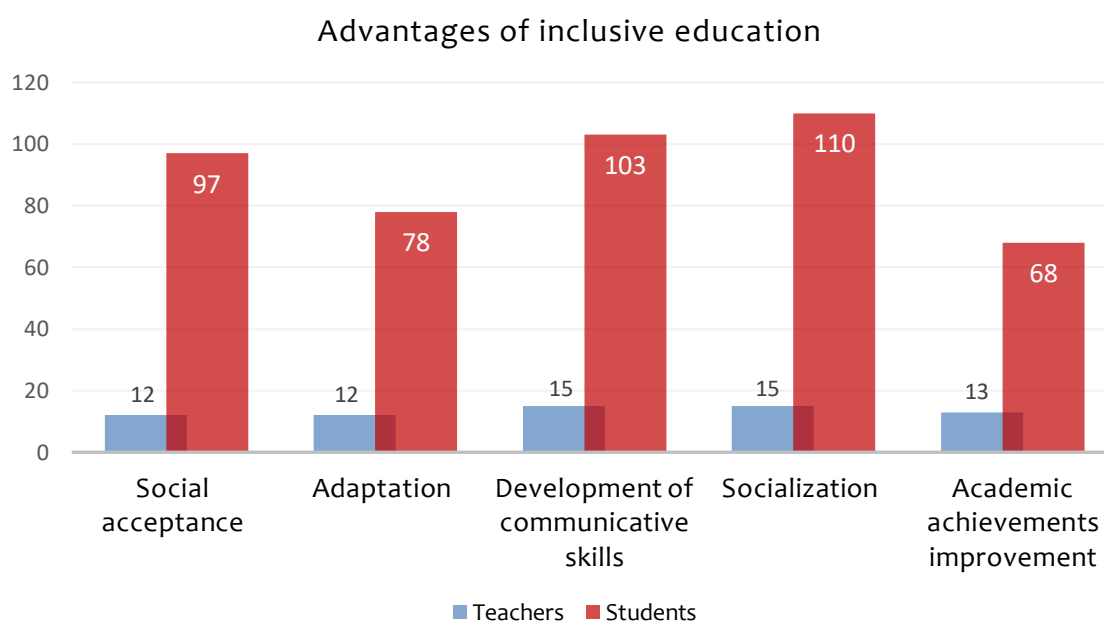
When interviewing about advantages one of the teachers said:

*“In one group I implemented the technology of mixed differentiation for most speaking tasks. As a result, students from both groups ID and non-ID learned their strong points and knew how to show them more beneficially.*

The summarized classification of advantages is demonstrated in **Figure 4**.

**Figure 4**

*Analysis of experimental data provided by ESP teachers and students.*



A small number of ESP teachers (37%) pointed out such disadvantages as the discrepancy between the syllabi and the real possibilities of internally displaced students and the lack of experience and knowledge in creating an inclusive environment. The ESP teacher who participated in the survey said:

*“When I got an information that in my class would be internally displaced students, I spent several weeks watching online webinars dedicated to the inclusive technologies that could be implemented during English classes.”*

Not all students accepted the idea of differentiation and distribution into groups. One of the recipients said:

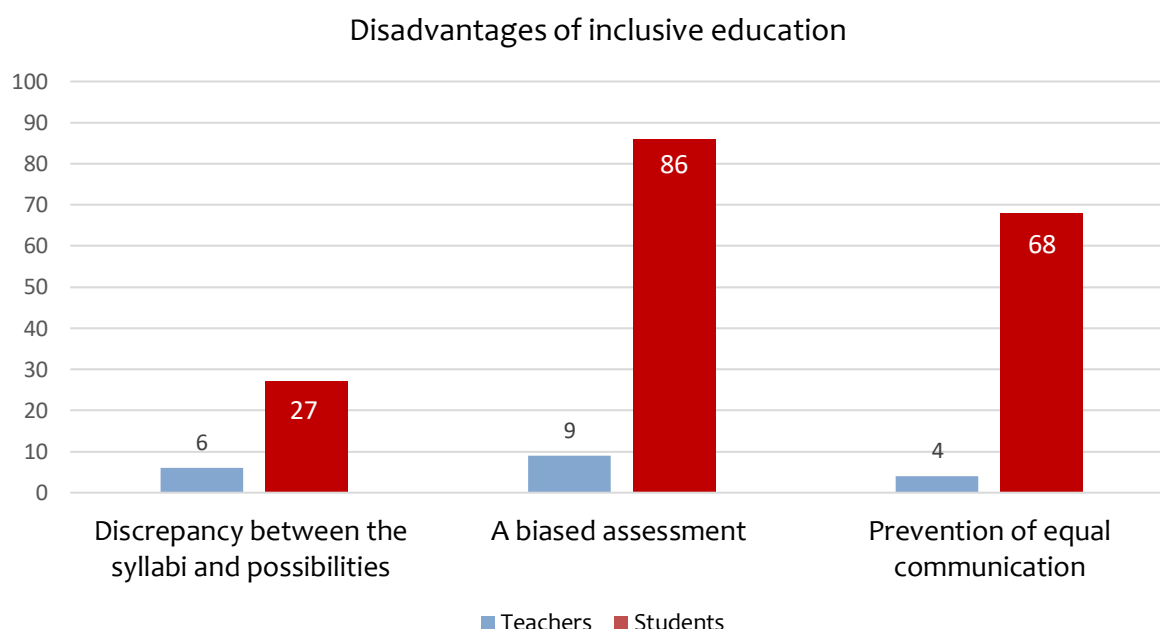
*“I don’t really like when the English teacher differentiates us by levels. Once students in my class were divided into three groups to listen and discuss the professional topic: students who spoke English well, students who spoke English worse, and internally displaced students. Of course, each group requires different levels of learning assistance. I think such an approach provides us with a lower level of education. Even more, it deprives us of communication with other groupmates”.*

Some ESP teachers mentioned that even despite their tries to create an inclusive environment the learning process is hampered by social and behavioral difficulties. The ESP teacher said:

*“Some internally displaced students can’t collaborate with their classmates due to psychological trauma and fear”.*

**Figure 5**

*Analysis of experimental data provided by ESP teachers and students when*



While there are many successful examples of how internally displaced students function in an inclusive environment, at the same time there are students who suffer from a biased assessment due to a condescending attitude or feel inconvenient due to the differentiation according to the level or location. It is obvious that such an approach should be eliminated.

Having analyzed peer-observation protocols, we calculated the frequency of communicative inclusive tasks which were implemented during the ESP classes to improve students' psychological well-being and students' attitudes to the tasks performed in an inclusive environment.

**Table 1***Frequency of inclusive strategies used in the ESP classroom*

<b>Inclusive strategies</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Students' positive response</b>	<b>Students' negative response</b>
1. Individualization	32	93	17
2. Differentiation by levels	19	47	63
3. Differentiation by function	28	98	12
4. Mixed differentiation	31	88	22
5. Strategies for correcting educational and behavioral difficulties	17	20	10
6. Strategies for the formation of social interaction skills	41	78	32

Thus, we can suggest that even taking into account the drawbacks of inclusive technologies, their implementation in the educational process provides considerable assistance in improving the personal well-being of internally displaced students.

### **Discussion**

Motivation and confidence are two very important factors that improve the social skills of internally displaced students and reduce their stress when interacting with other people. Internally displaced students should be provided with access not only to formal education but also to alternative flexible learning pathways. There is a need to shift to flexible non-formal education, where students can learn and pursue their future. While implementing the inclusive strategies, teachers admitted that not only teaching should be changed, there was a need for some organizational transformations. This idea is supported by Ainscow and Miles (2009) who claim that inclusion technologies can be divided into two groups organizational and pedagogical. The first one is aimed at creating a plan, conditions, and learning process, setting the desired results. While the second one is considered as a methodological solution and content selection. Five types of inclusive strategies can be identified: based on individual approach (individualization); based on differentiation; based on correcting educational and behavioral difficulties; based on the development of social skills; and inclusive assessment.

Most ID students demonstrated low level of self-esteem and confidence because they had lost a control over their lives and education that gave them feeling of stability. To provide students with the sense of a control, it is necessary to empower them with the opportunity to be involved into the learning process: to choose topics for discussion, tools for self-expression, groups for cooperation. Such activities create the feeling of a control and enhance

self-determination. Students admitted that when they got some level of autonomy and independence, they did not feel as victims of the circumstances any more. These observations are in a line with Pisotskaya's (2018) study. She emphasizes that the main task of inclusive pedagogy is to create conditions for the independence of internally displaced students. The teacher should help students understand the goals of learning, choose authentic and relevant education material, and suggest a variety of ways to find solutions.

Most teachers employed the differentiation as an inclusive strategy. We tried to implement the differentiation in groups suggested by Barres et al. (2014) according to language or educational background level, communicative function, or a mixed option. Differentiation by levels occurs when students in one class are distributed into three groups: high-achievers, medium-achievers, and students with psychophysiological problems. Each group requires different levels of learning assistance. The essence of the technology lies in the fact that a teacher sets tasks feasible for each group and helps in case of failures. For example, conducting ESP classes with academic groups that major in energy management, a teacher starts the ice-breaking activity by talking about the future that Ukraine will face after the war, about renewable energy projects that Ukraine will need. Speaking about future and making optimistic predictions help students overcome fear of the global destruction, motivates all students to work harder and provides a feeling of confidence and safe future for all students. Then, during the main part of the class, a teacher uses differentiation by levels to perform the task. The short description of inclusive language activity differentiated by levels is demonstrated in **Figure 6** (see Appendix).

Analyzing the observation protocol of the described class, educators mentioned that all groups successfully completed the task. However, what emerged as an interesting fact is that some students highlighted the implementation of differentiation by levels as a reason for the low level of education, because it deprives them of communication with their groupmates and provides a low level of education. In fact, in their ways, the students have highlighted the idea expressed by Veck et al. (2018). The researchers emphasize the necessity of meaningful and thoughtful use of differentiation using more criteria for differentiation. We understand this concern and recommend distribution groups according to other criteria and/or mixing students with different levels. But, in this case, students' roles should be well elaborated, and it will move to the functional differentiation.



Differentiation by function (Figure 7, see Appendix) means the distribution of tasks by functions so that everyone can take an action for a common result. The work of such groups is focused not only on the result but the coordinated collaborative interaction of students. In every group, each student takes on different functions, for example, the first one takes the function of a leader, the second sets goals (what to talk about in presentation), the third searches for a useful functional language, the fourth one keeps track of time, and so on.

Mixed differentiation is a model of general groups in which students are grouped according to levels and interests. The teacher organizes three consolidated groups. The first consists of students who are interested in a particular subject. The remaining two are from students who help the first group achieve overall results.

Based on the results of our empirical study, we can claim that inclusive language activities contributed to students' well-being improvement (fear level decreasing, control over emotions, active and open communication, higher level of self-esteem and self-confidence), expressing his/her mind in public without fear, becoming more confident language user due to development of communicative skills and more knowledgeable on the subject matter.

Communicative inclusive practices create comfortable and safe conditions for teaching internally displaced students. Their main idea is the constant monitoring of the interaction and timely removal of barriers. Wilkerson et al. (2013) promoted in their study three types of strategies for the formation of social interaction skills: demonstration, socialization through imitation, and socialization through activity. Demonstration of social skills takes place when a teacher demonstrates the rules of behavior and participates in interaction with students. Socialization through imitation is a strategy of peer education when a student who is successful in some educational area becomes an example for others. The imitation method is especially important when teaching students with a traumatic experience. These strategies are feasible to implement in English Language classes as most time of the class and many practices are focused on interaction and developed for the interaction that is partially personal and partially fictional.

We support the idea that stability and safety are very important for internally displaced students. As there is a high rate of mobility among these students, it is important to make sure that they have adequate and continuous education, and are

provided with physical, spiritual, and emotional stability to continue their learning journey during the years of their education. To exclude the biased assessment due to a condescending attitude inclusive assessing methods should be used which are options for our further study.

### Conclusions

Our study has led us to conclude that the implementation of inclusive education at ESP classes is a complex but effective process that requires much time, resources, awareness, and mutual interest and effort from teachers and students. The result of the introduction of inclusive communicative strategies is raising the social inclusivity responsibility of the university and academic community. For internally displaced students, the introduction of inclusive technologies includes academic gains in English literacy (speaking, listening, reading, and writing), better communication abilities, and improved social and interpersonal skills.

The present study has only examined the advantages and disadvantages of the implementation of inclusive communicative strategies. Therefore, this study has not taken into consideration the interrelations between the principles of inclusive education and the advantages or disadvantages of the approach and was not focused on students who didn't leave their homes but studied with IDP.

Future studies on the current topic are therefore required for the investigation of inclusive assessment strategies and their impact on the psychological well-being of internally displaced students.

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## APPENDIX

**Figure 2**

*An example of questionnaires proposed to ESP teachers.*

Nº	Question	Type of answer
1	I need to attend additional training or webinars to choose proper inclusive technologies to work with internally displaced students	Strongly Agree – Agree – Disagree – Strongly Disagree
2	What challenges to you encounter while teaching internally displaced students?	Open answer
3	What inclusive strategies did you apply?	Open answer
4	The psychological well-being of ID students improved after the usage of inclusive practices	Strongly Agree – Agree – Disagree – Strongly Disagree
5	What advantages can you observe during the implementation of inclusive technologies?	Open answer
6	What challenges can you observe during the implementation of inclusive technologies?	Open answer

**Figure 3**

*An example of questionnaires proposed to internally displaced students.*

Nº	Question	Type of answer
1	The relocation affected my study.	Strongly Agree – Agree – Disagree – Strongly Disagree
2	The academic requirements at new university are completely different from the university I studied before	Strongly Agree – Agree – Disagree – Strongly Disagree
3	The foreign language classes helped me adapt and build social networks with peers	Strongly Agree – Agree – Disagree – Strongly Disagree
4	Using foreign language for imaginary situations or discussions makes it easier to express my feelings than in real communication	Strongly Agree – Agree – Disagree – Strongly Disagree
5	Variability of self-expression possibilities at English language classes (audio/video recordings, blogs, vlogs, infographics, portfolios) helped me overcome communication barrier in new learning environment	Strongly Agree – Agree – Disagree – Strongly Disagree
6.	What advantages did you find in completion activities differentiated by levels or possibilities?	Open answer
7	What disadvantages did you find in completion activities differentiated by levels or possibilities?	Open answer

## Figure 6

*An example of tasks used by an ESP teacher and differentiated by levels*

**Topic:** Open-pit mines and renewable energy

**Specialism:** Energy management

**Instruction:** At an interdepartmental meeting, ELEC employees are discussing the future of energy supply. Listen and prepare the report about the future of energy supply.

LEVEL 1

Prepare your report following the next headings.

**1 Long-distance electricity transmission**

**2 R&D department project**

**3 Geothermal heating**

**4 Hydrogen**

LEVEL 2

Prepare your report using the above headings. The following expressions may help you

The Introduction

The most important points seem to me to be ...

I would like to mention briefly that...

The main body

A case in point is ...

Firstly, ... Secondly, ... Thirdly, ...

The conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that...

LEVEL 3

Prepare your report using the above headings, expressions, and plan below. Ask your teacher about things you are not sure about.

Plan

**1. The introduction**

Tell your classmates about:

- kind of company;
- energy resources;
- country where it was founded.

**2. The main part**

Tell your classmates about:

- how the company will work;
- benefits from such work;
- sources of renewable or nonrenewable energy.

**3. Conclusion**

Tell your classmates about:

- predict the future company.

**Figure 7**

*An example of task used by an ESP teacher and differentiated by function*

**Topic:** Open-pit mines and renewable energy  
**Specialism:** Energy engineers  
**Instruction:** With the help of the Internet find information about Ukrainian and European companies dealing with the latest Renewable energy projects. To present the information you are divided into groups with specific tasks, you can choose the group by filling in the Google form.

**GROUP 1** **SECOND** **FIRST**

**1. The introduction.**

**Tell your classmates about:**  
 kind of company;  
 source where the information was taken;  
 country where it was founded.

**You may use:**  
 The most important points seem to me to be ...  
 I would like to mention briefly that ...  
 I would like to make a few remarks concerning...  
 I would like to comment on the problem of ...

**THIRD**

**GROUP 2** **FOURTH**

**2. The main part.**

**Tell your classmates about:**  
 how the company will work;  
 benefits from such work;  
 sources of renewable energy.

**You may use:**  
 A case in point is ...  
 Firstly, ... Secondly, ... Thirdly, ...  
 Finally, ...  
 In addition, ...  
 Let me give an example ...

**GROUP 3**

**3. Conclusion.**

**Tell your classmates about:**  
 why did you choose this company;  
 can a subsidiary of this company be opened in your country?

**You may use:**  
 In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that...  
 Let me conclude by saying...  
 Allow me to conclude by highlighting the fact that...

*You may use the following websites as well as your own, which you will find.*  
<http://www.enertec.fi/company/10557/companycard.html>  
[http://www.flexlink.com/wps/public/s/10000/c/3225372?gclid=CLyI2\\_Dcg50CFQYTzAodrWX76w](http://www.flexlink.com/wps/public/s/10000/c/3225372?gclid=CLyI2_Dcg50CFQYTzAodrWX76w)  
[www.ucsusa.org/clean\\_energy/solutions/renewable\\_energy\\_solutions/cashing-in-on-clean-energy-a.html](http://www.ucsusa.org/clean_energy/solutions/renewable_energy_solutions/cashing-in-on-clean-energy-a.html)  
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# AN ASSESSMENT OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS LEARNING ENGLISH BASED ON ACADEMIC MAJOR, CLASS LEVEL, AND GENDER VARIABLES

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## Abstract



The goal of this study is to investigate undergraduate students' attitudes toward learning English based on their academic major, class level, and gender. A total of 150 undergraduate students (65 males and 85 females) distributed in different class levels and different colleges and departments were surveyed using a Likert-type scale. Statistical differences indicated that students had a mixed bag of attitudes about the English language, with some being positive and others being negative. The findings revealed that students in science-related majors and Kindergarten Education had a higher interest in learning English than other students; all students in science-related majors believed that learning English is beneficial; felt more confident and had more positive attitudes toward their English instructors than those in Education-related ones. In addition, juniors were more enthusiastic about learning English as a second language and had more positive attitudes toward it than freshmen. Likewise, female students obtained more positive attitudes in terms of interest and instructor subscales. However, ANOVA analysis of indicated no significant differences in self-confidence and usability subscales between male and female students. In light of the research's conclusions, some practical implications are explored to assist students in adopting a positive attitude toward English language learning.

