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Literacy skills in language education

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From the Editors

Recent developments in educational systems worldwide as well as dynamic global changes in information and communication technologies not only confirm how significant a role literacy skills play in our participation in educational and professional lives, but also how extensive the evolution of the concept has been. Broadly defined, literacy skills are interpreted as the skills of reading and writing as well as oral skills involved in one's interaction with a variety of text types by constructing, integrating, and critiquing meanings situated in different cultural, social, and disciplinary environments. Investigating literacy skills thus concerns their wide implementation, be it in mono- or multilingual, print or multimodal/digital contexts, when taught initially, developed through all the stages of education or maintained as lifelong competencies. It is such a view of literacy skills that the authors of the articles in the current volume subscribe to by addressing a wide spectrum of topics within their research interests.

The specific topics covered in the present volume include: pluriliteracies in CLIL instruction (Letizia Cinganotto and Daniela Cuccurullo), differences in institutional discourses and their relationship with education (Mehdi Galiere), literacy development programmes (Ildikó Szabó), sociocultural perspective in defining literacy (Izabela Dąbrowska), modelling online reading in L1 and L2 (Liliana Katarzyna Piasecka), strategic text processing in L2 reading (Halina Chodkiewicz), teacher role in developing L2 reading skills (Melanie Ellis), reading as a component of academic literacy skills (Anna Kiszczak), reading literacy in external exam context (Karolina Kotorowicz-Jasińska and Małgorzata Krzemińska-Adamek), impact of extensive reading on writing skills (Abir Ouafi), and academic writing skills and EAP courses (Magdalena Trepczyńska).

The editors believe that the current volume will enable both scholars and students delve into the reflection on the complexity of the literacy issues explored.

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Rethinking literacy in the 21st century: A pluriliteracies approach to CLIL[1]

ABSTRACT
The paper focuses on the concept of literacy in the 21st century, which takes the shape of "pluriliteracies" in order the meet the challenges of the knowledge society.
A project promoted by the European Centre of Modern Languages in Graz titled "Pluriliteracies Teaching for Learning" will be mentioned and described, referring to the conceptual framework aimed at deeper learning by interpreting and revisiting CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) methodology.
Keywords: literacy, pluriliteracies, CLIL, 21st century learner

1. Introduction

The term literacy is difficult to explain, as it has many shades of meaning and reflects a long historical, philosophical and educational tradition. What is meant by literacy, or to be literate in today's society, remains a matter of heated debate. The analysis of the international academic literature (García, Bartlett, & Kleifgen, 2007; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008; Crockett, Jukes, & Churches, 2011) reveals that literacy is a complex phenomenon which has attracted attention in many different disciplines.

For most of its history in English, the word 'literate' meant to be 'familiar with literature' or, more generally, 'well educated, learned'. Only since the late nineteenth century has it also come to refer to the abilities to read and write text,

[1] The paper has been developed jointly by the authors. In particular, Letizia Cinganotto is author of Abstract, Paragraphs 3 and 4; Daniela Cuccurullo is author of Paragraphs 1 and 2.

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while maintaining its broader meaning of being knowledgeable or educated in a particular field or fields. In 2002, the *United Nations Literacy Decade* acknowledged the place of literacy at the heart of lifelong learning, affirming that:

> Literacy is crucial to the acquisition, by every child, youth and adult, of essential life skills that enable them to address the challenges they can face in life, and represents an essential step in basic education, which is an indispensable means for effective participation in the societies and economies of the twenty-first century (p. 3).

2. Literacy in the 21st Century

In the 21st century "literacy as a concept has proved to be both complex and dynamic, continuing to be interpreted and defined in a multiplicity of ways" (UNESCO, 2006, p. 1). Broadly speaking, it has been recognized as "the ability to understand and employ printed information in daily activities, at home, at work and in the community" (UNESCO, 2006, p. 157). In other words, literacy is no longer just a question about being able to read but "is a more complex grouping of skills" (UNESCO, 2006, p. 148). There are four discrete understandings of literacy:

1. "literacy as an autonomous set of skills;
2. literacy as applied, practiced and situated;
3. literacy as a learning process;
4. literacy as text"[2].

"These broad areas of enquiry accommodate almost all theoretical understandings of literacy nowadays" (UNESCO, 2006, p. 148).