**Keywords:** attitude and motivation, attitude towards learning English, English language learning, academic major, class level, gender

## Article history:

Received: 13 June 2022

Reviewed: 10 October 2022

Accepted: 16 October 2022

Published: 20 December 2022

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**Citation:** Muftah, M. (2022). An Assessment of Undergraduate Students' Attitudes Towards Learning English Based on Academic Major, Class Level, and Gender Variables. *English Studies at NBU*, 8(2), 233-256. <https://doi.org/10.33919/esnbu.22.2.5>

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English has become the primary means of communication in the global context as a result of globalization and increased accessibility and connectivity of people all over the world. In commerce, finance and banking, science and technology, widespread culture, and international affairs, English has surpassed all other languages (Gömleksiz, 2010). Wulyani et al. (2019) believe that a strong mastery of the English language is crucial for globalization since it enables access to high-quality education, improved career possibilities and business, in addition to the development of interpersonal and cultural bonds. In addition, Morganna et al. (2020) state that people from all over the world use English to some extent. Learning English has become a necessity for adapting to the current world context and surviving global restructuring. It is generally accepted that proficiency in the English language is a prerequisite for one's own success.

Among the most essential indicators of achievement in learning English is students' attitude toward the language (Herwiana & Laili, 2021, Getie, 2020). As a result, teachers and educators should take motivation and attitude variables into account when developing strategies for English language instruction and training (Pham, 2021). Attitude is defined as an intellectual condition that encompasses beliefs and feelings and is widely recognized as a key notion in interpreting human behavior (Latchanna & Dagnew, 2009). Beliefs are one of the key elements that affect learning (Ajzen, 2005). The beliefs of students can be great stimuli, and they can be significantly affected by their families and teachers (Seven, 2020). A student should assume that anyone who works hard in class can succeed. Motivation, on the other hand, may be the only way to get good academic results and avoid failure. Their beliefs could be an impediment if they think they will not be effective at learning the new language (Lennartsson, 2008).

A negative attitude can make it difficult to learn a language (Ellis, 1994). However, a student's negative attitudes can be transformed into positive ones, making it easier to achieve a positive outcome (Lennartsson, 2008). Learners are off to a strong start if they have a positive attitude toward learning a language (Getie, 2020). Language learners are human beings with emotions, bodies, thoughts, memories, imaginations, passions, and identities in addition to being communicators and critical thinkers (Kramsch, 2006).

Learning a language is also affected by motivation. Lennartsson (2008) has asserted that motivation and the desire to learn a second language were deemed far more important than social factors. According to Liu (2007), motivation to learn a second



language (L2) stems from positive attitudes toward the L2 community as well as a desire to interact with and imitate those in the same community. A positive attitude elevates students' learning motivation (Csizér et al., 2010). Saville-Troike & Barto (2017) highlight the significance of motivation, claiming that more motivated students would learn a new language more effectively. How quickly they pick up a new language is determined by the motivation of each learner. Therefore, a student's interest in learning may indicate that the student is inclined to learn at a certain time in the future. A concept, a feeling, or a physical need can all encourage a student to learn. Hence, it is implausible that learning will take place, if a student is unwilling to do so (Seven, 2020).

Learners who are motivated and more enthusiastic about learning a new language and believe in its usability will progress faster than those who do not (Ellis, 1994; Gömleksiz, 2010; Getie, 2020; Pham, 2021). Reece et al. (2007) confirm that less competent but highly motivated students can gain greater success than more smart but unmotivated ones. Among the factors that influence attitudes are gender inequalities, educational levels, socioeconomic background, grade level, GPA, and proficiency level. According to Gömleksiz (2010), gender, grade level, and department variables all differ from one another in a statistically significant manner.

Another factor in the learning process is the teacher. Successful teachers guide their students toward educational goals (Delić & Bećirović, 2016) while instilling positive attitudes toward learning. If the students appreciate the language teacher, they can develop language skills more promptly and efficiently. However, if the students dislike or disrespect their teacher, they will be unable to attend class or enjoy the teaching-learning process (Abu-Melhim, 2009). Moreover, role-playing and providing constructive, satisfactory evaluative and developmental feedback have a considerable positive effect on students' self-confidence and self-esteem (Munna & Kalam, 2021). It was also discovered that a dynamic educational atmosphere enhances inclusion and participation and helps instructors and students perform better academically (Munna & Kalam, 2021).

One way to maintain students' attention and engagement in what they are practicing in the classroom and increase their motivation to learn the language is to use a variety of interesting topics and activities (Harmer, 2007). It may well be in increasing interest that instructors expend the most commitment and see the most instant and

visible results in terms of student motivation (Ur, 1996). Since activities can have a substantial influence on students' enthusiasm and given that the teacher is the one who planned, designs, and sets them up, it is important to invest time and energy into making classroom activities interesting and inspiring for students (Daskalovska et al., 2012).

In addition, to learn a second language, you must also have self-confidence. It might facilitate the learning process and can have a significant impact on a person's life, for better or worse (Brown, 2000). It goes without saying that the L2 self-confidence component is important and valuable to learners both in and out of the language classroom. Students who are confident are more likely to engage actively in class activities (Edwards & Roger, 2015). On the other hand, students who lack confidence are often proven to be considerably terrified and hesitant, avoiding conveying their thoughts and even being unable to communicate (Jabor et al., 2017). Therefore, having self-confidence is essential for several reasons. The first explanation is that people are more open to taking chances when they are confident in themselves. In order to succeed, one would likely have to undertake some risks. Another reason is that a self-confident person is unlikely to give up. With these certain aptitudes, a student can make progress and enhance language performance.

Family expectations are one of the influencing factors. Family expectations are one aspect that affects how students feel about learning a language, but they can also cause anxiety if the student does not live up to their family standards (Csizér et al., 2010). Therefore, understanding language learners' attitudes is crucial since it can increase the effectiveness of teaching and learning instructional strategies. Ukpong and George (2013) asserted that there was a connection between English study time and accomplishment. Barnes and Lock (2010) have stated that lecturers must understand their students' attitudes in order to respond to their needs and improve students' learning outcomes. As a result, research into language attitudes will benefit lecturers in terms of teaching-learning pedagogical practices. Some important aspects of a person's personality, such as who they are and what they believe in, can be expressed through their attitude.

Moreover, each student has distinct demands, beliefs, interests, educational backgrounds, and learning styles. These variables can cause a variety of responses in learning the language. To put it another way, students have their own language attitudes

toward English as a second language. Furthermore, they have opinions on the English learning process. Therefore, investigating language attitudes benefits decision-makers in various ways. A study of students' attitudes is an operative method for language teachers, education professionals, curriculum developers, and experts to achieve a better sense of the language pedagogical procedure.

In light of the above-mentioned discussion, it's critical to look into how students feel about English. Considering the significance of students' attitudes in the language learning process and their implication for their accomplishment, the role of L2 students' attitudes toward English in the context of Saudi Arabia has received insufficient attention, and the main contribution of this study is an attempt to bridge that gap. In this case, the research looks into the factors that may affect students' attitudes, such as academic major, class level, and gender. The central focus is to find out how university students feel about learning English. More specifically, it examines Saudi undergraduate students' attitudes towards learning English language. The main goal was to determine if there were any statistically significant differences in attitudes toward learning English among students based on their academic major, class level, and gender. Therefore, the current research may serve as a leading study in the context of Saudi university students' language learning and may, together with the investigation on interest, self-confidence, usability, and instructor variables contribute to the enhancements in the L2 learning processes in general.

### **Research questions**

The purpose of the present work was to provide answers to the subsequent research questions:

(1) Are there any statistically significant differences among students' attitudes toward learning English in relation to the academic major, class level and gender variables?

(2) To what extent does each factor (i.e. interest, self-confidence, usability and instructor) affect students' attitudes toward learning English in relation to the academic major, class level and gender variables?

## Literature Review

It is discovered that attitudes toward languages have three aspects or elements, namely cognitive, emotional, and behavioural (Baker, 1992). While the cognitive aspect is concerned with a person's beliefs, principles, and personal opinions about a language, the emotional aspect is concerned with his or her thoughts and feelings toward the language, and the behavioural aspect is concerned with his or her behavioural responses in that language. Positive language beliefs, on the other hand, are associated with positive emotions, which lead to positive linguistic behaviour. These three components may not always be present, though, as some individuals may have a stronger cognitive attitude toward language than a behavioural or emotional one.

A variety of factors, including age, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and cultural background, were reported to influence attitudes. Gardner (1985) suggested that second or foreign language (L2/FL) learners who have a positive perception of the target culture will typically tend to learn its language more efficiently than those who do not. According to (Ellis, 1994), students' attitudes could be influenced by the cultures of the source and the target languages.

Similarly, parental influences on learners' attitudes toward learning a L2/FL have been reported (Brown, 2000). Academic achievement, religious practice, culture, socioeconomic status, place of origin, and awareness of the target language were just a few of the social contexts to consider in the various parent factors (Brown, 2000; Spolsky, 1989). According to Wright(1987), teachers were seen as having a significant impact on students' attitudes (see also Getie, 2020).

Numerous scholars have produced taxonomies of variables such as personality factors, educational factors, social factors, and others such as age and gender that influence L2/FL learners' attitudes, which ultimately affect their language proficiency (Ehrman, 1996; McDonough & Shaw, 2012; Spolsky, 1989). Furthermore, Conteh-Morgan (2002) reinforced the view of some applied linguists that sociocultural context, learner personal qualities, learning environments, learning process, and academic achievement affect attitudes and language learning methods of students.

Attitudes and their functions in learning English as a L2/FL have been explored in a variety of settings around the world. Kiziltepe (2000), for instance, looked into the

impact of attitudes and motivation on Turkish students' English learning. Turkish students had a positive attitude toward learning English and the British and American cultures, and they also revealed no anxiety in class. On the other hand, Durer and Sayar (2013) looked at the attitudes of 400 non-English major students in Turkey to see if there were any gender differences. The results exhibited that male and female students had similar positive attitudes regarding EFL.

As to class level, Sedighi and Zarafshan (2006) looked at the responses of 126 freshmen and seniors majoring in English and English translation to see how their attitudes influenced their use of language learning strategies (LLSs). The respondents demonstrated that their attitudes had a significant impact on how they used LLSs. To clarify, learners who expressed positive attitudes toward LLS users were more likely to adopt their strategies than those who expressed negative attitudes.

In addition, Malallah (2010) discovered that university students in Kuwait were enthusiastic about learning English and native English speakers. The findings indicated a correlation between respondents' attitudes and their command of English and practical needs. Similarly, Tahaineh and Daana (2013) investigated Jordanian students' attitudes toward learning English. The findings showed that female English language and literature major students demonstrated positive attitudes toward EFL than English-speaking people.

Malaysian undergraduate students exhibited positive attitudes toward English learning (Ahmed, 2015; Adnan, 2017). To optimize English language classroom instruction, Ming et al. (2011) investigated the attitudes of secondary school Malaysian students. The outcomes demonstrated that the students' attitudes toward learning English are positive. However, compared to students of Arts, students majoring in science showed a greater interest in developing their English. Additionally, it was observed that advanced students had a more positive attitude than medium or lower-proficient ones.

Similarly, Orfan (2020) examined the cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitudes of Afghan non-English major students regarding studying English based on six criteria. The students' attitudes were found to be generally positive. Additionally, the perspectives of students were more influenced by their Internet access and English learning experiences at English language centres than by their gender, age, first language, and the subject of study. Another study, conducted by Bhaskar and Soundiraraj (2013), looked into the influence of age and level of education in the learning of English by Indian first-

year mechanical engineering students. It was discovered that students' attitudes change significantly to be more positive at the college level. Likewise, Abu-Snoubar (2017) discovered that gender influenced students' attitudes in Jordan, with females displaying more optimism than males. Students' attitudes, instead, were found to be unaffected by their field of study.

Abidin et al. (2012) performed a study into Libyan students' attitudes toward learning English as a foreign language. The research also looked into whether there were any significant dissimilarities in students' attitudes concerning their gender or field of study. Overall, the students' attitudes toward learning English were negative. Gender proved to be effective in this situation. Female students' attitudes were considerably more positive compared to male students. The study's findings also revealed that students majoring in social science fields had the greatest positive attitude of all, followed by students in the basic sciences and life sciences.

Al-Tamimi and Shuib (2009) investigated how Petroleum Engineering students had the commitment to master English. The findings of the study showed that the students' attitudes regarding learning English and the English-speaking community were positive. Arshad and Yusoff (2019) considered Indonesian non-English major students' attitudes towards the English language. The findings revealed the positive attitudes of students and their willingness to communicate.

Likewise, Iqbal et al. (2019) attempted to investigate the widely held belief that Islamic educational background students had negative attitudes toward learning English. The analysis indicated that there is hardly any difference in attitudes between the two faculties, with the Islamic Learning Faculty's students expressing less positive attitude toward English than Education Faculty's students.

In the Saudi context, a few studies have been done to look into the significance and function of attitudes in learning EFL, particularly in higher education. In higher education, the language used varies by university and subject. Some universities teach scientific subjects in English, generally in addition to some required English courses for all university students, whatever their area of study. Numerous investigations have been carried out to determine undergraduate students' attitudes toward learning English, each with a different focus.

Al-Zahrani (2008) study reported that Saudi respondents had a negative attitude toward learning EFL. This attitude, according to the researcher, was generated by inadequate practices and strategies of some teachers and instructors. On the contrary, Khan (2016) realized a relationship between students' attitudes and their ability to communicate in English. Despite having all of the necessary conveniences and resources in the learning setting, students' English proficiency was insufficient. This was ascribed to students' negative attitudes toward education in general as well as other aspects including a lack of confidence and a fear of making mistakes in English. Thus, the study highlighted how crucial the teacher is in fostering students' attitudes and inspiring them to utilize the target language in this particular situation.

Alkaff (2013) study findings revealed that the pre-intermediate and intermediate Saudi female students at King Abdulaziz University had a positive attitude toward learning English. Even though they had few opportunities to practice English in their EFL society, the participants emphasized how eager they were to enhance their English linguistic competence. Al Samadani and Ibnian (2015) conducted a thorough investigation into the impact of Saudi EFL students' attitudes toward learning English on their academic accomplishment, using a sample of 112 English major students ranging from freshmen to seniors with varying grade point averages (GPA). The study's conclusions showed that students generally view studying English positively. Students with high GPAs had the most positive attitudes toward learning English, followed by students with medium GPAs and students with low GPAs, in that order.

Ali et al. (2019) looked into the attitudes and perceptions of intensive English program students regarding their English-speaking abilities (2019). Participants came from different colleges, including business, community and arts. The findings indicated that students generally have positive attitudes and are becoming increasingly conscious of the value of learning English for their future.

Alsubaie (2021) studied the attitudes of Saudi non-English major students - particularly those majoring in Islamic Studies, Arabic Language, and Business Administration-toward learning English, the culture of English, and native speakers, along with its value in recent times. The findings revealed that the students had generally positive attitudes toward learning English, English culture, and native English speakers, and had sufficient knowledge of the value of English in the present era.

Nevertheless, the importance of L2 students' attitudes toward English in Saudi Arabia has received insufficient attention. The research that examined students' attitudes toward studying English in Saudi Arabia did not address the factors of attitudes (e.g., interest, self-confidence, usability, and instructor) or the variations in attitudes concerning variables like students' academic major, class level, and gender at the same time. In light of these scenarios, the current study, in conjunction with research on interest, self-confidence, usability, and instructor variables, may help as a leading study in the context of English language learning among Saudi university students, and contribute to overall improvements in L2 learning processes.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

The sample included 150 students (65 males and 85 females) at a public university in Saudi Arabia. Males made up 43.3% of the respondents, while females made up 56.7%. There are 78 freshmen and 72 juniors among the students. With reference to the academic majors, students are distributed in different colleges and departments as follows: Applied Medical Sciences (n=18), Engineering (n=16), Computer Science & Information Systems (n=16), Science (n=18), Administrative Science (n=16), Sharia and Fundamentals of Religion (n=15), Education (n=18), Arabic Language Education (n=17), Kindergarten Education (n=16). The Participants were informed about the procedures and how to complete the survey questionnaire. The students voluntarily participated in the study, and their ages ranged from 21 to 24. All of the participants had completed their required English courses successfully. These mandatory courses at the faculty had learning outcomes that were at the A2 level of English proficiency. Furthermore, some students, especially those majoring in the sciences, had taken additional courses such as English language skills (reading, writing, listening, and reading), vocabulary and grammar, general English, technical writing and communication skills before commencing their studies.

### **Instrument**

This study employed a quantitative approach. A 56-item five-point Likert-type attitude scale developed by (Gömleksiz, 2003) was adapted to collect data for the study.



Out of the 56 statements, 38 had a positive attitude, while the remaining 18 had a negative attitude. The items addressed the areas of interest in learning English (14 positive, 7 negative), the usability of learning English (6 positive, 4 negative), self-confidence in learning English (11 positive, 7 negative), us, and the instructor (7 positive, 0 negative). The questionnaire form comprised of two separate sections, one of which was demographic profile questions and the second incorporated attitude questions. The participants were instructed to give each statement a score based on their level of agreement on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 = strongly agree, 2=agree, 3 = normal, 4 = disagree and 5 = strongly disagree. They were asked to pick the most appropriate opinion from the list. The positive items were selected from the "Strongly Agree" option starting with 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, while negatively formulated items were scored in the opposite direction, i.e. they have a rating of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. The scale's reliability was calculated, and the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was found to be .91. This result displays that the scale is reliable.

Since this study was restricted to one university in Saudi Arabia, the findings can only give a partial picture of the Saudi students' attitudes toward learning English. Furthermore, the data was centered on respondents' opinions about the questionnaire items, therefore; it is assumed that students answered honestly and openly.

### **Data Analysis Procedure**

To identify factors influencing students' attitudes toward learning English and the degree to which each factor affects students' attitudes, students were requested to check each statement using a 5-point Likert Scale rating system Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, No opinion = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree = 1 and vice versa for negative statements. Therefore, students who checked the boxes next to the numbers 5 and 4 (Strongly Agree and Agree) confirmed that they have positive attitudes towards learning English. Firstly, the students were notified of the research's objectives. Then, the questionnaires were distributed to all students under the researcher's supervision. They were also advised to ask whatever inquiries they wanted regarding the survey. They took roughly 45 minutes to fill out the survey, and it was collected in its entirety.

The demographic profile of the participants was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The data collected through the questionnaire was organized, tabulated, and

quantitatively analyzed. In addition, One-way ANOVA and Scheffe Post Hoc tests were applied to ascertain if there were any differences in students' attitudes in relation to the academic majors' variable. Similarly, the examination of variations in students' attitudes toward learning English with respect to class level and gender variables was conducted using an independent groups t-test. The data was collected by the researcher herself, who managed to administer the scale items to the students.

### Findings and Interpretations

In this section, the t-test and one-way ANOVA tests were employed to determine if there were statistically significant differences in student attitudes regarding academic major, class level, and gender. The results of one-way ANOVA for academic majors on students' attitudes toward learning English were shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
*ANOVA results for the academic major on interest subscale*

Scale	Academic Major	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Interest	Applied Medical	18	3.87	0.76	Between Groups	51.491	8	4.454	9.706*	0.000
	Engineering	16	3.66	0.82						
	Comp. Sc. & Info. Systems	16	3.76	0.81						
	Science	18	3.82	0.73	Within Groups	566.443	141	0.134		
	Sharia & Fund. of Religion	15	2.93	0.78						
	Arabic Language	17	3.02	0.78						
	Admin. Sc.	16	3.44	0.76	Total	617.934	149			
	Education	18	3.43	0.64						
	Kindergarten Edu.	16	3.60	0.72						
Total		150	3.50	0.76						

\* $p < 0.05$

As presented in Table 1, ANOVA analysis exposed that there was a statistically significant difference in the students' attitudes regarding the interest subscale [ $F_{(8-141)}=9.706$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ]. Scheffe Post Hoc test findings showed that students majoring in Applied Medical Sciences, Science, Computer Science & Information Systems, Engineering, and Kindergarten Education academic presented a higher interest to learn English than the students of Sharia and Fundamentals of Religion, Arabic Language Education, Administrative Science, and Education academic majors.