The PISA Report (OECD, 2009) defined reading literacy as: "understanding, using, reflecting on and engaging with written texts, in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential, and to participate in society" (p. 10), which implies the challenges facing today's learners with particular regard to reading and writing texts. The ability to convey information in writing, as well as orally, is one of human kind's greatest assets. The discovery that information can be shared across time and space, without the limits of the strength of one's voice, the size of a venue and the accuracy of memory, has been fundamental to human progress. And yet, learning how to read and write requires effort because it cannot be achieved without mastering a collection of complex skills (OECD, 2009). Success in reading provides the foundation for achievement in other subject areas and for full participation in adult life. How can we guarantee that our students acquire such complex skills so as to become well prepared to meet the changes and challenges of the future? Can they analyze, reason and communicate their ideas effectively? Have they found the kinds of interests they can pursue throughout their lives as productive members of the economy and society?

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[2] UNESCO (2006). *Education for All Global Monitoring Report*, p. 148.

The advance of technology has led to a proliferation of 'literacies'. The following terms appear in the literature related to the 21st century literacies (cf. Rosenthal Tolisano, 2013):

- "Basic Literacies (reading & writing)
- Media Literacy
- Information Literacy
- Network Literacy
- Global Literacy
- Financial Literacy
- Cultural Literacy
- Digital Citizenship".

These literacies characterize the informational society, as they represent the foundational literacies set by the World Economic Forum (2016) (Fig. 1); however, to fully develop the global competence needed today (OECD, 2018), one more literacy should be acquired: the emotional literacy, "the ability to understand one's own emotions, the ability to listen to others and empathize with their emotions, and the ability to express emotions" (Steiner & Perry, 1997, p. 11).

"To be emotionally literate is to be able to handle emotions in a way that improves one's personal power and improves the quality of life all around. The emotional literacy improves relationships, creates new opportunities among people, makes co-operative work possible, and facilitates the feeling of community, in order to understand and appreciate the perspectives and world views of others and engaging in open, appropriate and effective interactions across cultures" (OECD, 2018).

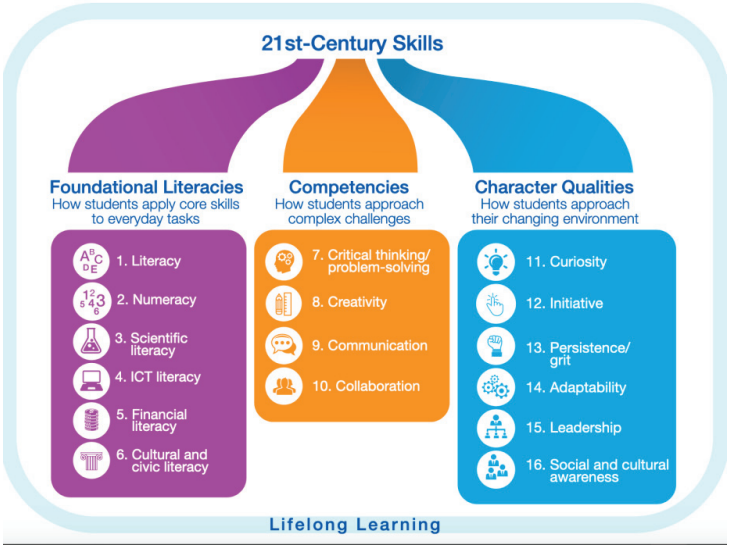

Fig. 1 - World Economic Forum, 2016 *New Vision for Education*

This proliferation of literacies determines the need to manage and integrate and inter-relate them, which means going beyond the mere and simple idea of literacy towards different concepts of multiliteracies and pluriliteracies. According to *The Common European Framework of Reference* (Council of Europe, 2001/2018) there is a distinction between the two terms: 'multilingualism', that is "the coexistence of different languages at the social or individual level and 'plurilingualism', that is the dynamic and developing linguistic repertoire of an individual user/learner. Plurilingualism is presented in the CEFR as an uneven and changing competence, in which the user/learner's resources in one language or variety may be very different in nature from those in another. However, the fundamental point is that plurilinguals have a single, inter-related, repertoire that they combine with their general competences and various strategies in order to accomplish tasks". Analogously, we can make the same distinction between the two terms: "multiliteracy", that is the coexistence of different literacies and "pluriliteracy", that is the complex, dynamic and inter-related literacy repertoire of an individual learner, a new competence to develop.

In order to clarify better the concept of multiliteracy, we canquote Goldoni (2008):

> Multiliteracy is a meaningful social and collaborative experience where students can work together with and learn from their peers and more experienced mentors. Multiliteracy is determined by social and cultural conventions that can be used and adapted based on specific purposes, modes and audiences. Therefore, a multiliteracy-based curriculum […] prepar[es] students to analyze multiple forms of text, discourses […] in multiple contexts and modes for multiple purposes and multiple audiences (p. 67).

The "Pluriliteracy" concept, on the contrary, "captures not only literacy continua with different interrelated axes, but also an emphasis on Literacy practices in sociocultural contexts, the hybridity of literacy practices afforded by new technologies, and the increasing interrelationship of semiotic systems. (García et al., 2007). It is a plural notion encompassing the manifold of meanings and dimensions of the before mentioned undeniably vital competencies. Such a view, responding to recent economic, political and social transformations, including globalization, and the advancement of information and communication technologies, recognizes that there are many practices of literacy embedded in different cultural processes, personal circumstances and collective structures" (UNRIC, 2018).

3. "Pluriliteracies Teaching for Deeper Learning": a project promoted by ECML[3]

The 21st century student has to face a wide range of challenges, therefore he/she must develop a large number of literacies or *pluriliteracies*.

This is the focus of a project promoted by the ECML (European Centre for Modern Languages), in Graz, titled "Pluriliteracies Teaching for Learning" (PTL), coordinated by Oliver Meyer and Do Coyle, aiming at interpreting CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) (Mehisto et al., 2008; Coyle et al., 2010; Cinganotto, 2018; Cinganotto & Cuccurullo, 2019) from a wider and deeper perspective.

In fact, in recent decades, research has focused mainly on the linguistic competence of CLIL students. Studies on the impact of CLIL on the disciplinary learning outcomes, although still limited, indicate that CLIL students remain at the same level, or under certain conditions can improve their outcomes compared to "non CLIL" students.

The use of language to learn a subject and to progress in the construction of knowledge and in the process of elaborating meanings must be supported by both linguistic and pedagogical foundations. Within this framework, CLIL can contribute to the pragmatic reduction of the so-called "functional illiteracy". This is the core of the PTL model (Meyer et al., 2015; Meyer et al., 2018; Meyer & Coyle, 2017), elaborated by the experts of the *Graz Group* at the European Centre for Modern Languages, according to which progress along the path of knowledge towards a deeper understanding of meanings requires a greater mastery of the mechanisms underlying discursive practices ("discourse"), as well as mastery of the specific "subject literacies", i.e., the literacies of the single disciplines.

Generally in DNL (non-linguistic subject) classes the subject teacher does not focus on the quality of literacy related to the specific discipline; in foreign language classes, this aspect is even considered irrelevant. Therefore, according to the experts of the Graz Group, if literacy were at the centre of the "learning agenda", regardless of the disciplines, there would be a fundamental change in the way of conceiving the lesson, which would facilitate deep learning.

In this regard, the PTL model integrates the 4 C (*Communication, Cognition, Culture, Content*) model of Do Coyle (Coyle, 2007) and draws a map of literacy and linguistic progression in CLIL contexts, acting as a guide for the design and implementation of teaching activities.

CLIL teaching also involves the ability to describe and explain representations and symbolic forms (e.g., a diagram or a map) in the foreign language, in the main

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[3] One of the authors (Letizia Cinganotto) is a member of the PTL consultancy team and is grateful to the *Pluriliteracies Graz Group*, in particular to Oliver Meyer, Do Coyle and Kevin Schuck. This contribution gets inspiration and has been adapted from the materials produced within the PTL project. The ECML webpage of the project: http://pluriliteracies.ecml.at/.

language of instruction, or in one's mother tongue. Students must therefore be guided to understand, translate, construct, rework and manipulate disciplinary content using all the various codes and communication channels they can benefit from.

In 21st century society it is natural to use a plurality of codes within the same communicative exchange: a continuous flow of languages, dialects, registers and semiotic systems characterizes our increasingly complex societies, where languages are not crystallized in diglossic situations, but forms of translanguaging, code-switching and code-mixing represent the daily routine.

As already mentioned, it is therefore necessary to facilitate and support this flexible use of the language and the exploitation of various communication codes.