**Table 2***ANOVA results for the academic major on self-confidence subscale*

Scale	Academic Major	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Self-confidence	Applied	18	3.64	0.65	Between Groups	48.406	8	6.834	12.534*	0.000
	Engineering	16	3.826	0.72						
	Comp. Sc. & Info. Systems	16	3.61	0.71						
	Science	18	3.88	0.67						
	Sharia & Fund. of Religion	15	3.26	0.64	Within Groups	432.615	141	0.436		
	Arabic	17	3.21	0.41						
	Admin. Sc.	16	3.52	0.76						
	Education	18	2.72	0.84	Total	481.021	149			
	Kindergarten	16	3.36	0.42						
Total		150	3.45	0.65						

\* $p < 0.05$ 

The significant F value [ $F_{(8-141)}=12.534$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ] achieved for the academic major variable demonstrated that the students majoring in Science, Engineering, Applied Medical Sciences, Computer Science & Information Systems and Administrative Science felt more confident than those of Education, Arabic Language Education, Sharia and Fundamentals of Religion and Kindergarten Education majors.

**Table 3***ANOVA results for the academic major on usability subscale*

Scale	Academic Major	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Usability	Applied	18	3.81	0.61	Between Groups	30.825	8	4.521	22.834*	0.000
	Engineering	16	3.486	0.43						
	Comp. Sc. & Info. Systems	16	3.71	0.79						
	Science	18	3.68	0.67						
	Sharia & Fund. of Religion	15	3.00	0.38	Within Groups	221.369	141	0.157		
	Arabic	17	2.55	0.451						
	Admin. Sc.	16	3.51	0.53						
	Education	18	3.06	0.35	Total	252.185	149			
	Kindergarten	16	3.40	0.38						
Total		150	3.32	0.51						

\* $p < 0.05$ 

The ANOVA results for the usability subscale, which compared the average mean scores of the students' attitudes, were summarized in Table 3. The data exhibited that there were significant differences among the students' attitudes on the usability subscale

[ $F_{(8-141)} = 22,834$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ]. Scheffe Post Hoc test results indicated that students majoring in Applied Medical Sciences, Computer Science & Information Systems, Science, Engineering and Administrative Science thought learning English to be more advantageous than other groups did.

**Table 4**

*ANOVA results for the academic major on instructor subscale*

Scale	Academic Major	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Instructor	Applied Medical	18	3.61	0.76	Between Groups	29.181	8	3.422	6.562*	0.000
	Engineering	16	3.29	0.63						
	Comp. Sc. & Info. Systems	16	3.79	0.69						
	Science	18	3.49	0.77	Within Groups	608.7507	141	0.518		
	Sharia & Fund. of Religion	15	3.43	0.68						
	Arabic Language	17	3.22	0.751						
	Admin. Sc.	16	3.50	0.73	Total	637.931	149			
	Education	18	3.37	0.65						
	Kindergarten	16	3.54	0.78						
Total		150	3.47	0.72						

\* $p < 0.05$

The results of ANOVA for the instructor subscale in Table 4 revealed that students' attitudes concerning the academic major variable differed significantly [ $F_{(8-141)} = 6,562$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ]. Scheffe Post Hoc test findings exposed that students majoring in Computer Science & Information Systems, Applied Medical Sciences, Kindergarten Education Administrative Science, and Science expressed stronger positive attitudes toward their English instructors than those majoring in Arabic Language, Engineering, Education, and Sharia and Fundamentals of Religion.

**Table 5**

*t-test results for class level on students' attitudes towards learning English*

Scale	Class Level	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	DF	t	p
Interest	Freshmen	78	3.24	0.765	148	-2.0833*	0.004
	Junior	72	3.48	0.329			
Self-confidence	Freshmen	78	3.38	0.702	148	-2.4014*	0.020
	Junior	72	3.44	0.482			
Usability	Freshmen	78	3.22	0.387	148	-6.9444*	0.001
	Junior	72	3.51	0.743			
Instructor	Freshmen	78	3.36	0.815	148	-4.1667*	0.000
	Junior	72	3.61	0.758			
Total		150					

As can be noticed in Table 5, *t*-test results indicated significant differences between freshmen and juniors' attitudes in relation to interest [ $t_{(148)} = -2.0833$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ], self-confidence [ $t_{(148)} = -2.4014$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ], usability [ $t_{(148)} = -6.9444$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ] and instructor [ $t_{(148)} = -4.1667$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ] variables. In other words, juniors were more likely than freshmen to endorse learning EFL.

**Table 6**

*t*-test results for gender on students' attitudes towards learning English

Scale	Class Level	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	DF	t	p
<b>Interest</b>	Male	65	3.43	0.425	148	-2.6120*	0.000
	Female	85	3.56	0.724			
<b>Self-confidence</b>	Male	65	3.28	0.517	148	-1.0734*	0.109
	Female	85	3.44	0.662			
<b>Usability</b>	Male	65	3.35	0.718	148	-3.7281*	0.061
	Female	85	3.40	0.645			
<b>Instructor</b>	Male	65	3.33	0.725	148	-6.1250*	0.000
	Female	85	3.46	0.789			
<b>Total</b>		150					

As it is realized in Table 6, the undergraduate students' attitudes towards learning English diverged significantly in relation to the gender of the students. A higher mean rating in interest [ $t_{(148)} = -2.6120$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ] and instructor [ $t_{(148)} = -6.1250$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ] subscales designated female students tended to exhibit more positive attitudes than male students did. In addition, analysis of ANOVA indicated that there were no significant differences in self-confidence [ $t_{(148)} = -1.0734$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ] and usability subscales [ $t_{(148)} = -3.7281$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ] between male and female students.

## Discussion

In the Arab world, active EFL instruction has always been a source of fascination. A growing number of teachers, educational authorities, linguists, and scholars are committed to strengthening language teaching-learning methods. Students' learning is influenced by a variety of factors, including their attitudes. In the present investigation, university students' attitudes toward learning EFL in Saudi Arabia were assessed. Gardner (1985) suggested that attitudes are linked to motivation because they serve as pillars of a learner's overall orientation. Al-Tamimi and Shuib (2009) also claimed that learners' aptitude for language development is controlled by their attitudes towards learning that language. Consequently, the main objective of this study was to investigate

university students' attitudes towards studying EFL in connection to academic major, class level, and gender variables and to find out to what extent does each factor (i.e. interest, self-confidence, usability and instructor) affect students' attitudes in relation to these variables. As Gardner and Lambert (1972) and Midraj (2003) asserted, a clearer knowledge of students' attitudes will aid the instructional developers in developing language teaching plans and strategies that foster the attitudes and motivation that are most relevant to the improvement of competent EFL learners.

Statistical analysis revealed that students' attitudes differed significantly. Statistically significant differences were discovered among student attitudes based on academic major, class level, and gender variables. As to academic majors, the attitudes of student range from one domain to another. Students majoring in Applied Medical Sciences, Science, Computer Science & Information Systems, Engineering, and Kindergarten Education displayed increased interest in learning English compared to the students of Sharia and Fundamentals of Religion, Arabic Language Education, Administrative Science, and Education. In addition, juniors had more interest in learning English than freshmen. These results were consistent with that of Ming et al. (2011) which indicated that science students were more motivated to work on their English compared to other students, and highly proficient students maintained a more positive attitude than intermediate or less proficient students. The same result, however, is incongruent with that of Abidin et al. (2012) who confirmed that social sciences students had the most positive attitude, followed by students in the basic sciences and life sciences.

The students' attitudes toward learning English were significantly influenced by their gender. In the interest subscale, female students exhibited a more positive attitude than male students. This outcome corroborates Karahan's (2007) survey findings and is in line with Gömleksiz's (2010) study which confirmed that attitudes toward interest were more positive among females. A similar finding was confirmed by Bećirović (2017) who concluded that females are much more motivated to learn English than males. However, this interpretation does not agree with that of Latić & Brdarević (2018) who discovered no statistically significant differences between females and males in terms of their attitudes towards language learning, despite the gender inequalities in language use.

Similar results were realized with regard to the self-confidence subscale. Students enrolled in science-related majors including Engineering, Science, Applied Medical Sciences, Computer Science & Information Systems and Administrative Science looked more confident than those in Education, Arabic Language Education, Sharia and Fundamentals of Religion and Kindergarten Education majors. Similarly, they believed that learning English is more useful. That is to say, students enrolled in science-related departments were likely to hold more positive perceptions compared to other students. This interpretation is in line with several studies (e.g. Al-Tamimi & Shuib, 2009; Bhaskar & Soundiraraj, 2013) which reported engineering students' positive attitudes toward learning English and understanding the culture of the English-speaking world. Similarly, Iqbal et al. (2019) confirmed that students from Islamic educational backgrounds had less positivity toward learning English than Education Faculty students.

This could be because English is taught as a required course for education-related majors, which require only a minimum qualification and a basic understanding of the language, as opposed to science-related majors, which demand the use of English for a range of academic and professional purposes in the course of their years of education. As a result of the lack of awareness of the target language usability, students majoring in education may believe that learning English is ineffective, leading to a negative attitude toward the language and culture. According to Ellis (1994), students' attitudes can be influenced by their own culture's perspectives. This is also consistent with Gardner (1985) who claimed that positive attitudes toward the target culture help L2/FL learners to pick up the language more efficiently than negative attitudes.

Moreover, t-test results indicated attitudes in relation to self-confidence and usability subscales among freshmen and juniors differed significantly where juniors were found to be more confident than other students and displayed more positive attitudes than freshmen. On the contrary, analysis of ANOVA indicated no significant differences in self-confidence and usability subscales between male and female students. These findings seem to oppose that of Jabor et al. (2017) which revealed that males have higher self-confidence than females. They further stated that females exhibit a high level of self-doubt when speaking English to professors and classmates. The females show a high level of anxiety and fear of speaking English in public, while also being very concerned about their grades and competitiveness. In addition, the findings also contradicts Delić (2020),

who found no significant differences in reporting the types of attitudes regarding gender or grade level. Delić came to the conclusion that students' attitudes have not been heavily affected by their gender or grade level as both male and female students, regardless of grade level, have comparable attitudes toward the English language.

Instead, positive feelings and emotions with instructors can help students develop positive attitudes about learning a FL. The possibility of students adopting a positive attitude toward the target language increases with the number of interactions they have with their teacher. Without interaction between students and teachers, there will not be many chances for successful learning (Getie, 2020). It is true that depending on the instructor's knowledge of the topic, his/her attitude toward the students, and the topic, the impact can be either positive or negative. Dörnyei (2001) added that students adopted comparable perceptions, attitudes, anticipations, and behaviours due to the teacher's transmission of beliefs, expectations, and attitudes. If the teacher possesses all of the previously stated attributes and invites his/her students in a structured manner, the possibility that students will establish a positive attitude toward language acquisition will increase.

In terms of the instructor subscale, students majoring in science-related disciplines including Computer Science & Information Systems, Applied Medical Sciences, Administrative Science, Science as well as Kindergarten Education revealed more positive attitudes toward their English instructors than students majoring in Arabic Language, Engineering, Education, and Sharia and Fundamentals of Religion. Furthermore, the results indicated juniors were more excited about learning English as a FL, ensuring more positive attitudes than freshmen. In terms of gender, female students' attitude was more positive than male students'. This result corroborates Karahan's (2007) survey findings and is in line with Gömleksiz's (2010) study which confirmed that female students displayed more positive attitudes toward teachers.

The teacher's role is critical in developing a positive attitude toward learning English (Delić & Bećirović, 2016; Munna & Kalam, 2021). Therefore, teachers need to afford a more effective, unrestricted educational setting for their students. Students' negative attitudes toward learning English inhibit them from effectively engaging in various activities. Therefore, it's critical to think about ways to reduce negative attitudes



toward learning English in order to enhance students' interests, self-confidence, and positive attitude toward doing so (Gömleksiz, 2010). To do so, teachers must be trained to recognize the issues that seriously affect students and must consider their needs.

To sum up, the assessment of Saudi undergraduate students' attitudes towards learning English regarding academic major, class level and gender variables revealed that students tended to have partial positive attitudes (see e.g., Alkaff, 2013; Ali et al., 2019; Al Samadani and Ibnian, 2015; Alsubaie, 2021) and partial negative attitudes (see e.g. Al-Zahrani , 2008; Khan, 2016). In both cases, the importance of the instructor and the teaching environment in enhancing students' attitudes toward learning and inspiring them to use the target language was recommended.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

With the preceding discussion, it is reasonable to conclude that attitudes (both negative and positive attitudes) highly impacted performance in language learning (Getie, 2020). Therefore, it might be assumed that attitude is vital for language learning. These ideas about the attitude and their significance obviously demonstrate that it could also be a significant barrier to learning a L2/FL (Rahman et al., 2021). People may exhibit a variety of attitudes toward a language, rather than just one. To give an example, someone may enjoy a language in one domain, such as usability, but not in another, such as an instructor; he/she may want to learn it for personal reasons and interest but lack self-confidence.

Other variables that may affect attitudes including socioeconomic and cultural status, financial status, parental education level, and geographic location, should be investigated in future research. Due to the small sample size of the study, more research with larger samples is needed to gain a better interpretation of students' attitudes toward learning English. In addition, qualitative research could be conducted to determine the factors that influence students' attitudes toward learning English. Interviewing students from other institutions of higher education and colleges to see if they share similar viewpoints and to learn further about their attitudes towards learning English could also be a future research topic. Observational research methods could be used in other studies for example observing and interviewing in a real-world classroom. More insight into the possible factors that may affect attitudes could be gained by observing real classroom environments and personal interviews with instructors.

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**Reviewers:**

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# THE NON-EUROPEAN NATURE OF THE BULGARIAN SOCIO-ECONOMIC MODEL

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## Abstract

The article looks at the contemporary socio-economic model in Bulgaria arguing that it does not correspond to the broad European tradition of being sensitive to the presence of significant social imbalances in the society. The author insists that this is one of the primary factors for the controversial economic outcomes and the existence of deepening social problems in the country. The argumentation goes through evaluation of the formation process of the new socio-economic model in Bulgaria after 1989 and the assessment of the economic and social outcomes for the period until 2022. On this basis it is concluded that maintaining the current policy in the medium-term will inevitably undermine not only the economic prospects, but also the quality and stability of Bulgarian democracy.

**Keywords:** inequalities, poverty, Bulgaria, social policy, social justice, European tradition

### Article history:

Received: 08 September 2022

Reviewed: 10 October 2022

Accepted: 26 November 2022

Published: 20 December 2022

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**Citation:** Minkov, Zh. (2022). The Non-European Nature of the Bulgarian Socio-Economic Model. *English Studies at NBU*, 8(2), 257-269. <https://doi.org/10.33919/esnbu.22.2.6>

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The study argues that the contemporary socio-economic model in Bulgaria is “not social enough”. It is not recommendable for a researcher in the field of social policy to use such a formulation, but nevertheless, in the context of Bulgarian reality it may be acceptable. Despite relative positive outcomes the development of the country in the last decades is also marked by continuous accumulation of disbalances. They give reasons for concerns not only regarding our middle and long-term prospects but also threaten to undermine and make meaningless all that we have achieved as a society until now. It is worth from this perspective us to ask and search for the reasons of this situation. This leads me to my principled conviction. It refers to the overall philosophy and logic which was built (deliberately or not) into the bases of the new Bulgarian socio-economic model. Here, there is a need of a very important clarification. I have no intention to defend the past or to display any kind of nostalgia to it! Neither do I intend to become a part of the classic in the Bulgarian politicizing polemics – the comparison between “socialist past” and “democratic present”<sup>1</sup>. To me, and I truly believe, for most of the Bulgarian citizens the choice we have made about 30 years ago could not be a subject of any discussions or contestations. However, this does not mean that we must accept without any criticism and with endless patience all the shortcomings and problems in our contemporary development. On the contrary: I am convinced that such kind of conduct is in a deep contradiction with the values we have chosen.

It could be argued that what I am recognizing as one of the leading problems of the new socio-economic model in Bulgaria is only a detail, a footnote under the line of our inevitable way to the progress. But in my opinion the choice we have made 30 years ago and the chances for change we have missed in the time after do already have their strong footprint in our present. The contemporary shortcomings and problems in our society are not (at least not predominantly) far-reaching effects from our socialist past – they are results and function of the present socio-economic model of development in Bulgaria. This model is lacking value-based and political sensibility toward existence of excessive social imbalances or social injustice, sensibility which is typically inherent for the broad European tradition.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In 1989 I was 14 years old. I do not remember whether “the cheese was cheaper” than today or whether the life was harder because “there was nothing to buy for your money”, or because “you were not allowed to express freely your opinion”. First and foremost, to me, the period before 1989 is a romantic one – just because with the years it seems to me that my childhood was one of the happiest periods in my life. This however is not connected to the reality in the past or with any attempt to give an evaluation of that time or to compare it with the present one. It is just and simple my personal subjectivity.

<sup>2</sup> We should look at the evolution of the European states and societies in the last 100 years. Those are the same states which are our allies in the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). If we do so, we will be able to realize the following: Each of the European societies, regardless of



In the following section I will try to clarify the arguments for my opinion by starting with the context and the factors which influenced the formation of the contemporary model of development in Bulgaria.

One of the leading factors was the specific timing and context of the transition to democracy and market economy. We must bear in mind that the end of the 80s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was not only the period when the socialist block collapsed. At the same time appeared a significant change into the development of the consolidated market democracies. After a short period of crisis<sup>3</sup> the Keynesian model of market economy was pushed out by the neoliberal doctrine which was recognized as the new “recipe” for recovery of the lost economic growth. The implementation of the neoliberal concept has had different impact over the consolidated market democracies and the Central and Eastern Europe countries (CEEC) which started at that time their transition from socialism. Nevertheless, the common denominator of the new doctrine was the preference of the free from state interventions and control market forces and processes on national and global level which were expected to generate stable economic growth. Ideologically the intervention into the functioning of the free market, including interventions striving to ensure more balanced (than the market-produced one) distribution of wealth and chances started to be seen as a distortion of the just and natural market-produced inequalities and as a moral corruption which are coming from the failed ideology and practice of the real Soviet socialism. The growing influence of the neoliberal paradigm in the following decades has led to a partly discreditation of the idea for social balanced distribution of wealth. Parallel to this “ideological” discreditation the globalization processes and the formation of post-national environment pose additional challenges for the practical implementation and maintenance of such kind of wealth distribution. The consolidated market democracies in Europe have kept their principal commitment with the idea of balanced economic and social development. But in doing this they can step on a shrinking social support and have at their disposal much more limited political instruments for mitigating the social inequalities.