For example, in the case of science, students must be able to write scientific reports on investigations or experiments. This requires the use of particular linguistic structures and textual genres, linked to specific disciplinary knowledge which is typical of that specific disciplinary area.

Each subject is characterized by a particular textual genre, with well-defined models and practices, which integrate written texts, oral productions, images, graphics, etc. During the learning process, students are stimulated to activate various cognitive discourse functions through the implementation of different activities (classified as: doing, organizing, explaining, arguing), which require the use of specific operational verbs, as illustrated in the "pluriliteracies wheel" shown in Fig. 2 below:

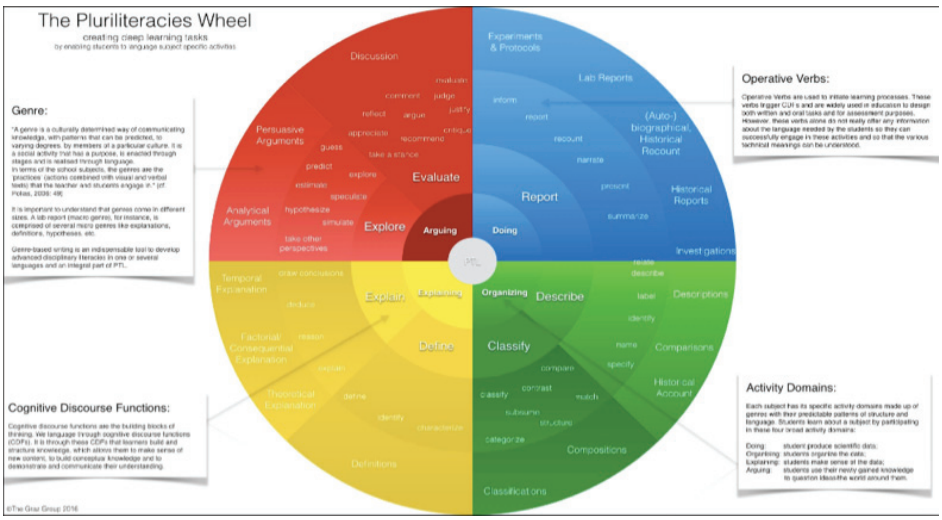

Fig. 2 – The Pluriliteracies wheel

Learning is the result of the intersection of a series of flows involving the personal growth of the student engaged in communication activities

(communicating continuum), which represent the expression and verbalization of cognitive processes activated (conceptualising continuum), under the constant guidance of the teacher (mentoring continuum), who implements a series of strategies to support learning (designing & evaluating, scaffolding, feedback, assessment), as illustrated in the image below, which is an effective synthesis of the PTL model (Fig. 3), which includes 4 Continua:

- communicating continuum
- mentoring continuum
- conceptualizing continuum
- personal growth continuum.

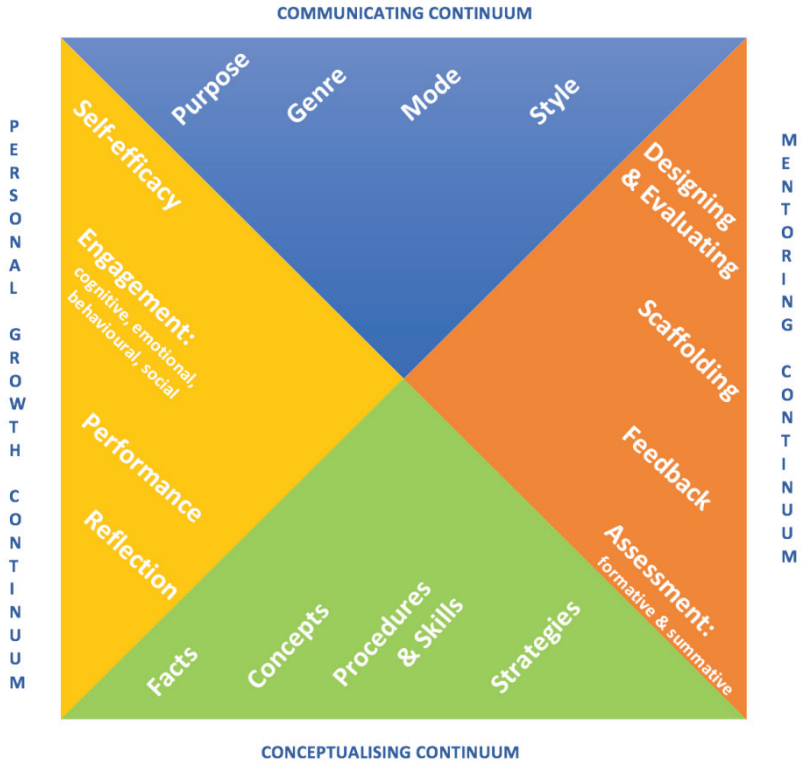

Fig. 3 – The 4 "continua"

The *Pluriliteracies Graz Group* has recently developed a new 3 D model, highlighting the ecological dimension of pluriliteracies, which incorporates affective factors, learner engagement, mastery-orientation and reflection in order to emphasize the impact of well-being and mindsets on deeper learning and personal growth.

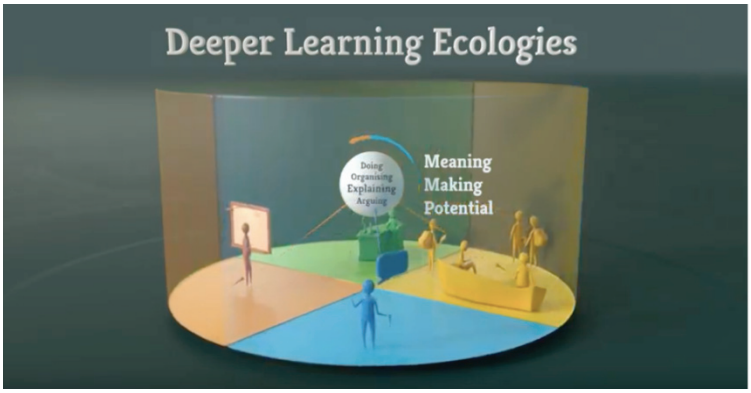

Fig. 4 – The new *Pluriliteracies* model[4]

4. Conclusions

The new and different paradigm of teaching and learning in the 21st Century culture and society requires the development of a spectrum of cognitive, critical, digital and emotional intelligences as a mindset and head-ware issue in a digital landscape through the cultivation of a pluriliterate citizenship.

In this context, the new pluriliteracies approach to CLIL will not only render content knowledge linguistically accessible yet cognitively challenging, but contribute to developing academic linguistic proficiency, a competence which is transferrable across languages and disciplines, thus redesigning and empowering the traditional concept of literacy.

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[4] The video describing the new model is available here: https://youtu.be/QSQisLoOcQE.

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The role of education in the discourses of the EU and of alternative schooling institutions

ABSTRACT
The paper discusses two different approaches to education and the way they are embedded in different discourses on education. The market-oriented approach is compared to the democratic approach. In the paper, the discourse of the European Union is considered as an example of hegemonic neoliberal discourse while the discourse produced by the Summerhill School and the Self-Managed High School of Paris is addressed as a counter-hegemonic discourse. Drawing on Critical Discourse Studies scholars such as Norman Fairclough, and critical pedagogic approaches such as Basil Bernstein's and Paulo Freire's, it will be shown that the difference in the ways these institutions represent the social world around them have a strong influence on their discourses on what education is for and should be like. For the European Union, education is a utilitarian means facilitating the adaptation of society to the economic system through the acquisition of predefined skills, while for the democratic approach it is rather a practice developing common decision-making and empowerment through an understanding of the world as a whole.
Keywords: education, critical pedagogy, critical discourse analysis, democratic education, *Europe 2020*.

1. Introduction

The preliminary question that I would like to answer is why bothering with investigating the neoliberal discourse of education.

My claim is that there is a project called democratic education that will provide means for learners to transform the world they live in according to their interests. In Europe, the democratic pedagogical approach is foreclosed by the current neoliberal discourse of the European Union, emphasizing the free movement of workforce and generalized competition.

However, I shall also argue, there exist possibilities of resistance to this discourse.

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The focus of this paper should be on the extent to which people may self identify with it. Even if one is critical of the neo-liberal discourse, its arguments and dispositions have been interiorized to some extent.