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which political ideology dominated its development (socialism, conservatism, liberalism or Christian-democracy) have cultivated this value-based and political sensibility towards extreme social imbalances. Each of the European societies have formulated its own answer and policy for correction and mitigation of those imbalances and for reaching of some form of social justice. In practice this is the appearance and development of the social policy or the subordination of the public policy to some common social goals and responsibilities.

<sup>3</sup> Low levels of economic growth, growing unemployment and public budgetary deficits etc.

Concerning the CEEC this influence was transferred through the leading international organizations and institutions like International Monetary Fund (IMF), The World Bank (WB), The Organization for Economic cooperation and development (OECD) and others. Exactly those organizations have bound their work with the mission to implement worldwide the neoliberal concept. By delivering broad spectrum of support for the CEEC they strongly influenced the ideational basis of democratization process and of the reforms in all the sectors of their public policy (Deacon, 1992; 2000). The concrete dimension of this process for Bulgaria was the entrance into the policy matrix of IMF and WB which supported financially and by expert technical advice all the countries in transition according to the principle “help in exchange of reforms”. The unique situation of the transition in the CEEC gave the chance for much broader and more complete implementation of all the core elements from the neoliberal concept. In this way the first stage of the transition in Bulgaria was dominated by a “values and policies transfer process” strongly influenced by the existing at that time variant of the neoliberal concept. The main elements of this concept transformed into practical policies were the following one: strict discipline of the public finances; maximum restraint of the state interventions into the market; limitation of public responsibilities toward the social risks to the maintenance of the so called “minimal social security net”. In addition, considering the specific processes in the CEEC there was a strong emphasize on foreign direct investments (FDI) which were supposed to be attracted on the ground of the existing relative competition advantages possessed by the CEEC, like cheap and qualified labour. It was expected that this “recipe” will in a middle-term lead to a stable economic growth, corresponding increase of national wealth and automatic growth of living conditions for a major part of the citizens. In my opinion exactly this specific context and path of the transition process has played a decisive role. In this line of thinking it is possible to be argued that to a certain degree the Bulgarian choice of a new socio – economic model was “persuaded” or even “imposed” one.

There were expectations that the preparation of the country for membership into the European Union (EU) will lead to some upgrade of this minimal social model. But the impact of the EU didn’t impose a transformational influence concerning the overall philosophy and ideological basis that were already built into the new Bulgarian model. By no means the implementation of the EU, *acquis communautaire* and the common EU-policies has broadened the list with the goals supposed to be in the focus of the countries public policy. But the question about how and to what extend should the public policy be engaged with

these goals was left open. There is nothing surprising in this, just because this important and principled decisions are left predominantly in the competencies of the member-states and their citizens will.

It is more than logical us to ask the general question about outcomes in Bulgarian economic and social development and try to compare them with the presupposed expectations. By doing this, the study does not aim to give a comprehensive picture of the Bulgarian development in all the possible dimensions. The focus here is on the question to what extent the above-described development philosophy has led to the desired results regarding the growth of the national wealth and its distribution to all Bulgarian citizens. The general measurement-indicators in this respect are more than firm and above all indicative according to the steady nature of some development-trends.

The economic outcomes of Bulgaria after 1989 could be described as relative positive. After the collapse in the period 1990 – 97, starting in year 2000, the country is in a phase of stable economic recovery. Since 2000 the average annual growth of Bulgaria's GDP is higher than the European one. This led to national wealth growth, as in 2004 Bulgaria reached its GDP level from 1989. In comparison to year 2000 when the GDP per capita of Bulgaria was 29% form the medium of the EU, in 2019 this indicator reached about 53% and at the end of 2021 – 55% (Eurostat, 2022a). However, in a comparative plan the economic development of Bulgaria should be evaluated as weak to medium. For the period 2000 – 2021 Bulgaria has managed to “make up” for about 26% form the medium level of EU. In contrast the same indicator for other CEEC like Romania, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia is between 36 and 46 % (Eurostat, 2022a; own callucaltions). No surprise that despite relative positive results in 2021 Bulgaria is the less economic developed member-state of the EU and the country with the lowest standards of living in the union. Nevertheless, there is a slow process of wealth growth in Bulgaria - conclusion that leaves a bitter taste in the mouth.

The ambiguous economic development is just one possible dimension of evaluation. A second one is to answer the question whether the Bulgarian citizens do accumulate advantages form the wealth increase. Here the data are even more straight and alarming. Bulgaria is the member-state with the highest level of income inequalities and overall distribution of wealth in the EU. This negative trend is stable and does not correlate and change significant within periods of higher economic growth. For the whole period after 1989 the Bulgarian Gini coefficient is increasing steadily from 21.00 (Hristov, 2009, p. 24) to

39.6 in 2018 and 40.00 in 2020 (Eurostat, 2022b). Same, even more significant is the increase in the income inequalities between the 20% of the richest citizens and the other 80% of the population. At the beginning of the transition this ratio was 3.7 in 2017 it reached its absolute maximum of 8.23 and moves between 8.10 in 2019 and 7.46 in 2021 (Eurostat, 2022c). In view of this data there is no surprise that Bulgaria is the EU – member state with the highest share of its population living at risk of poverty and social exclusion. In the last years this share is dropping slowly: in 2015 almost the half of the Bulgarians (43%) were living in risk of poverty and in 2021 the share dropped to about 31% (Eurostat, 2022d). Nevertheless, data show that the country is far from the medium levels for the EU (21% for 2021). Even more dramatic is the living situation of a specific groups: the people over 65 years old, 37% of which lived at risk of poverty and social exclusion in 2021 and people in the age range of 15 to 24 years old with 35.6% in 2020 (Eurostat, 2022e; Eurostat, 2022f).

There is more to be said about the social situation in Bulgaria, but this is not the main goal of the study. These data were given only with the aim to support the main thesis in the text. However, it is worth to scrutinize one more time the view that Bulgarian socio-economic model does lack of a strong connection to the values and goals of the broad European tradition. It is typical for this tradition to bear the understanding that the economic development should be committed with a broad and balanced distribution of wealth or politically operationalized concept for social justice. The broad European tradition in the field of social justice does not incorporate the view that everyone should be “equal” (in everything) or that everyone should get an “equal part of the wealth”. In the European tradition I am referring to, there are two main elements. The first one is a society and model of development which do all the possible to eradicate or mitigate the poverty that threatens the pure physical survival of the individuum. The second goal is the same model to be “inclusive” one. It means: to create such kind of conditions that a maximum share of citizens can gain equal access to the needed resources and chances allowing them to develop their potential and became wholesome participants into the societal life. The ideational and value bases of this concept could be addressed to the works of John Rawls and Amartya Sen (Rawls, 1999; Sen, 2009).

Without any further comments about the philosophic and political dimensions of these concepts for social justice I must repeat my conviction that the present Bulgarian social and economic model does not incorporate and fulfil neither of these two goals. The above-

described trends of development in Bulgaria could be taken as first step evidence: that such kind of goals are not present into the main priorities of the country's governance. In this context it is logical to think about one problem which is very hard to be analysed. It seems that the official Bulgarian public policy and long-term development strategy (it is questionable if such a strategy does exist) have not been changed and enriched (in value and ideational senesce) since the beginning of transition. It is somehow paradoxical that the neoliberal "recipe," itself has undergo some very important changes. Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the outcomes of this recipe-implementation started to be evaluate as controversial one. The main reason was that in a middle-term the expectation for "automatic" decrease of poverty and social inequalities was not confirmed. In fact, by many of the "patients" the levels of this indicators rose to a such extent that they started to undermine the economic growth and social stability (Cingano, 2014, pp. 14-19). Especially after the financial collapse in 2008 the question about the negative impact of poverty and social inequalities over the economic development started to gain importance into the main strategies and documents of the IMF, WB and OECD. It is even more indicative that exactly the global poverty and inequalities have been pointed out as one of the leading problems by the United Nations Organization (UNO, 2020). By mentioning this I am not making an insinuation that there is already a solution of this problem on a global or European policy-level. On the contrary – the increase of poverty and inequalities is still going on in almost all world regions. Therefore, after more than two decades of neglecting this problem returned to a leading position in the global political agenda.

The paramount question here is why we continue to neglect this problem – especially when its impact over Bulgarian development is of such a magnitude. The Bulgarian policy looks like "frozen" in the ideational frames and unfinished reforms from the period about year 2000. On one principal level it is still following the logic that the economic growth, which is inevitable to come, will as well as inevitable bring a decline of the significant inequalities. This believe was already abandoned not only by IMF and WB but also by all the solid researchers in the field in favour of public policies addressing the inequalities. Besides, even if we can reach a catch-up economic effect this will not mean we have overcome the existence and structure of the inequalities in the country. On the contrary: In this scenario the inequalities are going to increase because the Bulgarian public policy does not incorporate mechanisms of inclusive economic growth and broader distribution or redistribution of wealth. It is obvious that we are still under the domination of the twisted believe that such

kind of policies are in deep contradiction with the prerequisites for economic growth and not a systematic and important factor favouring balanced social and economic development. It is even more concerning that there is no sign of political will for breaking this status quo. It is enough to point out the ongoing denial of reforms which could help the Bulgarian social policy start fulfil at least its minimal goals. In fact, exactly the situation of Bulgarian social model is my second argument. Its functioning is inefficient, incoherent and faulty because of inherited problems and unfinished reforms. Putted as short as possible: the present system of social policy in the country is not able to cope even with minimal goals like guarantee of a basic social security and preservation of poverty.

Among the leading problems is the crisis in the health sector. I will try just to summarize: Low level of funding - about 8,1% of GDP, where 4.4% are public finances, compared with 9.8% GDP public funding medium for EU; High level of direct payments which in 2017 reached 46.6% of all health costs, compared to 15,8% in EU (OECD, 2019, pp. 10-11); Unfinished reforms in the hospital healthcare where there is a growing financial deficit, worsening quality of the healthcare services and increasing lack of qualified personnel (Minkov, 2022, p. 119); Last but not least is to be mentioned the lack of access to healthcare – at the end of 2019 there were between 520 and 670 thousand Bulgarian citizens without healthcare-insurance rights (Ananiev, 2020).

The second accent which summarizes a whole complex of chronic and systematic problems is connected to the level of incomes in the country – from labour and incomes coming as social transfers. At the end of 2020 more than 690 thousand Bulgarian retirees “enjoyed” the monthly rent of 250 while the official poverty line in 2020 was 369 leva (Natzionalen Osiguritelni Institut 2020, p. 133). The example with the system for social help which is supposed to be the main instrument for poverty prevention is even more telling. In fact, the whole system does not correspond to its main role of primary social security net against poverty. The best illustration here is the lack of any systematic and logical link between the levels of guaranteed social help-transfers and the official poverty line or the gross minimum wage (GMW) in the country. According to the social regulations the maximal amount of the guaranteed social help in 2021 was 123.75 BGN (about 63 EUR) but the official poverty line was 369 BGN (about 190 EUR). Even if we choose not to discuss how and according to what methodology the official poverty line is set, the reality speaks for itself. The guarantee social help transfer is supposed to cover the basic needs which means to be at

least of equal amount with the poverty line. In fact, the guaranteed social help in the country is set on administrative basis and without any idea to be an effective fence against poverty. And this is a long-lasting policy because in 2007 the relative share of the so called guaranteed minimal income (GMI) was about 36% from the poverty line and dropped to about 20% in 2021. Furthermore, the relative share of GMI from the GMW in 2007 was about 30%, but in 2021 dropped to 11.5% (Natzionalna mreza za detzsa, 2021). In this context it must be noted that a major part of the existing social transfers (i.e. invalidity pensions, social pensions) are also not set in any functional dependence with the poverty line, GMW or with the gross average wage (GAW).

The situation concerning the levels of employment benefits is similar. For almost the whole period after 1989 Bulgarian governments have abandoned the idea and the practical implementation of a structured policy in this field. The national GMW introduced at the beginning of the transition was capped on an irrelevant to the economic and price dynamic level until year 2014 (340 BGN in 2014). For the period 1990 – 2014 its relative share from the GAW moved between the maximum of 52.1% in 1991, to its minimum of 26.5% in 1997 – 98 (Ivanov, 2015). The measures for step-by-step increase of the GMW undertaken after 2015 have had a positive effect over the labour incomes. However, the change of GMW was set again on an administrative basis without any clear methodology which connects its level with the poverty line or other criteria, like productivity of labour or the amount of GAW. As a result, according to the Bulgarian trade unions, in 2021 the labour incomes in the country are clearly lagging to the dynamic of the consumer-prices. A study from 2021 by the Confederation of independent trade unions in Bulgaria (CITUB) shows that the consumer-prices in Bulgaria are as twice as lower than the medium for the EU, but the labour incomes of the Bulgarians are as four as lower than the medium level in EU (KNSB, 2021). As a result, in the moment the inequalities in the country have reached such a level that are already starting to endanger and undermine in manifold ways all achieved in the last decades.

The presented data are more than firm. The Bulgarian social model is not able to fulfil even the goal to eliminate and mitigate the poverty. Although important, this problem presents only one site of the coin. Just as an example we can ask the following rhetorical question: Is the guarantee of mere physical survival of the individuum enough to ensure its wholesome inclusion into the social life? I do not believe that, for example the contemporary labour market, the modern society and the logic of the progress do need only people which

have enough food and water and are save from death. The elimination of poverty is a basic obligation but does not help enough the balanced development of the society. We must strive to mitigate and balance the inequalities. Just because the income inequalities tend to transform into inequalities of the chances. On their turn the inequalities of chances, especially when there are no policy mechanisms for their reasonable correction inevitably transform again to income inequalities. If these inequalities are significant and even grow with time they result into different kinds and levels of social exclusion. Even if this exclusion does not present the so-called absolute poverty (danger for the physical survival), it has other important and harmful consequences not only for the economy. The contemporary inequalities are manifold and do affect negatively different dimension of the individual and social life (standard of living, chances for realization i.e.). Exactly the refusal to recognize this accumulating with the time negative effects of the significant inequalities and the lack of political measures for addressing them do not correspond with our “European choice”.

All pointed out above brings me back to my constataion that Bulgaria must reassess its present socio-economic model in favour of including into public policy more comprehensive social goals. I will only sketch the most paramount challenges before us in case we stay on the same development path.

In respect of economy, the significant inequalities and their deepening will continue to undermine growth chances – just because more and more Bulgarian citizens will lack access to needed resources and chances for wholesome participation into the social life. As a result, one growing part of the counties so-called social capital, which by the way is already shrinking, will be placed in a losing position to meet the steady growing requirements for labour market participation and inclusion. And this effect will not change by itself. On the contrary. Without proper policy measures the children (at least a major part of them) of those living in poverty and social exclusion will probably follow the same life-path close to social marginalization. I will leave the experts to answer the question if there is a chance for stable economic growth under such conditions.

The second and often neglected challenge concerns the stability, legitimacy and quality of democracy in the country. Probably, many would be surprised by such a correlation, but it is a well-known dimension of democracy studies. If we realize the relative “young age” of Bulgarian democracy, the question how could the continuing of the resent development trends influence it, is more than relevant. In this respect it will be reasonable



us to recall that the survival of any political system, even of democratic one, steps on its acceptance as legitim. And legitimacy is available when at least two preconditions are fulfilled – broad support and recognition of the leading values imposed by the political regime, and satisfactory (for the citizens) outcomes from the regime government. In this respect the theory and the study of democracy give enough reasons to think about the “Bulgarian case”. For instance, it was Lipset who first formulated the now-classical relation between socio-economic development, poverty and democracy. In his own words: “The more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chance that it will sustain democracy” (Lipset, 1981, p. 31). Besides pointing out the crucial role of prosperity, Lipset maintains that only in affluent societies, where relatively few people live in real poverty, could there be a situation where the majority of the population can participate intelligently in politics, having developed the mechanisms to resist the appeals of irresponsible demagogues (Lipset, 1981, p. 31). In this case, Lipset views high levels of prosperity and low levels of poverty not as essential elements of democracy, but as important prerequisites for its stability and sustainability in the face of radical political ideas and/or destabilizing class conflicts. Further, we must not forget that the functioning of democracy presupposes not only the mere legal establishment of civil and political rights but also real chances for the citizens to make use of them in an active and informed way. Inequalities which exclude significant group of citizens from the social life, limit and even exclude in manifold ways these citizens from the chance to make use of their civil and political rights – and this undermines the correct functioning of democracy and/or its complete establishment (Myer, 2011, p. 13; Rueschemeyer, 2004, pp. 76-90). I am convinced we need to start a discussion about these problems and challenges in our society. It would be wise to remember Steven Friedman’s warning: ‘For the present, citizens of new democracies do seem to have concluded that freedom is preferable to bondage, even if it widens the gulf between those who have and those who do not. But it is at least possible that this has much to do with recent memories of authoritarianism and that, if current trends in the distribution of resources, opportunities and capabilities continue, or even if they are not significantly reversed, the next generation may find continued or growing inequality less tolerable than an authoritarianism that they have ever experienced.’ (Friedman, 2002, pp.15-16).

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**Reviewers:**

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**Handling Editor:**

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## **DOCTORAL SECTION**

## VIEWS OF NOVICE PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS TOWARDS THE USE OF L1 IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

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### Abstract

This study aimed to explore the views of pre-service teachers (freshman students) at English Language Teaching program at a state university in Turkey towards the use of L1 (mother tongue) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms while also investigating their actual use of L1 during an extracurricular teaching event. It also aims to find out if there is a relationship between participants' educational background in language learning, their views towards use of L1 and their actual use of L1. This study employed a qualitative approach by collecting data through semi-structured interviews and these interviews were supported with field notes taken by the researcher. The findings showed that ELT students mostly favored the use of L2 (target language) in the classroom and stated that it must be used as much as possible; however, some participants also stated that L1 could be used depending on the proficiency of students. The analysis of the interviews showed that there was no relationship between the participants' actual use of L1 and their educational background for the participants. Finally, the study suggests some implications towards the ELT curriculum in line with the findings.

**Keywords:** English as a foreign language, use of L1, Turkish pre-service students

#### Article history:

Received: 30 May 2022

Reviewed: 05 September 2022

Accepted: 06 September 2022

Published: 20 December 2022

#### Contributor roles

Conceptualization; Investigation; Data curation; Formal Analysis;

Writing - original draft: K.Ç. (lead);

Resources; Methodology; Supervision; Validation; Writing - review & editing; Visualization: N.Ö-G. (lead)

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**Citation:** Kenan, Ç. and Özbek-Gürbüz, N. (2022). Views of Novice Pre-Service Teachers Towards the Use of L1 in the EFL Classroom. *English Studies at NBU*, 8(2), 271-288. <https://doi.org/10.33919/esnbu.22.2.7>

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There have been contradicting views regarding the ways English should be taught throughout the history of English language teaching. One of the main controversies in this regard is the use of mother tongue in foreign language classrooms. Some researchers argue that thinking in L2 is the best way to develop proficiency and it is a common belief that the more input students receive, the more they will benefit from being exposed to the target language (Gass, 2017; Gass, Mackey, & Pica, 1998; Halliwell & Jones, 1991; Krashen et al., 1984; Krashen, 2008).

The controversy on use of L1 in EFL classrooms still goes on and it attracts scholars in the field of language teaching. A growing number of recent publications on the use of L1 in EFL classrooms show that abandoning L1 entirely is not favorable; however, there is a limitation to its use (Al-amir, 2017; Almohaimeed & Almurshed, 2018; Alshehri, 2017; Debreli & Oyman, 2016; Diaz & Perez, 2016; Galali & Cinkara, 2017; Köylü, 2018; Sali, 2014; Taşçı & Ataç, 2020; Taşkın, 2011; Timuçin & Baytar, 2014; Tetiurka, 2016; Turnbull, 2018; Yavuz, 2012). Although use of L1 has been examined in EFL classrooms, most studies in the literature looked at the views of students or teachers. Only a limited number of studies examined the views of pre-service teachers and none of these studies were conducted in Turkish context. This study aims to explore the views of pre-service teachers (freshman students) at the program of English Language Teaching at a state university in Turkey towards the use of L1 in EFL classrooms. Their actual use of L1 was also taken into consideration with observations by one of the researchers of this study at an extracurricular teaching event organized together by their university and a middle school in a city located in Black Sea Region in Turkey. Another aim of the study is to find out if there is a relationship between educational background, views towards use of L1 and actual use of L1 among the participants. Guided with these aims, this study sought to look for answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the views of pre-service teachers who had their first teaching experience during an extracurricular event towards the use of native language (L1) in the classroom?
2. Do the pre-service teachers use L1 in their teaching? If so, for what reasons do they use L1?
3. Is there a relationship between their educational background, their views towards use of L1, and their actual use of L1?

One important aspect of the study is that it examines the first teaching experience of pre-service teachers. As some researchers suggest, first-time teaching is a critical instance in a prospective teacher's life and it is a time period when they first encounter the most intense emotions caused by a mismatch of reality and expectations (Gaede, 1978; Meanwell & Kleiner, 2014). It is not illogical to expect prospective teachers to teach in a way that contradicts their beliefs or views. This study contributes to the debate on the use of L1 in EFL classrooms by examining the novice pre-service teachers' first time teaching experience and gathering their views on the use of L1 during their experience. Moreover, since the participants of the study are at their first year of education, their view on the use of L1 can be significant in comparing the views of prospective teachers, in-service teachers, or instructors.

## **Background**

Auerbach (1993) claims that the monolingual view towards teaching a language dates back to 19th century when political views affected language teaching policies which caused a decline of bilingual education. Phillipson (1992) states that monolingual tenet defends that English should be taught in the medium of L2 entirely and English should be the only language permitted in the classroom. In such a tenet, use of mother tongue is seen as the absolute last resort and should only be use in extreme situations. The ban of mother tongue means that L1 is seen as a hinderance in monolingual tenet. The monolingual tenet is criticized for imposing content and ideology of English since it rejects the experience of other languages which also means excluding a person's most substantial experience (Phillipson, 1992).

On contrary to monolingual tenet, some scholars argue that the potential of the use of L1 needs further exploration, and it may be used for eliciting language, checking comprehension, or even giving instructions at early levels (Atkinson, 1987; McMillan & Rivers, 2011; Schweers, 1999). Building on Atkinson's work, Schweers (1999) suggests a list of uses for L1 in EFL classrooms (Figure 1).

In addition to Schweer's suggested list, Auerbach (1993) also lists some other uses for L1 in educational process such as "negotiation of the syllabus and the lesson; record keeping; classroom management; scene setting; language analysis; presentation of rules governing grammar, phonology, morphology, and spelling; discussion of cross-cultural

issues; instructions or prompts; explanations of errors; and assessment of comprehension" (p. 21). Zakaria (2013) also lists similar uses of L1 such as "helping establishing security, conveying meaning of words, checking for comprehension, and explaining grammatical rules" (p. 373).

<b>1. Eliciting language</b> <i>"How do you say 'X' in English?"</i>
<b>2. Checking comprehension</b> <i>"How do you say, 'I've been waiting for then minutes' in Spanish?" (Also used for comprehension of a reading or listening text.)</i>
<b>3. Giving complex instructions to basic levels</b>
<b>4. Co-operating in groups</b> <i>Learners compare and correct answers to exercises or tasks in the L1. Students at times can explain new points better than the teacher.</i>
<b>5. Explaining classroom methodology at basic levels</b>
<b>6. Using translation to highlight a recently taught language item</b>
<b>7. Checking for sense</b> <i>If students write or say something in the L2 that does not make sense, have them try to translate it into the L1 to realize their error.</i>
<b>8. Testing</b> <i>Translation items can be useful in testing mastery of forms and meanings.</i>
<b>9. Developing circumlocution strategies</b> <i>When students do not know how to say something in the L2, have them think of different ways to say the same thing in the L1, which may be easier to translate.</i>

**Figure 1**

Suggested Uses for the L1 in the EFL Classroom (Schweers, 1999, p. 7)

The body of literature on use of L1 shows that the matter was examined mostly by gathering students' and teachers' views. Almohaimeed and Almurshed (2018) found out that although most students refrained from the use of L1 in classroom, some still thought it could be used for understanding difficult vocabulary or grammar points. Galali and Cinkara (2017) examined the views of students towards the use of L1 and found out that they viewed L1 as a tool which could be used in finding out the meanings of unknown words or understanding grammar points. Debreli and Oyman (2016) found out that students who had a low proficiency background in English tended to prefer the use of L1 and participants mostly demanded that new vocabulary items or complex grammar



points are explained in L1. Köylü (2018) investigated language instructors' use of L1 and reported that most (85%) participants rarely used L1 and some often used L1 (15%) for socializing, translating vocabulary, or clarifying language points. In his study, Kılıçkaya (2006) reported that most instructors at Turkish universities favored Turkish-medium instruction. Marsakawati (2017) also examined instructors' views and reported that instructors used L1 to provide clarification, build rapport, save time and establish the discipline in the classroom. Diaz and Perez (2016) argue that teachers use L1 for explaining the meaning of a word or a sentence, teaching and eliciting grammar rules and for classroom management purposes. Al-Amir (2017) reported that many teachers agreed on the use of L1 for the explanation of administrative information, discussing assignments, quizzes, tests, and giving instruction. Alsheshri (2017) found out that teachers thought that use of L1 should be limited to functions such as explaining vocabulary, clarifying meaning or building relationships with students. Taşçı and Ataç (2020) reported that teachers used L1 for functions such as "translation, classroom management, checking understanding, eliciting, drawing attention giving feedback, grammar instruction" (p.655). Yavuz (2012) stated that teachers reported that they used L1 when they wanted to increase students' interest or self-confidence in class. Sali (2014) investigated English teachers' use of L1 in classes and she found out that the teachers used L1 "to communicate the content of the lesson or to regulate classroom interactions and proceedings efficiently" (p. 316). Timuçin and Baytar (2014) investigated students' and teachers' use of L1 in classrooms, and they observed that teachers mostly used L1 by means of translation, for the purposes of checking understanding and giving directions. Taşkın (2011) also investigated both teachers' and students' views on use of L1 and found out that although teachers had negative perception towards the use of L1 in classrooms, they used it as a last resort in order to present grammar or vocabulary, check comprehension or drawing attention, and students had positive views on the use of L1 in their classroom.

In addition to students' and teachers' views, some research also included pre-service teachers' views on using L1 in EFL classrooms. Turnbull (2018) maintains that pre-service teachers' views towards the use of L1 is limited to translation and explanation. Tetiurka (2016) found out that most pre-service teachers held the view that L1 could be used to explain grammar, translate vocabulary or explain difficult tasks.

## **Method**

### **Design of the Study**

The present study employed a qualitative approach by following the principles of a case study design in order to explore the views of pre-service teachers towards the use of L1 in EFL classrooms. Yin (2018) states that case studies help in understanding a contemporary phenomenon (a case) in depth and the contextual conditions that are relevant to the case. Since the study focused on a case and aimed to gather participants' views and their use of L1, case study was an appropriate mode of inquiry. As with any other similar study, this case study focuses on a small sample in a specific setting.

### **Research Context**

The participants of this study were all freshman students enrolled at English Language Teaching bachelor's program at a state university located in Black Sea Region in Turkey. The data for this case study came from field notes and observations taken during an extracurricular event titled "Speak English Event". The event was organized with the aim to increase middle school students' (sixth graders) motivation and willingness to learn English by meeting pre-service teachers who prepared English teaching activities for the day.

Each pre-service teacher carried out an activity as a group leader and activity leader. The role of group leader was for assisting students and helping them understand the instructions. Group leader role was for carrying out the activity by giving instructions. The activities at the event included a warm up activity (Guessing game; daily routines), an ice breaker (Ball in the air), a main activity titled 'Superwriters', and a wrap-up activity (Run to the board), and each participant was the leader of at least one activity and leader of at least one group.

### **Participants**

Eight ELT students at A state university in Turkey participated in the interviews. The ages of the participants vary from 18 to 20; moreover, five of them are female and three of them are male. All the participants are in their first year of education at a state university in Turkey.

**Table 1***Participants' Demographic Features*

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>
Age	18	18	18	24	22	19	18	18
Gender	F	F	M	M	F	F	M	F

All eight participants enrolled in English Language Teaching program by obtaining adequate score from university placement exam which includes an English proficiency exam conducted by Measuring, Selection and Placement Center (ÖSYM in Turkish). All participants in the study also passed a proficiency exam conducted by the school of foreign languages at the university and they obtained a score above B2 level of English.

**Data Collection Instruments**

The views of the participants were gathered by semi-structured interviews which were administered at the end of the event. The interviews included questions aiming to gather the participants' views towards the use of L1 in language teaching, as well as some reflective questions towards their actual of L1 at the event. Moreover, data regarding their actual use of L1 was also obtained through researcher's notes during the teaching event.

Adams (2015) states that semi-structured interviews employ "a blend of closed and open-ended questions, often accompanied by follow-up why or how questions", and "the dialogue can meander around the topics on the agenda" (p. 493). The type of instrument implemented in this research was semi-structured due to the fact that this study aimed to gather beliefs and opinions of the participants towards the use of L1, and while doing so, it is important to direct structured questions and then build on the inquiries during the interview with the help of follow-up questions. Interview questions were built by taking into consideration the relevant information gathered from the review of literature (Klasinc, 2018). The interview questions were sent to experts in the field of education and language teaching.

**Table 2***Data Collection Matrix*

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Data Collection Instrument</b>
To explore the views of the participants towards the use of L1 in EFL classrooms and a possible link towards their background and their use of L1	Semi-Structured Interviews Questions in the interview are based on the findings of the studies in the literature (Appendix 1)

To observe and report actual frequency and reason of use of L1 in teaching	Observation Chart
	The chart includes 3 categories: specific time of the use of L1, the utterance, and context

Observations by one of the researchers of this study were also used as supporting information for the questions in the interviews. The first author of this study was present at the event and recorded any use of L1 with information such as time of the use of L1, the utterance (the specific word that the participant used), and context (reason of the use).

## Data Analysis

The analysis regarding the interviews included transcribing the recordings of the interview and focusing on the emerging related codes with the help of the questions structured beforehand, as well as the new ideas which occurred during the interviews. The codes of the analysis were organized in MAXQDA 2018 software.

## Findings

Three major themes emerged from the analysis of the transcripts of interviews. The first major theme '*Personal background in language education*' included participants' responses regarding their history with learning English. The second major theme '*Views towards the use of L1*' which included their preferences towards L1 or L2 also included a sub-section for *L1 as a teaching tool*. The third theme '*Use of L1 by the Participants*' included the participants views and insights regarding when they actually used L1. The third major theme and included their views in regard to why they, or teachers use L1 in the classroom.

**Table 3**

### *Personal Background in Language Education*

Themes	Codes	<i>f</i>	Participants
Attitudes towards learning English	Always liked English as a course and as a language, had no trouble learning it	6	H, F, E, B, A, C
	Gradually liked and improved English	1	G
	Almost always bad at English, until recently	1	D
Teacher's use of L1 in the past	Almost always	4	B, C, D, H
	Mostly L1 but sometimes L2	2	A, G
	Exceptional: extracurricular or temporary instances of L2 instruction in language education	2	E, F

Since personal background in language education of the participants were examined in relation to their views towards the use L1 and their actual use. The analysis of the transcripts also included their responses about personal educational background of language. Specifically, the medium of instruction their teachers used in the past and their motivation levels towards learning English were included in the results.

Almost all participants showed positive attitude towards learning English; while some always liked English, others gradually started liking it with age. One exception was that a participant (D) recently started liking English after studying in Prep classes (English preparatory programs before starting their university education) for a year and decided to study English Language Teaching after graduating from another B. A. program. Half the participants (B, C, D, H) stated that their teachers almost always used L1 in the classroom in the past. Only two participants (A & G) reported partial use of L2 in the classroom. One participant (E) reported that she had attended to a private language course where English was the medium of instruction. Another participant (F) stayed in Australia for three years.

**Table 4**

*Views towards the Use of L1*

Themes	Level	f	Notes	Participants
General views and preferences	Moderate	6	Participants defend the use of L2 and state that it should be prioritized; however, they also believe L1 can be used depending on proficiency	B, C, D, E, F, G, H
	Exceptional	1	Different than other views, participant holds a more flexible view towards the use of L1.	A

When asked about their preferences, the participants generally favored the use L2; they stated that L2 must be prioritized in the classroom; however, upon further questioning about their views in various settings, some participants stated that L1 could be used in some situations. The categorization of this theme showed that most participants constantly defended the use of L2 and argued that L1 can be used with low-proficient students to a limited extend. One participant (A) held a more flexible view stating that L1 may be used when needed such as introducing new grammar structures that does not exist in students' native language, as some of the excerpts demonstrated:

If everything is going well, it (medium of instruction) should be English. If nobody understands anything in the class, then Turkish might have a place. (Participant F)

It (medium of instruction) should be English but students who were here today were at A1 level, some adjustments can be made for them. (Participant H)

**Table 5**

*Views towards the Use of L1 as a Teaching Tool*

<b>L1 As a teaching tool when...</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Participants</b>
teaching grammar and vocabulary	3	Despite the general view favoring the use of L2, participants state that L1 can be used in specific cases	E, C, A
giving instructions	4	These participants hold the view that L1 may be used to a limited extend depending on proficiency level	A, B, E, F
having classroom interactions	4	Participants think that L1 can be used for having small talks warm-up discussions before class or discussing a homework or project in detail	E, C, F, G,

There was a general tendency in the views of the participants towards the use of L2 as the medium of instruction in the classroom; they held a general view that grammar and vocabulary could be taught by using L2 in classroom, and it could be better if L1 was not used as some of the excerpts showed (it is important to note here that all excerpts from the interviews were translated from Turkish to English by the researchers):

I think then (when a new grammar structure is introduced) flashcards can be used, it is better if L1 is not used. (Participant F)

There were also participants who stated that L1 could be used in specific cases. For teaching grammar and vocabulary, one participant (A) stated that grammar should be introduced in Turkish first, then reinforced again in English; and that she *saw no problem* in the use of L1 for teaching vocabulary either while also she would be found of the use of L2. Moreover, one participant (C) defended the use of L2 for teaching vocabulary but was unsure about teaching grammar in L2 and finally stated that L1 could be used for teaching grammar, as excerpts demonstrated:

Perhaps revision can be made in English, but the structure can be introduced in Turkish first. (Participant A)

I think for that (teaching vocabulary) English should be used and they should deduct the meaning from former words they used, the teacher should not say the meaning in Turkish but in English... ..for grammar it is a little harder, then Turkish may be used. (Participant C)

The participants generally thought that L1 could be used when things got too complicated. They (A, B, E, F) stated that L1 could be used in the classroom depending on the type of instruction. If the activity involved simple actions such as dancing or clapping, using L2 could be appropriate; however, when the instruction involved more abstract concepts or explanations L1 came into play. The others (D, C), on the other hand, stated that using L2 could not make a difference when students did not understand an instruction before a teaching activity, or that (G) students could eventually understand instructions in L2 with peer assistance in the classroom.

Turkish can be used but I would like to give an example from my teacher at language school, he used to do it in English, and when we could not understand, he used to show it on the board or give an example. (Participant E)

Participants F and E stated that teacher could make use of L1 while making revisions or having small talks or warm-up discussions before the class or discussing details of an assignment or a project; but only when the students in the classroom showed signs of confusion or had a hard time understanding. One participant (C) held the view that L1 could be used as a tool to *ease into the use L2*; in other words, a language teacher could use L1 at first, and then gradually increase the use of L2. Others, on the other hand, saw no use in L1 for this matter (D, H). While some participants favored L2 for classroom management, others (A, F, G, H) stated that L1 could be used for establishing order in the classroom (preventing misbehavior) and giving positive reinforcement or correcting students' mistakes (A).

**Table 6**

*Use of L1 by the Participants*

Students used L1 during...	f	Notes	As...	Participants
main activity (writing a story and acting it out)	5	Participants admit using L1 to assist the students	group leader	A, G, D, E, H,
icebreaker (throwing a ball and the one catching it asks a question)	1	Participants admit using L1 in their instructions	Activity leader	F

Participants' use of L1 was observed during the event; moreover, their reported use of L1 was also analyzed through the transcripts of the interviews. The two data collection methods showed similar results; there was no discrepancy between reported use of L1 and observed use of L1. Both sources of data confirmed that most participants did not use L1 during the event as activity leaders when they gave instructions, monitored and concluded the activities.

Almost all participants admitted using L1 during activities that they participated as *group leaders* when they assisted the 6th grade students in completing the activities. Participant A used L1 as *last resort* in an attempt to encourage the students several times to get an answer to a question asked by the activity leader (another participant) during the main writing activity in which students gathered in tables in groups of 5 and with one prospective EFL teacher, and wrote a story of daily routines together about a fictional character they created and finally acted the story out. Participant A also stated that the whole activity could have failed without the use of L1. Participant E also admitted using L1 in order to save the flow. Participant D also reported use of L1 for the same reason.

When asked about why they used L1, the participants gave various responses. Many used L1 for organizational purposes; for role distribution in group works since the 6th graders did not understand what to do. Additionally, one participant (C) thought that the students might have been shy and retain themselves from speaking even if they could.

They could not distribute roles on their own, there needed to be a leader in the group, I helped, and I needed to do that in Turkish since they did not comprehend.  
(Participant D)

One participant (F) used L1 as an activity leader (instructor of the activity) when she asked one of the students to ask a question in an icebreaking activity; when the student froze, she tried again, and eventually she uttered "Bana soru sorun" which means "Ask me a question" in Turkish. When asked about the incident, the participant stated that after not getting a response for a while, she had to sustain the flow of the activity and used L1 as a *last resort*. There was no other instances of L1 use for the participant. Other participants did not use L1 as the activity leaders. Participant H stated that although she did not use L1 she felt often that the 6th graders did not understand the instructions, that is when others came to help as group leaders. She thought that if the group leaders were



not there to help, she would *give up* and *give in* to the use of L1. Participant G stated that he did not use L1, thought the 6th graders *picked up enough hints* from the instructions he gave in L2. He insisted on using L2 during his activity as the leader even when the flow of the activity was under threat after the students struggled to guess a word since he held the view that in order to motivate the 6th graders in learning English, one must make use of L2 as much as possible. Participant D also felt the need to use L1 but he *held himself back* and expected the students to observe or warn each other in order to catch up. Participant A did not use L1 in activities as the leader, either. She felt that since the activity was more *practice-based* (guessing game with actions) students already figured out what to do.