To illustrate how the neoliberal discourse of the EU institutions permeates common sense knowledge, I will take the example of an independent Hungarian university student organization (viz. Hallgatoi Halozat, literary "student network"). While it argues against the policy of the Hungarian government on education (such as forcing students to sign a contract to stay in the country for an exemption of tuition fee, in particular degrees seen as "productive" therefore worthy of state support): it claims that "The student contract also violates the European Union's fundamental rights, especially the basic principle of the free circulation of workforce included in the Lisbon Treaty Treaty"[1] (Hallgatói Halozat, 2013 [translation by the author])."

Let me expose the ideological investment this logic is embedded in: First, the free circulation of workforce is only implied by the Lisbon Treaty, articulated in the ideology expressed by the "free circulation of people" (European Commission, 2013). Let us be reminded that the Lisbon Treaty (signed in 2007 in order to make for the TEC rejected by French and Dutch voters) is articulating the institutional architecture of the EU. Second, an important part was omitted. The full statement of that EU treaty is actually "the free movement of *people*, *goods*, *services* and *capital*" (European Commission, 2013). The selectivity of the document issued by the Student Organization shows how dependent our resistances can be upon neoliberal frameworks of thinking.

In order to explore how to challenge neoliberal discourses on education by counter-hegemonic educational discourses and practices, I will:

1. Define an outline of what a democratic education should look like with a focus on critical literacy as a theory in action, based on the already existing practice of democratic education in contrast to present-day market-oriented education.
2. I will discuss the way the power relations of the late capitalist system at the European and local levels shape the discourses on education in the specific texts I have chosen for my analysis.
3. For the particular analysis, I will focus on examples from the Europe *2020* documents of the EU as the key text representing the neo-liberal discourse on education and analyze the representation of the social world in the European Commission's texts that should shape the education practices the EU sees desirable at present. I will expose the ideological investments of the EU document against the practices of two existing alternative educational

[1] In the original: A hallgatói szerződés ellentmond az uniós alapjogoknak is, különösen a munkaerő szabad áramlására vonatkozó, a Lisszaboni Szerződésben rögzített alapelvnek

institutions, the Summerhill School in the UK and the Paris Self-Managed Highschool in France. I want to demonstrate the possibility of a counter-discourse, enabled by critical literacy and critical pedagogy, to resist the hegemony of the European Union's neoliberal discourse on education, conceivable from within a broader social resistance against oppressions.

2. Outline of a democratic education with a focus on critical literacy

There are different understandings of literacy. The most widespread understanding is the one that Harvey Graff calls the literacy myth. According to the dominant logic, literacy is seen by education planners as a skill whose aim is to bring "economic development" and "individual advancement" (Graff, 1991, p. xxxviii; as cit. in Behrent, 2012, p. 219). Because it supposes literacy as a universal skill that should apply in all and any context, it is possible to believe that literacy is a matter of some innate intellectual capacity. That is, the pedagogic practice that should follow from the conceptualization of literacy as a skill will consider and treat the student isolated from the real world. In other words, this kind of literacy aims at "containing" within the status quo rather than "liberating" the student from its dominating logic (Freire, 1968).

Another understanding of literacy is critical literacy. Critical literacy counts as a revolutionary, liberating pedagogical action, in that it would result in a schooling that produces participants who can reflect on their lived experiences through developing a critical awareness of the textual production of life.

It consists of a re-appropriation of priorities in the classification of subjects (Bernstein, 2008) in the curriculum to fight class inequalities perpetuated by education and to allow for learners to understand reality as changing and therefore changeable. Subjects should be classified in such a way that education allow any learner to understand reality as a changing and changeable whole, while it should avoid at all costs compartmentalization as it is done nowadays and challenge it because:

> this method of work has also left us as legacy the habit of observing natural objects and processes in isolation apart from their connections with the vast whole; of observing them in repose, not in motion, as constraints, not as essentially variables; in their death, not in their life (Engels, 1970, p. 128, as cit. in Knopp, 2012, p. 16).

This means that in democratic schooling, a dialectical approach should be applied for literacy as well as an alternative to the compartmentalization of literacy into different skills. More concretely, according to the Russian-Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky, the difference between critical awareness or reflection and compartmentalization is comparable to:

The chemical analysis of water into hydrogen and oxygen, neither of which possess the properties of the whole and each of which possesses properties not

present in the whole. The student applying this method in looking for some explanation of some property of water –why it extinguishes fire, for example, will find to his surprise that hydrogen burns and that oxygen sustains fire (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 4, as cit. in Knopp, 2012, pp. 17–18).