The participants were also asked if they would use L1 if they were not observed in the future (A, D, G) if it was needed or when they had a difficulty in communicating. In addition to their use of L1, the participants were also asked about why a language teacher might use L1 in EFL classrooms, their responses mostly (B, F, H) hovered around the view of '*being drawn into using it*'; meaning that one may not usually prefer to use it, but feel as though they have to since they have the responsibility to follow an agenda, prepare their students for exams.

I would use English if I was a teacher on my own, but if I saw that they did not understand, I would turn back to Turkish. (Participant A)

### Discussion

In light of the analysis of transcripts of the interviews, it was determined that the students generally held the view that L2 should be used as much as possible, and some participants stated that L1 could also be used in teaching grammar and vocabulary, giving instructions or having classroom interactions (Table 5). Similarly, Solhi and Büyükyazı (2011) claim that teachers mostly use L1 to explain new or difficult grammar structures. In further examination of the findings, it was also determined that most participants used L1 during the main activity as *group leaders* when they assisted the 6th grade students in completing the activities (Table 6). One student also used L1 while giving instruction as an *activity leader* (when she gave instructions, monitored and concluded the activities).

It was clearly stated both by the participants and supported by the observations of the researcher that the participants of the interviews generally preferred L2 as the

medium of instruction but made use of L1 as a last resort. Although participants stated that L1 could be used in classroom, none of the participants prioritized the use of L1; in fact, most held the view that it is best if L2 was the medium of instruction. Upon further examination, the fact that Participant F used L1 during the icebreaker but did not use L1 during the main activity (see Table 4) indicated that she might have used L1 by mistake without a particular purpose. The fact that most participants used L1 during the writing activity could mean that the use of L1 might show difference among receptive and productive skill-based activities.

Some participants stated that L1 could be used for lower-proficiency classrooms. This finding was in alignment with the findings of Solhi and Büyükyazı (2011) who reported that teachers often use L1 depending on the learner's language levels. Similarly, Zakaria (2013) also stated that L1 is used for explaining grammatical rules. This finding was also supported by Cole (1998) who argues that L1 is most useful at beginning and low levels. Cole also claims that teachers can make use of L1 by comparing the main grammatical characteristics of the two languages, which is in alignment of the finding of this study which determined that the participants viewed L1 as a teaching tool in certain situations. There were mixed views regarding the use of L1 in classroom management; half the participants favored L1 and the other half favored L2. Literature shows that L1 can be used as a tool to manage a classroom (Auerbach, 1993; Marsakawati, 2017; Zakaria, 2013).

None of the participants held the view that L1 should be the medium of instruction considering the fact that almost all of them had English teachers who almost always used L1 in the classrooms in the past. This finding shows that there was no relationship between the participants' use of L1 and their educational background since most of them had teachers who used Turkish most of the time in the classroom. Participants who were taught English as a medium of instruction (Participant F stayed in Australia for 3 years, and Participant E attended a language school with English as a medium of instruction; see Table 3) held the view that L1 could be used in EFL classroom, and they actually used L1 during activities. These findings eliminate the possibility of a relationship between these participants' use of L1 and their educational background. However, the fact that most participants viewed L1 as a tool to be used in EFL classrooms and they actually used L1

as group leaders in activities indicate that there might be a relationship between their views and actions which is expected and natural.

### **Conclusion**

This study aimed to explore the views of pre-service teachers at the program of English Language Teaching at a state university in Turkey towards the use of L1 (mother tongue) in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classrooms. It also aimed to find out if there was a relationship between participants' educational background, their views towards use of L1 and their actual use of L1 among the participants. With a qualitative approach, data were through semi-structured interviews with ELT students and field notes taken by the researcher. The findings illustrated that participants in this study mostly favored the use of L2 (target language) in the classroom. The participants also stated that L2 should be used as much as possible; however, some participants also stated that L1 could have a place in the classroom depending on the proficiency. Moreover, the analyses of the interviews showed that there was no relationship between the participants' actual use of L1 and their educational background.

As with any case study, the sample size of this research was limited to a small number of participants. One limitation was that the views of eight participants guided the study in reaching conclusions. Since the results of this study is unique to the case studied in this research, it can be expected that other studies can present different results, and for this reason it can be suggested that further research can be conducted in order to find out views of pre-service teachers towards the use of L1. Another limitation was that the participants had their first teaching experience in a controlled and observed setting and their actual use of L1 may have differed without observation.

The mixed views between and within the responses indicates that the medium of instruction is of significance in EFL classrooms, and also a significant topic for ELT students, which is why this study suggests that this topic should be incorporated further into the curriculum of the ELT departments. In Turkey, pre-service teachers of English language usually have their first teaching experience in the fourth (last) year. Another pedagogical implementation of this study is that ELT students are introduced to practical teaching experiences earlier during their teacher education programs. This may be done gradually. In other words, the students may participate in supervised teaching which requires collaboration between universities and state schools in Turkey.

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1. Anonymous
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**Handling Editor:**

Boris Naimushin, PhD,  
New Bulgarian University

## ANALYSIS OF EFL STUDENTS' ERRORS IN WRITING AT THE HIGHER TEACHERS' TRAINING COLLEGE IN N'DJAMENA

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### Abstract

This paper set to carry out an experimental study on ten students who were randomly selected and divided into two groups: control group (CG) and treatment group (TG). After being taught, the control group was asked to write a composition. The treatment group was also asked to write a composition on the same topic. This paper then compared their results. The findings in the study of the control group indicated that the most common errors committed by the learners were spelling errors which recorded the highest percentage with 24.24%, followed by word choice errors with 15.15%, and adjective related errors having 12.12%. Finally, this article indicates that the writing of learners of English as a foreign language was not free from errors even though they were appropriately taught.

**Keywords:** comparative study, error analysis, learners, teaching

### Article history:

Received: 09 May 2022

Reviewed: 28 September 2022

Accepted: 30 October 2022

Published: 20 December 2022

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**Citation:** Ngarsou, V. (2022). Analysis of EFL students' Errors in Writing at the Higher Teachers' Training College of N'Djamena. *English Studies at NBU*, 8(2), 289-300. <https://doi.org/10.33919/esnbu.22.2.8>

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Etymologically, error comes from a Latin word *errare*, meaning “stray”, “mistake”. It can be applied to language learning. Most researchers in the field of language teaching and learning hold the view that an error is a deviation from the norm of the language that the learner is learning, be it a second language or a foreign language, written or spoken (Weinreich, 1953; Brown, 2007; Ellis, 2008).

Research in the errors made by the learners of a second or foreign language in their writing has been gaining ground even though Error Analysis has been a controversial topic among linguists, teachers, and researchers. Errors committed by the learners of English as a foreign language and their solutions by the researchers and teachers play an important role.

The learning of English in a non-native setting like Chad has been a big challenge for the learners. By carrying out the research on errors made by undergraduate students of the higher teachers’ training college of N’Djamena, the students’ writing has been tested, and the linguistic areas found to be problematic have been identified and analysed, and consequently, solutions provided.

### **Literature review**

Sokeng (2014) investigated grammatical errors made by 250 bilingual level 1 Francophone students in the Department of Bilingual Studies of the University of Yaoundé I studying English. She used test as an instrument for her research. She marked the students’ scripts, identified, classified and explained the causes of errors encountered by the students.

From the findings, most students made grammatical errors which concern verb tense and form which indicated the highest percentage (23%), subject-verb agreement recorded 22%, preposition, 18%, word order with 13%, plurality scored 9%, articles 5%, passive voice 5%, auxiliaries 3%, and double negation 2%. The researcher discovered that the sources of these errors were found to be intralingual transfer and interlingual transfer. She concluded that the teaching of English languages should be reinforced and effective from primary school, secondary school, college and university, but she did not specify what should be taught.



Ngadda and Nwoke (2014) have also studied errors in the written English of undergraduate Engineering students at Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University in Bauchi State. To carry out their study, they used examination tests and term papers. They analysed their data adopting error analysis procedure. The findings of the study showed that grammar recorded the highest percentage: 29.5% in term paper, 31.35% in continuous assessment test and 29.72% in examination scripts, followed by errors related to expression, punctuation, spelling, vocabulary and connectives. Both researchers attributed the causes of these errors to interlingual difficulties, intralingual difficulties, lack of much exposure to the target language, faulty teaching and learning, and forgetfulness.

Therefore, on the basis of the errors that they analysed, they recommended some pedagogical ways of solving error problems such as drama and the use of audio-visual materials, the teaching of grammar, vocabulary, expression, spelling and punctuation, proper pronunciation of words by the teacher, observation of behavioural and personality problems, thinking in English, exposing learners to a wide range of experiences, writing practice, relaxation, efficient teaching techniques and materials as well as conducting research based on students' errors.

### **Theoretical framework**

Corder (1984) distinguished between the errors of performance which are not systematic and the errors of competence which are systematic. For a better understanding, "it will be useful therefore hereafter to refer to errors of performance as *mistakes*, reserving the term *error* to refer to the systematic errors of the learner from which we are able to reconstruct his knowledge of the language to date, i.e. his *transitional competence*" (Corder, 1984, pp. 24-25). In language learning, committing errors is more important than making mistakes, because if a learner makes errors, "his errors could be taken as evidence not of failure but of success and achievement" (Richards and Sampson, 1984: p. 4), while "mistakes are of no significance to the process of language learning" (Corder, 1984, p. 25).

Ellis (1997) made the distinction between errors and mistakes clearer by pointing out that errors are caused by gaps in the learner's knowledge, because he or she is unable

to differentiate between what is correct and what is incorrect; mistakes are due to lapses in performance, because, occasionally, the learner uses what he or she knows incorrectly. Mistakes are believed to be made by L1 learners, while L2 learners commit errors. Brown (2007), however, argued that mistakes are made by everybody. But when the same mistakes are made persistently by the learner, and he cannot correct himself, they are therefore considered to be errors.

Basically, errors and mistakes are words that are concerned with the inaccurate usage of language that results in lexical, semantic, syntactic/grammatical, and phonological problems. So, the term *errors* can be taken as a synonym for *mistakes*.

Presented below is the framework for error analysis established by Ellis (1997) and adopted for this research.

### **Data collection**

This step is based on the collection of data from learners or informants by means of such various research instruments as interview, questionnaire, observation, or test. For the present study, composition and questionnaires were used to obtain written data.

### **Identification of errors**

The identification of errors is a situation where the researcher has to recognise and categorise errors. In other words, he has to distinguish between what can be said to be an error and what cannot be said to be an error.

### **Description**

The description model of error analysis involves a comparison of the learner's idiosyncratic utterances with a reconstruction of those utterances in the target language. Errors are described on the basis of linguistic categories: lexical errors, grammatical/syntactic errors, morphological errors, phonological errors, semantic errors, pragmatic errors. These categories can also be subdivided into sub-categories according to the classes of words and their functions, for instance, subject-verb agreement, tenses, prepositions, adjectives, etc. Ellis (2008) states this step gives a detailed description of specific errors and a quantification of errors as well.

## Explanation of errors

According to Ellis (2008), the explanation of errors is a step which consists of establishing the sources of L2 learners' errors, that is to say, finding out why learners have made errors with a view to explaining the second language learning process on the basis of established principles.

## Evaluation of errors

The evaluation of errors is motivated by a desire to improve language pedagogy. So, it takes into consideration the effect that errors can have from the point of view of the person who deals with the errors. In fact, error evaluation measures the effect that errors committed by the learner of a second or foreign language may have on the evaluator. This effect can be gauged either in terms of the addressee's comprehension of the learner's meaning or in terms of the addressee's affective response to the errors (Ellis, 2008: 56). However, the evaluation was not taken into consideration in this study.

## Method

This research has been conducted at the Higher Teachers' Training College of N'Djamena. Data were collected from the students of the department of English of the then school. A sample of 10 students out of 80 was used in the experimental study. In other words, an experiment of two groups of students selected randomly was presented: five students in a control group taught writing for thirty hours, they were also asked to write compositions on the topic, *private schools are better than public schools. Discuss.* Another group of five students called treatment group was not taught, but given the same topic the same day, and in the same venue to write on with a view to evaluating the effectiveness teaching writing. This was to see if there was a noticeable difference between the two groups in terms of performance in writing as a result of the teaching.

Practically, the presentation of the analysis of errors looks like this:

- Presentation of the results according to error categories and types.
- Introduction of example(s) of the error types found in the students' compositions.
- Analysis of the error
- Proposition of correction (reconstructed version)

Relative Frequency Percentage Formula to analyse the data was then used. This consisted of dividing the number of times each error category or type occurred in the compositions by the total number of frequencies. This formula leads to simple statistical analysis. The formula is as follows:

$$\text{Relative Frequency } \mathbf{RF} = \frac{f}{n} \times \frac{100}{1} \%$$

Where,

$f$  = frequency of the number of the error type occurred for all levels.

$n$  = Total number of the students' compositions for the intended levels.

## Results and discussion

Results have been tabulated. Only examples of errors with the highest percentage are given.

**Table 1**

*Errors of Mechanics*

S/N	Error types	Number		Percentage		Ranking	
		CG	TG	CG	TG	CG	TG
1	Spelling	8	6	24.24%	17.64%	1	2
2	Punctuation	1	2	3.03%	5.88%	5	5
3	Broken word	-	1	-	2.94%	-	6
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>27.27%</b>	<b>26.46</b>		

**Table 1** presents error of mechanics. Among the errors of mechanics, spelling error has been described as having the highest percentage (24.24%) followed by errors of punctuation with 3.03% in the CG. In the TG, it can be seen that spelling errors indicate 17.64% followed by errors of punctuation that have 5.88%, and a broken word representing 2.94%.

### Spelling

A spelling error is identified in the following example:

“**Money**” is wrongly written as “**many**”. The cause of this error can be traced back to the lack of distinction between the vowel sound /ʌ/ and the letters “**a**” resulting into “**many**” instead of “**money**”. This type of error does not allow a proper understanding of the message.

**Proposed correction:** The money that they invest.

**Table 2**  
*Grammatical Errors*

S/N	Error types	Number		Percentage		Ranking	
		CG	TG	CG	TG	CG	TG
1	Adjectives	4	4	12.12%	11.76%	3	3
2	Tense	2	2	6.06%	5.88%	4	5
3	Subject-Verb Agreement	1	-	3.03%	-	5	-
4	Possessive Case	2	-	6.06%	-	4	-
5	Pronoun	1	-	3.03%	-	5	-
6	Plurality	1	3	3.03%	8.82%	5	4
7	Preposition	1	1	3.03%	2.94%	5	6
8	Article	1	-	3.03%	-	5	-
9	Adverb	-	3	-	8.82%	-	4
10	Verb form	-	1	-	2.94%	-	6
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>39.39%</b>	<b>41.16%</b>		

**Table 2** shows that the area of difficulties identified in the scripts of the students in the control group are grammar. The grammatical errors concerned adjectives which registered the highest percentage in this category of errors, that is to say, 12.12%. In the second position, are errors relating to subject-verb agreement, pronoun, plurality, preposition, and article which scored each 5% followed by tense and possessive case error with 4% each. In the TG, the same table reveals that the percentage of errors of adjectives is the highest in this category with 11.76%. This type of errors is followed by errors relating to plurality and adverb, having each 8.82%, Tense errors is in the third position with 5.88%, and errors about preposition and verb form scoring each 2.94%.

### Adjectives

There is a wrong use of adjective in the following example:

**Example:** Overcrowded number of students

**Overcrowded** is an adjective which is used about a place with too many people. Therefore, the “**number of students**” cannot be overcrowded again. This error is due to the lack of understanding of the meaning of **overcrowded**. The teacher may understand what the student meant, but this error can affect the composition of the student. “**Classroom**” should be used in place of “**number of students**”, the adjective that could be used in place of “**overcrowded**” would be “**great**”. Then, example 1 will look like this: **overcrowded classroom** or **great number of students**.

**Proposed correction:** An overcrowded classroom

**Table 3***Lexical Errors*

S/N	Error types	Number		Percentage		Ranking	
		CG	TG	CG	TG	CG	TG
1	Unnecessary words	2	3	6.06%	8.82%	4	4
2	Word choice	5	8	15.15%	23.52%	2	1
3	Borrowing	2	-	6.06%	-	4	-
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>27.27%</b>	<b>32.34%</b>		

Table 3 reveals that among lexical errors, word choice related errors indicate 15.15% representing the highest percentage. Unnecessary words and borrowing occur in the second position scoring each 6.06%. In the TG, two types of errors, unnecessary use of words with a percentage that corresponds to 8.82% and word choice errors with the highest percentage (23.52%) are shown.

**Word choice**

**Example:** Reason why the **level** of public schools are very **down**

Concerning word choice errors in example 3, the words “**level**” and “**down**” are not used in their correct place. They may give a different interpretation of the sentence. The literal translation of the French words, “*niveau*” and “*bas*” into English might be the cause of this error. Again, the learner might not know that a word in the source language may have several contextual meanings in the target language. For example, another meaning of “*niveau*” in English is “**standard**”, and “*bas*” is “**decline**”. From this view, example 3 could be read: “**that is why the standard of public schools is indeed on the decline**”.

**Proposed correction:** that is why the performance of public schools is very poor

**Table 4***Semantic Errors*

S/N	Error types	Number		Percentage		Ranking	
		CG	TG	CG	TG	CG	TG
1	Meaningless sentence	1	-	3.03%	-	5	-
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3.03%</b>	<b>-</b>		

**Table 4** reveals that in semantic errors, a meaningless sentence has been identified as can be seen, indicates a percentage of 3.03% while students in the TG have not committed errors related to semantics.

**Example:** “the problem of education **born the they and they**”. “**born the they and they**” has rendered the sentence meaningless. This type of error is difficult to explain, and therefore, the proposed correction is impossible to reflect the intention of the student.

**Table 5***Syntactic Errors*

S/N	Error types	Number		Percentage		Ranking	
		CG	TG	CG	TG	CG	TG
1	Infinitive	1	-	3.03 %	-	5	-
2	Sentence fragments	-	3	-	8.82%	-	4
3	Omission	-	6	-	17.64%	-	2
4	Parallelism	-	1	-	2.94%	-	6
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3.03 %</b>	<b>29.4</b>		

Table 5 shows that a syntactic error at the level of the infinitive scores 3.03%. In the TG, omission scored 17.64%, followed by segment fragments with 8.82%, and parallelism that shows 2.94%.

**Omission**

In the following example, there is an omission of a word which should be “**differences**”. Without this word, the sentence is not comprehensible. The reason behind the omission could be forgetfulness.