Critical literacy also entails empowering students through creating the space for them to make decisions on how and what they learn. This would mean that the education process should take place in an environment favoring cooperation over competition, the latter is the ultimate value shaping all activities in neo-liberalism that, according to Bernard Legros and Jean-Noël Delplanque, requires the education system to prepare the students in fact for the suffering of their future when they will be "judged according to the techno-economic criteria of profitability" (Legros & Delplanque, 2009, p. 69).

These major principles of liberating education are discussed in details in Paulo Freire's educational Praxis. He makes an important point about democratic education: it does not limit itself to making learners intellectually conscious of the world and the relations between the social groups, (what he calls emergence) but it also involves acting upon the world thanks to the gained awareness, inside and outside the classroom (what he calls intervention). Thus, praxis is the simultaneous "action and reflexion of men and women upon their world in order to transform it" (Freire, 1968, as cit. in Johnson & Terzakis, 2012, p. 195). The school itself becomes the realm of participating in such a democratic, liberating practice.

3. Relations between the capitalist system, power relations at the European and local levels, and the way these are embedded in the discourses on education.

First of all, I would like to define Neo-liberalism or late capitalism: drawing on David Harvey, I see it as a reconfiguration of the mode of capital accumulation that started in the 1970s and 1980s, leading to the dominant mode of production in the past two decades, characterized by what Harvey calls "flexible accumulation" of wealth and which from the perspective of the field of cultural production is usually labeled as '"the knowledge economy". The various institutions then shape the corresponding subjectivities in accordance with the values of "flexibility"," lifelong learning" and "diversity" (Harvey, 1992, p. 150).

The texts will be analyzed based on Norman Fairclough's model of Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1992, 2011). For him, particular ways of representing reality (the actual discourses) are shaped by their institutions of production. The emerging texts can have more or less immediate effects on reality; depending on the power potential of those that are authorized by the given texts as "experts" of what comes articulated as "knowledge", i.e., the expected ways of doing thing, such as educating children in the 21st century in Europe. One of the most relevant "factors" that determine whether texts have an effect on

the institutional changes is the position of power, especially political power, of the actual institution issuing a document. Therefore it is crucial to study the texts of the EU *2020* strategy that is endowed with hegemonic power for the member state's education policies in the couple of years ahead of us.

It is telling how the EU *2020* document silences the few existing projects that imagine the political possibility of a democratic education, which doesn't appeal to the violence implicated by the dominant neoliberal discourse of meritocracy that rests on the value of competition.

Some local projects of democratic education are however possible. And indeed, what I have found in my research for existing models of such schooling are the particular examples of the Paris Self-Managed Highschool (Lycée Autogéré de Paris, or LAP) and Summerhill, UK.

4. The European Commission's way of representing the social world shapes its texts and, in turn, education practices.

I am going to focus on the most important ideological features of the discourse of the EU on education as articulated in the *Europe 2020* strategy.

The highest level EC document starts with the descriptive claim that there is a 'discrepancy' between the speed of economy and politics over the past two years to be solved in the EU. The systemic naming of the two decades ("it") as the grammatical subject instead of naming the logical subject of the dramatic changes, actually responsible for the dramatic figures of unemployment and debts, directs the critical gaze away early on from discussing what is implicated as crisis, how it has come about, towards the pragmatic requirement to deal with this "challenge", reassuring the reader that the "burden" of the crisis is eventually a matter of skilful "management". Here is the actual formulation of the social situation calling for the issuing of the EU document:

> Economic realities are moving faster than political realities [...] the last two years have left millions unemployed, it has brought a burden of debt that will last for many years. It has brought new pressures on our social cohesion. It has also exposed some fundamental truths about the challenges that the European economy faces. And in the meantime, the global economy is moving forward (European Commission, 2010, p. 2).

What is most striking in the above excerpt is the logic according to which economy and politics are two distinct phenomena, each with their own distinct pace. Yet in so far as economy is simply stated as the field that happens to be "moving forward" within a particular span of time economy comes to be represented as a naturally moving object along a trajectory that happens to move twice as fast as politics. On the other hand politics comes to be positioned by this logic as the field that is trying to catch up, live up to the challenge. Hence politics comes to be distinct from the field of economy once again, indirectly implicated

to be marked by some agency. The social event of the crisis is thus represented as a natural phenomenon that happened without any social actors, only as a result of time passing by: "the last two years". The pronoun "it" refers to the span of time not the actual social actor responsible for the results of the crisis. This is an ideological mitigation of social responsibility (Fairclough, 2003, p. 144).