**Example:** So, what are the  $\wedge$  between private schools and public schools?

In the treatment group, word choice has 23.52%, followed by omission that scored 17.64%, and spelling with 17.64%. Adjectives occurred in the third position with 11.76%.

**Proposed correction:**

- a) So, what are the differences between private schools and public schools?
- b) So, what are the similarities between private schools and public schools?

**Error similarities and differences between control group and treatment group****Grammatical errors**

In the experimental study, the findings show that in grammatical errors, control group and treatment group have in common errors relating to adjectives, tense, plurality, and preposition.

- Concerning adjective errors, the control group has 12.12% while the treatment group has 11.76%. This means that the control group has more problems with adjectives than the treatment group. Therefore, the teaching on adjectives to remedy errors has proved effective.
- With tense errors, the control group registered 6.06% compared to the treatment group that got a percentage of 5.88% meaning that the control group has not performed better in the use of tense. This is also evidence that the teaching on tenses had positive effect on the performance of the treatment group.
- In the area of plurality, however, 3.03% is an indicator that the control group has fewer difficulties with the formation of plural nouns than the treatment group has 8.82%. In this case, the teaching on the plural nouns has proven inefficient.
- Findings show that the control group that has 3.03% has more problems than the treatment group that scores 2.94 in the use of preposition. Once again, the teaching of preposition is found effective.

It should be noted that the control group has difficulties with subject-verb agreement, possessive case, pronoun, and article, but the treatment group has not registered these types of errors. This reflects the efficiency of the teaching of these aspects of grammar to the treatment group. The treatment group, however, has problem with adverb and verb form which the control group hasn't. From this comparison, it appears clearly that teaching grammar appropriately can help the learners to improve and make less grammatical errors in writing.

### **Lexical errors**

In lexical category of errors, the findings reveal that both control group and treatment group use unnecessary words and have difficulties in choosing the correct words. However, a look at the percentage analysis indicates that unnecessary words represent 6.06% in the control group and 8.82% in the treatment group. With regards to word choice, the treatment group still passes the control group in percentage with 23.52% against 15.15%. This suggests that the treatment group has much more problem in using wordy elements and choosing appropriate words in sentences. Therefore, teaching has not help solving learners' vocabulary problems.



### **Errors of mechanics**

Learners in control group and treatment group commit errors of punctuation and spelling errors as well. In fact, spelling errors in control group indicate 24.24% against 17.64% in treatment group. Here, the treatment group performs better than control group in terms of words' spelling. However, the percentage of errors of punctuation in treatment group is higher representing 5.88%. In the control group, errors of punctuation correspond to 3.03%. Learner in the treatment group has another error of mechanics which learner in the control group has not committed. In terms of total percentage, the control group has got 27.27% against 26.52%. There is a slight difference in percentage between the two groups with regards to spelling and punctuation errors. So, for this reason, the linguistic difficulties among the learners of the two groups are almost equal. In this case, the teaching on spelling and punctuation has no effect on the learners' writing.

### **Syntactic errors**

Learners in control group committed one type of syntactic errors, infinitive which carried 3.03% while learners in treatment group committed three different types of syntactic errors: sentence fragments having 8.82%, omission with 17.64%, and parallelism that recorded 2.94%. So, from these results, it is obvious that the treatment group has more problem than the control group. Therefore, the effectiveness of teaching did not have considerable influence in reducing the occurrence of syntactic errors in the learners' writing.

### **Semantic errors**

One group registered semantic errors relating to meaningless sentence with a percentage of 3.03%. This was the control group. In other words, learner in the treatment group did not have difficulty in semantics as they made meaningful sentences. Therefore, the appropriate teaching enabled the learners of the treatment group to avoid making semantic errors.

### **Conclusion**

Despite the exhaustive research on error analysis, the experimental studies conducted on written errors committed by Chadian learners of English at higher institutions that exist are few.

As stated by Corder (1977), there are two schools of thought according to which errors occur either as a result of the inadequacy of the teaching method or the imperfection of the world. Bongaerts et al. (1984, p. 49) on their part argued that if errors occurred, in spite of the teaching, this was invariably attributed to interference from L1. In fact, many researchers in the field of English Language Teaching suggested appropriate teaching as a solution to the phenomenon of errors.

The findings from the study showed that no matter how students were taught, errors still occurred in their compositions. In terms of teaching, this research confirms the well-balanced argument of Mackey (1974, p. x) according to which “good teaching is no guarantee of good learning; for it is what the learner does that makes him learn. Poor learning can nullify the best teaching, just as poor teaching can devalue the best method”.

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# ECOCRITICAL HUES IN CHRISTY LEFTERI'S "SONGBIRDS": THE DISSOLUTION OF THE HUMAN/NONHUMAN DISTINCTION

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## Abstract

The human/nonhuman distinction is a significant theme in ecocriticism, which tries to undermine this dichotomy and make us rethink the human relationship with nature and other creatures. This paper argues that Christy Lefteri's latest novel *Songbirds* (2021) dispels this hierarchical dualism through the portrayal of a golden mouflon ovis, a wild sheep native to the Caspian region and an extremely meaningful animal in the story: it comes to represent nature and eventually leads to the assimilation of the human and nonhuman spheres. By comparing the description of the mouflon ovis with the hedgehog in "The Mower" (1979) by Philip Larkin, I will attempt to bring to the foreground the similarities between both animal representations and the strong ecocritical hues in Lefteri's description. Furthermore, the paper aims to show how the author depicts an interspecies and inter-elemental community – in which not only the animate dimension, but also the inanimate sphere is given value and importance – through the representation of the mouflon ovis, the motif of gold and specific passages in the novel.

**Keywords:** Christy Lefteri, human/nonhuman, Philip Larkin, ecocriticism, community

## Article history:

Received: 10 October 2022

Reviewed: 12 November 2022

Accepted: 16 November 2022

Published: 20 December 2022

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**Citation:** Mondo, C. (2022). Ecocritical Hues in Christy Lefteri's "Songbirds": The Dissolution of the Human/Nonhuman Distinction. *English Studies at NBU*, 8(2), 301-313.

<https://doi.org/10.33919/esnbu.22.2.9>

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*[...] a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man*  
(Wordsworth, 2020, p. 48)

Ecocriticism has been engaged in rethinking the divide between human and nonhuman animals by proposing new definitions of humanity and by investigating the animal characteristics of humans themselves. While discussing ecofeminism, Iovino outlines Val Plumwood's list of antinomies, which bring to the foreground the discrepancy between those concepts that have been given primacy and those that have been overlooked, making them strong and weak poles, respectively (Iovino, 2020, p. 77). The entry human/nature (nonhuman) (Plumwood, 1993, as cited in Iovino, 2020, p. 77) is among Plumwood's strongest dualisms and reflects a particularly ossified distinction. As underlined by Boehrer (2020, p. 545), in early modern culture the closeness of human and nonhuman animals, both literal and figurative, triggered feelings of anxiety. However, the conceptual separation between the human and nonhuman spheres has recently become more pronounced.

As a reflection of thoughts and beliefs of numerous historical periods, literature cannot but mirror such a controversial antinomy. Yet, it has been justly pointed out that the post-Enlightenment view of animals is only a brief phase challenged by pre- and posthumanism (Wolfe, 2009, p. 564). One of the most prominent contemporary ecocritical writers, Amitav Ghosh discussed the importance of stories and maintained that in the past nonhuman creatures were considered gifted with agency and a kind of consciousness (PBS Books, 2019). In this regard, Greek mythology and classical culture are peppered with animal transformations: Jove metamorphoses into a swan to reach the beautiful Leda, whereas Arachne becomes a spider and Actaeon a stag, just to mention a few examples (Palazzi, 2010, pp. 52, 61, 79). Added to this, the inanimate dimension was not overlooked either; Jove reaches the imprisoned Danae as golden rain, the heart-broken and weeping Niobe is transformed into a rock (Palazzi, 2010, pp. 50, 73) and the nymph Arethusa into a spring of water (Britannica, n.d.). Stories recognising the agency of nonhuman creatures have been gradually dwindling (PBS Books, 2019), which increased the separation of the human and the nonhuman spheres. It is no wonder, then,

that “the climate crisis is also a crisis of culture, and thus of the imagination” (Ghosh, 2016, p. 9).

In this sense, Christy Lefteri’s novel *Songbirds* is interesting in that it displays a new way of thinking about nature in which forms of life come to share “something far more deeply interfused” (Wordsworth, 2020, p. 48), to use Wordsworth’s words, since British romanticism was much appreciated by first-wave ecocritics (Buell, 2011, pp. 89, 95). Published in 2021, Lefteri’s latest novel shares the same sensitivity towards interspecies connections that can be found in ancient legends and stories. The London-born writer reads about weather and climate change (Lefteri, 2022) and is not new to ecocritical themes, which also surfaced in *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*. Published in 2019, *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* is concerned with the troubled and obstacle-riddled journey of two refugees making their way towards England. Bees play an important role in the novel, since the main character is a beekeeper and is fascinated by their community, which seems on equal footing with that of humans and, therefore, can undermine anthropocentric frames of understanding of the world. Once he discovers that bees communicate through a dance and learns to understand them, the main character admits that “the world around me never looked or sounded the same again” (Lefteri, 2020, p. 12). Similarly, Lefteri’s latest novel *Songbirds* is surprising in its portrayal of a golden mouflon ovis, which shows the wild sheep as a majestic animal, but could also hint at other meanings regarding the representation of nature through an animal, a trope particularly widespread in literature.

This paper aims to underline the ecocritical sensitivity shown by Christy Lefteri’s depiction of animals in *Songbirds*, in particular that of a golden mouflon ovis, by comparing their representation with a poem by Philip Larkin entitled “The Mower.” Published in 1979, Larkin’s poem has been chosen because of the similarities it shares with the representation of animals in *Songbirds*. In addition, it was written fairly recently but shortly before the birth of ecocriticism, which developed during the 1990s in America, despite the fact that Joseph Meeker’s influential work *The Comedy of Survival: Studies in Literary Ecology* had already been published in 1972 (Iovino, 2020, pp. 15–16). I will attempt to show the similarities between the portrayals of the mouflon ovis in *Songbirds* and the hedgehog in Larkin’s poem, and underline the ecocritical hues underpinning Lefteri’s novel, which may be more far-reaching than those in “The Mower.”

Indeed, I claim that Lefteri's portrayal of the mouflon ovis possesses stronger ecocritical hues, inasmuch as it hints at an identification between man and animal, and alludes to the interconnection between animate beings and inanimate elements as well. Such interconnection is further emphasised by the motif of gold and interesting inclusive images that strengthen the theme of interspecies community.

### **Towards an Ecocritical Understanding of Community: The Mouflon Ovis, the Motif of Gold and Interspecies Images**

Especially in Anglophone literature, representations of individual animals frequently act as symbols that come to embody nature and engender deep reflections on it. Some of these animal descriptions hint at a raging and wild nature which is celebrated in its beauty, dangerousness and untameability. To mention two examples by Amitav Ghosh that belong to contemporary ecocritical literature, the quasi-mythical tiger depicted in *The Hungry Tide* with a coat "of a colour that shone like gold in the sunlight" (Ghosh, 2005, p. 329) and the slithering cobra in *Gun Island* endowed with "shining black eyes" (Ghosh, 2020, p. 83) are worth citing, in that their presence in the plots exerts considerable gravity and the nonhuman creatures end up representing much more than how they appear at first sight.

At other times, the depicted animals are characterised by peacefulness, meekness and even a sort of resignation when faced with human cruelty. The soaring albatross in Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" which "every day, for food or play,/ Came to the mariners' hollo!" (Coleridge, n.d.) is as famous as its senseless killing. Instead, Gervase's story concerned with the dolphin wounded by a javelin hurled by a sailor (Cohen, 2015, pos. 2665–2670) is less known, although the creature is as meek as Coleridge's albatross and is likewise harmed by humans. The mouflon ovis figuring in *Songbirds* could be placed in this second category of animal representations linked to nature, in that the majestic and meek animal is imbued with meanings that go beyond a naturalistic detail aimed at embellishing the plot. Unlike the story of the dolphin and Coleridge's albatross, the mouflon ovis is a product of contemporary literature and, arguably, of considerable ecocritical influence. To prove that environmental concerns were already present in 19th-century English literature, Taylor pointed out that many Victorianists had "been doing a form of ecocriticism without using the term" (2015, p.

879) well before the 1990s. Yet, the worsening climate change and rampant environmental crisis have recently honed ecocritical sensitivity and fuelled the development of ecocriticism, comprehensively. As a consequence, Lefteri's representation of a nature-associated animal is not only inserted in the tradition of Anglophone literature and similar to other animal descriptions by authors of the past, but it also acquires different and unique connotations.

Interestingly, one of the main characters, Yiannis, comes across – or rather, is found by – a mouflon ovis while he is flagrantly in an illicit activity. The poacher is collecting, killing and throwing into a bucket those songbirds that have been lured in by lime sticks and got stuck to them. The first description of the mouflon ovis shows an animal that is far from ordinary, but has rather a beautiful, gilded coat:

The mouflon was calmly staring at me. It stood in the long shadows of the trees and it wasn't until the light shifted that I saw the most extraordinary thing: instead of the usual red and brown, its short-haired coat was gold; its curved horns, bronze. (Lefteri, 2021, p. 11)

Reminiscent of Jason's golden fleece or Artemis's hind, which was endowed with golden horns and copper hooves (Palazzi, 2010, p. 164), the golden mouflon ovis takes a step backward when Yiannis goes forward, but keeps holding a "straight and strong" posture (Lefteri, 2021, p. 11). Although it understandably utters no words for Yiannis to comprehend, the mouflon is articulate enough to ask him "A question of a single word" (Lefteri, 2021, p. 13) with a sound it makes. Since Yiannis has been caught red-handed poaching songbirds, it seems only too likely that the one-word question is "Why?" As if that were not enough, the creature aptly uses its gaze to clearly make explicit what it disapproves of: "For the first time, it broke its gaze. It seemed to rest its eyes on the bucket of birds beside me" (Lefteri, 2021, p. 13). In Iovino's view, the common ascendant process of transcendence spun from materiality to spirituality ought to be replaced by a more subversive concept that creates a horizontal level, thus allowing transcendence to escape the logics of anthropocentrism (2020, p. 91). In my opinion, the portrayal of the mouflon ovis is a perfect example of this new conception of transcendence: it focuses on an animal that refuses to be reduced to a symbol and that is at the same time brought to the foreground as, if not an image, at least a recipient or catalyst of nature's strength and disappointment at Yiannis's behaviour.

Let us now compare the depiction of the mouflon ovis in *Songbirds* with the hedgehog in "The Mower" (1979) by Philip Larkin, a poem which I consider particularly fit for comparison. To reiterate, "The Mower" was published fairly recently but in a period in which ecocriticism still had not yet officially gained ground; therefore, a comparison between a late 1970s representation of nature-associated animals and a contemporary one could prove fruitful to understand their similarities and differences. Indeed, ecocritical themes figure in some poems by Larkin as well: he has been considered a possible "eco-poet" and his poem "Going, Going" a "harbinger of the gloomy fate the earth might suffer" (Idrus & Mukahal, 2021, pp. 55, 50). By comparing "The Mower" and *Songbirds*, we may also observe how ecocritical sensitivity has shaped the representation of meaningful animals in literature, a trope that is rooted in the past and has illustrious representatives in Blake's "The Tyger" or Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale."

Larkin's poem opens with a more domestic situation than that of the appearance of the mouflon ovis in Lefteri's novel: "The mower stalled, twice; kneeling, I found/ A hedgehog jammed up against the blades,/ Killed. It had been in the long grass" (Larkin, n.d.). Rather than poaching songbirds, the speaker traumatically encounters the hedgehog while intent on mowing the grass, an absolutely simple and ordinary activity. But it is exactly this carefree and 'routinely' ordinariness that spurs reflections on the extent to which human action, albeit unintentionally, can have devastating consequences for nature and its creatures. Incidentally, it ought to be noted that poaching songbirds is part and parcel of Yiannis's routine as well. It is as if Larkin wanted to draw readers into the speaker's experience: in the brief first line, the punctuation forces readers to make pauses marked by the two commas and especially by the semi-colon which seems to part the line into hemistichs. The two hemistichs and the pauses almost force readers to reproduce the action of the mower that 'stalled, twice.'

The apparently innocent act of mowing the lawn causes the death of an animal as innocent as the songbirds poached by Yiannis: "Now I had mauled its unobtrusive world/ Unmendably. Burial was no help" (Larkin, n.d.). These two lines have interesting points of contact with the representation of animals in Lefteri's novel. Acknowledging the damage caused by the speaker – which results in the death of the hedgehog –, the first line shares noticeable similarities with the destiny of the mouflon ovis. The golden animal is then mercilessly shot by a more insensitive poacher who wants to take the creature as a prize.



In a similar vein, the hedgehog has been killed as well, although in different circumstances. The adjective ‘unobtrusive,’ referring to the hedgehog’s life, is particularly meaningful too. Indeed, aside from their ill fate, both animals share an aura of quietness and silence that hovers over them. The life of the hedgehog was ‘unobtrusive’ and, therefore, low-key, silent and barely perceptible to the speaker. In a way akin to this, the mouflon draws near Yiannis very silently and produces only a cracking sound of leaves that are crushed under its hooves. The creature is so quiet in its approach, that at first Yiannis has the impression that a human being – very likely a policeman or a ranger – has come to arrest him. This happens twice: the first time the animal lives, but the second time Yiannis is with another poacher and the animal dies. The quietness of nature can be backed up against the human-induced noise of the mower in Larkin’s poem and of Yiannis’s own loud voice in *Songbirds*, which is almost redolent of Leo Marx’s “startling shriek of the train whistle” (Marx, 1964, p. 15): “‘I won’t hurt you,’ I said, and realised suddenly how loud my voice was in the woods, how it disturbed the peace” (Lefteri, 2021, p. 13).

Larkin’s above-quoted second line focuses on the feelings of the speaker and concisely expresses the pangs of guilt elicited by the discovery of the dead hedgehog. It concludes by sombrely saying that “Burial was no help” (Larkin, n.d.). Rather than to the mouflon ovis, these words could perfectly apply to an owlet that Yiannis finds in his bin bag filled to the brim with dead songbirds and other birds which he has to sift through: “I wondered if it had flown into the net while following his mother on a night hunt. Its oversized opaque black eyes in its pale, heart-shaped face looked up at me without seeing” (Lefteri, 2021, p. 193). The small, feathery creature cannot be brought back to life, which triggers sorrow and provokes feelings of regret in the wavering poacher: “I took a spade and buried the owlet in the soft soil beneath the orange tree. I buried it deep so that cats and wild animals could not get to it” (Lefteri, 2021, p. 200). Even in this case, ‘Burial was no help,’ one is tempted to say.

Up to this point, the representation of the hedgehog and the mouflon ovis share thought-provoking similarities: both animals are meek, lead a silent life and are killed by humans, one by accident, the other purposefully. In both cases, their death spurs reflections and invests the animals with another meaning, inasmuch as they come to embody nature. Nevertheless, a more important element shared by both literary works ought to be emphasised, namely the transition from a nonhuman to a human dimension,

which implies connection. Although it is concerned with the death of a hedgehog, Larkin's poem ends with considerations that deal with humans: "[...] we should be careful/ Of each other, we should be kind/ While there is still time" (Larkin, n.d.). At a second glance, these lines and the words 'each other' may actually apply to both human and nonhuman animals. They might refer to the fact that humans ought to care for and be merciful towards animals, or they may encourage humans to express their kindness towards others before it is too late. Read from an ecocritical perspective, these lines become extremely interesting because they might allude to similarities and associations between human and nonhuman animals.

In a similar vein, Yiannis cannot help but observe that the mouflon ovis shares something special with his beloved Nisha. He had already encountered another mouflon ovis when he was in her company on a trip and had marvelled at Nisha's unique connection with the animal: "There was a flash in her eyes, as if the colours of the forest shone through them, as if some secret energy, some nimble animal hiding amongst the trees, had suddenly come to life" (Lefteri, 2021, p. 12). Upon observing Nisha approaching the creature, Yiannis realises that "I felt such a distance from her and the animal, like they shared something I couldn't understand" (Lefteri, 2021, p. 13). As Iovino highlighted, exploitation of resources originates social unease and vice versa, and destruction of environments often goes hand in hand with the destruction of cultures conceived of as marginal (2020, p. 48). In light of this conception, the connection between the mouflon and Nisha, from which Yiannis is cut off, might hint at the fact that both are marginalised in human society: one because of its animality, the other due to her being a woman, a foreigner and the invisibility which accompanies her. Indeed, a recurring theme in the novel is the invisibility of female domestic workers to people in general, their employers included. The invisibility oppressively experienced by foreigners brings to mind an excerpt from Aravind Adiga's *Amnesty*; the main character, an illegal immigrant in Sydney, ironically says: "Easiest thing in the world, becoming invisible to white people, who don't see you anyway" (Adiga, 2021, p. 49).

Be it as it may, the encounter with the mouflon ovis is not limited to the experience of coming across a wild animal or a simple representation of nature, but involves Nisha as well and hints at a larger connection between human and nonhuman animals, as Larkin's poem seems to do as well. Nevertheless, in her novel endowed with "lyrical

prose" (Sweeney, 2021), Christy Lefteri goes one step further and surpasses the depiction of the mouflon ovis as an image evoking association between human and nonhuman animals. Indeed, its representation involves assimilation or even identification of the two spheres. In Yiannis's first description of the mouflon ovis, two elements are particularly important: the fact that the coat of the animal is strangely golden and that Yiannis acknowledges that "Its eyes were the exact colour of Nisha's – the eyes of a lion" (Lefteri, 2021, p. 11). Further on in the story, after the mouflon ovis has been shot, Yiannis looks again into the dying golden animal's eyes, "now pools of liquid gold" (Lefteri, 2021, p. 268). Although Yiannis does not know it yet, his girlfriend Nisha, who had mysteriously disappeared weeks ago, has been killed. In the novel, the mouflon tellingly has her same eyes, as if it shared a part of Nisha's soul or were even her reincarnation. This hypothesis finds further supporting evidence in the fact that Yiannis meets the golden mouflon ovis shortly after Nisha's murder, although he is still unaware of that. As Nisha had told Yiannis once, "If in another life you were a lion, I think I would recognise you and still love you" (Lefteri, 2021, p. 132). Therefore, the fact that the mouflon ovis has Nisha's eyes, paired with her death, creates a process of identification between the woman and the animal, which become one. As a consequence, unlike Larkin's poem, *Songbirds* offers a moving example of assimilation between two beings, rather than association.

If one wanted to be precise, it ought to be pointed out that Nisha's metamorphosis after her death may even be twofold, which introduces the importance of the inanimate world in the novel. Apart from becoming identified with the amber-eyed mouflon ovis, the woman also undergoes an inter-elemental rebirth, insomuch as her image is forever carved in a wooden sculpture made by an artist, Muya. Incidentally, this is a reversal of the myth of Pygmalion. It could be argued that Muya, the artist, carved the statue well before Nisha's death. Although this is true, it should be highlighted that the statue acquires meaning and fills Nisha's absence with a static presence only after her disappearance, understandably:

It was Nisha, to be sure, her heart-shaped face, her fiery eyes. Even the tiny dimple in her right cheek. I reached out and touched her hand. I wanted her to speak. I was desperate that she would break out of her wooden case and speak to me. 'Nisha,' I said, gently. 'Tell me where you are.' (Lefteri, 2021, p. 156)

Aside from this passage, bodies and inanimate materials are often linked together through an interesting use of metaphors, reminiscent of Anne Michaels's in her novel *The Winter Vault*. In the Canadian poet's novel, the carving of an anthropomorphic statue by a hominid is "the earliest example of stone made flesh" and the spectacle of the statues of the Temple of Abu Simbel that have been cut in several pieces to be moved consists of "ghastly devastation. Bodies lay exposed, limbs strewn at hideous angles. Each king was decapitated [...] their proud torsos dismembered by chainsaws" (Michaels, 2010, pp. 13, 3). Similarly, Lefteri describes the scattered tree branches in Muya's studio "like severed limbs" and the scar on Kiyoma's – Nisha's sister – chest "like a beautiful tree branch" (Lefteri, 2021, pp. 118, 81). Coupled with the rebirth as a golden mouflon ovis, Nisha may thus even undergo another metamorphosis which gives importance to the inanimate dimension as well, which is often connected to humans, in the novel.

Yet, the golden colour of the mouflon ovis's coat and eyes has far deeper implications than an identification between Nisha and the creature. As Iovino underlines, in Aldo Leopold's view, the interdependency of forms of life forges a fully-fledged community, rather than a mere juxtaposition of elements or a simple environment (2020, p. 126). Enlarging this concept, it could be said that the coexistence of humans, nonhuman animals, and inanimate elements creates an enormous and carefully wrought community regulated through complex mechanisms, in tune with the conception of an ecosystem. I claim that *Songbirds* advocates for such an ecocritical interspecies and inter-elemental community through the use of the colour gold and its recurring presence in the descriptions of the mouflon ovis. As a matter of fact, the motif of gold binds together numerous elements in the novel, both animate and inanimate: the golden leaves of cherry and pecan trees, the golden sun, the golden coats of dogs, the "gold and red and blue" wings of birds and the "pure gold" of a singer's voice (Lefteri, 2021, pp. 65, 65, 149, 163, 193). Nisha herself becomes part of this community when she vanished and turned to gold. She turned to gold in the eyes of the creature that stood before me. She turned to gold in the morning sky and in the music of the birds. Later, in the shimmering melody of the maid from Vietnam who sang at Theo's restaurant. (Lefteri, 2021, pp. 1–3)

This golden community is striking because it encompasses a myriad of different beings and natural elements but links them all together through the constant colour gold that may make reference to their equally important role in the world. In line with this, the

description of the golden eyes of a cat is particularly interesting: they are “gold, with an area of patchy blue that looked like the Earth from a great distance” (Lefteri, 2021, p. 33). Therefore, using gold as a *fil rouge* connecting all forms of life and even inanimate elements, the novel recovers the ecocritical and ancient sensitivity that connected the human and nonhuman spheres. Discussing oral traditions that linked humans to an entire community of living beings, Westling states that “radical changes to those ancient traditions came with domestication of plants and animals and with the settled hierarchical civilizations that began to separate themselves from the rest of the natural world” (2014, p. 1). However, in this case, no hierarchy is present, the sun is on equal footing with the mouflon, with Nisha and countless, multifarious other creatures. Another interesting image in the novel may hint at this multi-layered interspecies and inter-elemental community, namely the description of the subjects of Muyia’s sculptures:

They were mostly faces of people, but also animals: a snake, an elephant, three dragonflies hovering on invisible strings. There were finely carved flowers and various birds and fish, even a globe of the Earth – all crafted intricately with minute, precious details. (Lefteri, 2021, p. 119)

Muyia’s carvings include varied forms of life which culminate in the final reference to a ‘globe of the Earth,’ thus further reinforcing the idea of a large, varied community inhabiting the globe.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the ecocritical hues in *Songbirds* acquire multi-layered meanings. While “The Mower” by Philip Larkin seems to employ a transition from nonhuman to human creatures to create an association between them, through its depiction of the golden mouflon ovis the novel puts forward a deeper assimilation between animal and character. Added to this, the recurring colour gold might allude to a common spirit present in any creature and connecting it to a larger, interspecies and inter-elemental community of beings. Through the carefully wrought descriptions of the mouflon ovis, the motif of gold and meaningful passages that exemplify varied communities made of animate and inanimate elements, the distinction between human and nonhuman spheres is undermined and prompts us to rethink them in an ecocritical frame of understanding.

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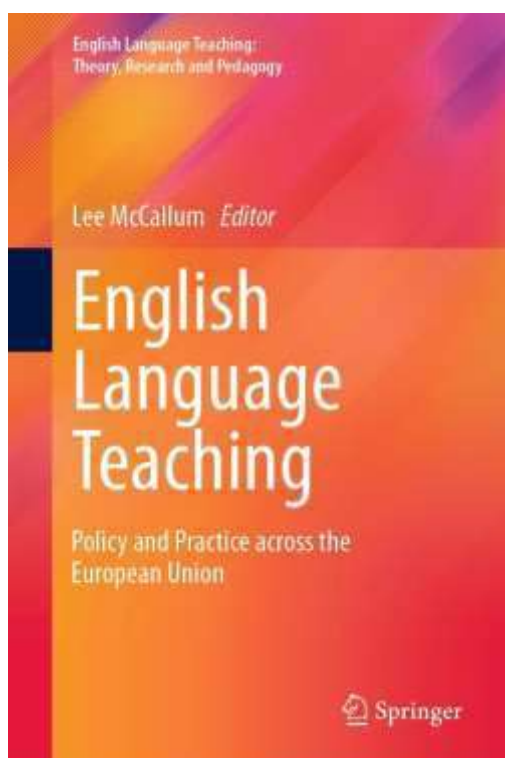
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## **BOOK REVIEW SECTION**



## ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING: POLICY AND PRACTICE ACROSS THE EUROPEAN UNION – BOOK REVIEW

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### Book Details

**Title:**

English Language Teaching:  
Policy and Practice Across the European Union

**Editor:**

Lee McCallum


**Publisher:**

Springer, 357 pages

**Year of publication:** 2022

**ISBN** 978-981-19-2151-3 (hardback),  
978-981-19-2152-0 (eBook)

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**Citation:** Hoyte-West, A. (2022). English Language Teaching: Policy and Practice Across the European Union – Book review. *English Studies at NBU*, 8(2), 315-319. <https://doi.org/10.33919/esnbu.22.2.10>

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Although indisputably the global lingua franca of our times, English is the native tongue of just a small percentage of the European Union's (EU) population. However, its broader social, economic, and cultural importance means that the teaching and learning of English is now common at all levels of education across Europe. Using a variety of approaches, the nineteen chapters of this edited volume examine the interplay between language policy and classroom practice in a range of selected EU member states. Adroitly edited by Lee McCallum, Lecturer in Academic Writing at Coventry University (United Kingdom) with a global background in both research and teaching, *English Language Teaching: Policy and Practice across the European Union* forms part of Springer's book series in 'English Language Teaching: Theory, Research and Pedagogy'.

The contributions are divided into four thematic sections. The first (and with seven chapters, the largest) is devoted to examining how policies relating to English Language Teaching (ELT) have had a bearing on classroom practice. Lee McCallum's introductory contribution outlines the scope of the volume, paying necessary attention to relevant EU language policies and the ever-evolving role of English in the European context, particularly in the light of Brexit. In addition, she highlights the book's objectives in encouraging a reflective and comparative perspective on current ELT-related issues. This broad focus is taken up in the second chapter, entitled "Teaching and Learning English in the European Union: A Research Review", by Chiew Hong Ng and Yin Ling Cheung. Using publications from a prominent international language policy journal as a source, this literature-based study employs thematic discourse analyses of selected conceptual frameworks relating to the growing prevalence of English in tertiary-level education.

Portugal is the centre of attention of Chapter 3, by Lili Cavaleiro, Luis Guerra, and Ricardo Pereira. Here, the authors describe the quantitative and qualitative findings of their research examining various aspects of multilingual primary and secondary school English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. This includes demographic and linguistic information about teachers and pupils, the general awareness of pertinent language education policies and training needs among teaching staff, as well as pupils' own attitudes towards English both at school and outside of it. Moving eastwards to Poland, the role of language-in-education planning, combined with linguistic imperialism, is the object of the contribution by Aleksandra Ita Olszewska, Maria Coady, and Urszula Markowska-Manista. Here, the authors analyse the historical and contemporary trajectory of English since the fall of Communism, contrasting it with the former role of Russian during Soviet times.

In Chapter 5, “Mother Tongue Support as a Scaffold to English Language Proficiency: An Ideological Analysis of a Belgian International School’s Language Policy”, Anne-Sophie Bafort, Kerrilyn Thacker, and Mieke Vandenbroucke conduct a linguistic ethnography of an international school in Belgium where English is the medium of instruction but linguistic diversity is also appreciated. Using school documents and through analysis of the institution’s linguistic landscape, insights are gained into how English is used in such environments to accommodate varying proficiency levels, as well as how the importance of different mother tongues can still be acknowledged.

Accent choice among university students of English in Austria is the centre of Karin Richter and Andreas Weissenböck’s analysis in Chapter 7. Noting that often the binary choice between “British” or “American” pronunciation is made, despite English’s status as a global language, the authors outline the linguistic, pedagogical, geopolitical and social/psychological aspects informing the selection of a given accent before providing the results of an online survey. The final contribution to this first part of the book is by Lee McCallum, the editor of the volume. In her discourse-focused study of the experiences of native-speaking EFL teachers in Spain, she examines the narratives of her interviewees through the prism of socio-political and economic aspects, thus uncovering valuable information about the broader professional identity of practitioners in that context.

Part Two of the book, “Exploring Challenges and Practices in Primary Education”, is divided into four chapters. The first contribution of this section, Chapter 8 (titled “Benefits and Challenges of Learning and Teaching English: The Case of Student Teachers in France”) focuses on the impact of the 2016 decision ensuring that English would be taught in French primary schools. As such, Jill Kay Partridge Salomon and Sophie Dufossé Sournin examine the ramifications of this decision on teacher education, using their own institution, the Teacher Training Institute of Limoges, as a case study. They provide valuable hints and tips for any institution or individual seeking to accommodate similar changes to their professional reality.

Chapter 9 of the volume returns to Poland. Using both questionnaire and interview-based approaches with EFL practitioners from primary and secondary schools, Agnieszka Kałdonek-Crnjaković examines teachers’ perspectives regarding the impact that Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) can exert on pupils’ learning of additional languages.

With the title “Building Young Learners’ Plurilingual and Pluricultural Repertoire: An Analysis of EFL Textbooks’ Speaking Activities”, the contribution by

Maria Daniela Cifone Ponte pays specific attention to those textbooks used by sixth-year primary school pupils in La Rioja, Spain. Using the definitions offered by the 2018 Companion Volume to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), she seeks to examine how relevant cultural aspects are incorporated into textbooks used at that level. Young learners are also the focus of Chapter 11, where Olga Vraštilová utilises a mixed-methods approach to ascertain information about supplementary and leisure-time reading habits of a group of fourth-graders in Czechia.

The third part of the volume, “Exploring Pedagogic Practices and Models in Secondary and Tertiary Education”, is also comprised of four chapters. The first contribution to this section, Chapter 12, provides a comparative overview of three EU member states: Austria, France, and Sweden. Here, observing the modern-day prevalence of communicative language teaching across Europe, Alexandra Schurz and Marion Coumel use an interview-based approach to examine EFL teachers’ own perspectives and experiences of the issue, paying particular attention to the presence of English outside the classroom and how this could potentially influence classroom-based activities.

In Maria del Mar Suárez and Ferran Gesa’s chapter on “Integrating Foreign Language Vocabulary Research into the Curriculum: Extensive Video Viewing in the University Classroom”, the authors report on the findings of a research study which tested how a television series could be used to aid vocabulary learning among undergraduates. In addition to encouraging the students to self-reflect on their learning process, the authors also provide advice and sample materials on how practitioners could incorporate similar initiatives into their pedagogical practice.

Chapter 14 focuses on theoretical approaches. Here, Niall Curry analyses the interplay between corpus-based contrastive linguistics and language pedagogy, reflecting on various common points and providing suggestions regarding future academic and practical implications. The subsequent chapter by Eloy Romero Muñoz, “Teaching Form in the Action-Oriented Classroom: Can-Do!” is also centred on theory-based aspects. In this instance, the study focuses on the intersection between usage-based linguistics (UBL) (Diessel, 2017) and the ‘can-do’ descriptive statements of the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020).

The four chapters of the final section of the book focus on “Exploring Broad Applications of Technology-Enhanced Teaching and Learning”, which is particularly relevant in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the rapid global switch to online education. In Chapter 16, Dara Tafazoli examines how English teachers in Spain view computer-assisted language learning (CALL) as based on the data of an online survey.

Using the SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) framework, he outlines the benefits and challenges of increased technological integration, together with some pointers for its practical implementation. The following chapter, "ICT Training of Pre-service Bilingual Teachers: Present, Past, and Future Needs", is also based in the Spanish context. Here, María Elena Gómez-Parra uses a mixed-methods analysis to elucidate how these pre-service teacher trainees view technology, not only in terms of their perceptions and skills but also with regard to the relevant infrastructure required and the approaches needed to integrate digital aspects into the teaching and learning process.

The penultimate contribution to the volume (Chapter 18) also focuses on pre-service teachers, this time at the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia. With COVID-19 restrictions meaning that teaching placements had to move online, Lara Burazer and Janez Skela utilise surveys and reflective essays completed by trainee EFL teachers to provide a panorama of the insights obtained at that time. The nineteenth and final chapter of the book is by Georgios Vlassios Kormpas. Noting the specific role and importance of English in the Greek context, his study is based on both surveys and interviews with teachers and school owners of private English-language institutions in Greece, and portrays the past, present, and future impact of technology in that domain.

As illustrated by the breadth and depth of the chapters summarised above, one of the most impacting aspects of this book is its diversity. This is apparent not only in the different research studies presented, but also in the number of EU member states featured (11), and in the wide range of affiliations represented by the contributing authors, thus echoing the volume's pan-European subtitle. A mixture of theoretical and applied methodologies are featured, and each chapter offers a new and useful contribution. Accordingly, given its quality, content, and scope, the appeal of this edited volume certainly extends well beyond researchers and practitioners in the domain of English Language Teaching. Indeed, those with wider interests in multilingualism and language policy will surely also find relevant and insightful information, thus contributing to their broader academic and professional development and practice.

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## **ISSUE METRICS**

### ***ESNBU Volume 8, Issue 2, 2022***

*Submitted: 27 articles*

*Rejected: 15 articles*

*Withdrawn: 2 articles*

*Published: 10 articles*

*Acceptance rate: 37%*