According to this logic, the claim that training people in accordance with the "need" of the job market will resolve unemployment follows. This discourse is an ideological myth: it is aimed at strengthening the power of the employers over everyone's education. In so far as unemployment is argued to pertain to the "youth" in general, it is "reasonable" to link it up with the changes in the field of education that should now be forced to "deliver right skills". Ironically "all relevant stakeholders" come to mean the job market, i.e. the employers, quite exclusively.

> The most pressing challenges for Member States are to address the needs of the economy and focus on solutions to tackle fast-rising youth unemployment. In this communication, emphasis is being placed on delivering the right skills for employment, increasing the efficiency and inclusiveness of our education and training institutions and on working collaboratively with all relevant stakeholders. (European Commission, 2012b, p. 2)

A more interesting feature of the Commission's discourse is its representation of foreign language learning as a "basic skill". What is interesting here is not that much the categorization of learning (foreign) languages as a matter of skills, that is in line with their general perception of teaching/learning. The European Commission bases its argument on the widely shared common sense knowledge that learning/teaching languages is a matter of learning skills that should help workers adapt to the employers needs in a unified and deregulated European multicultural and multilingual labour market. What is more noteworthy now is that the Commission legitimize the need of inclusion of foreign language skills based on the assumption that there are not enough people speaking foreign languages because of the failure of language pedagogy (only):

> In a world of international exchanges, the ability to speak foreign languages is a factor for competitiveness. Languages are more and more important to increase levels of employability9 and mobility of young people, and poor language skills are a major obstacle to free movement of workers. Businesses also require the language skills needed to function in the global marketplace. This means that after several years of studying at school, the majority of young Europeans are not able to have a simple conversation in the foreign languages they have learned (European Commission, 2012a, p. 5)

We can notice immediately that "international exchanges" are not meant to imply tourist travels of leisure or cultural exchanges of entertainment but purely work-related exchanges taking place through the mediation of the markets.

The European Commission is not using its habitual discourse on cultural openness and diversity any longer. The utilitarian view is now hegemonic. The content of language teaching should by the force of this logic lead to a focus on practical and communicative skills for they are the ones that will be needed in such a context of increased mobility within the labour market – at the same time always assuming that the default case in communication "competences" by definition is "understanding":

> The choice of languages and *emphasis on competences* should be inspired by a clear vision of their value for mobility and for work in enterprises and organisations active at the international level, *with a focus on practical, communicative skills* [emphasis added] (*European Commission,* 2012a, p. 24)

> For language skills to translate into better job opportunities, it will also be important to *ensure a more accurate targeting of the language competences* of young people. Rather than aiming at an unrealistic 'native speaker' level, what they learn must enable them *to perform the tasks* they are likely to face in further education or in professional life [emphasis added] (European Commission, 2012a, p. 6,)

The "unrealism" of the native speaker myth, argued, ironically by critical literacy scholarship (Birdsong, 1992) as *really* unrealistic and contradictory because appealing to the ideology of the universal innate norm, is here contrasted with the *realism* of using language in "professional life", thus the effect produced that there seems to be no alternative in between those two possibilities, one of them even being in the realm of the impossible.

5. Counter-discourses resisting the hegemonic discourse on education

The Summerhill and the LAP documents I have chosen are "Introduction to Summerhill" (Summerhill School, 2013) and the book published by the LAP for its twentieth year anniversary (Lycée Autogéré de Paris, 2012).

One of the roles of the school is to teach democratic experiences in order to allow learners to take into consideration the common good, instead of letting the adults impose their rules without debate, in an authoritarian fashion.

This transformative perception of education above all entails the practicing of critical literacy on a daily basis. The Summerhill School wants to achieve this objective by making school into a site of affect where students to learn through emotion and love, through engaging with issues relevant for their immediate context rather than from top-down schoolbooks.

> We can pose a few awkward questions. Why does man hate and kill in war when animals do not? Why does cancer increase? Why are there so many suicides? So many insane sex crimes? Why the hate that is racism? Why the need for drugs to enhance life? Why backbiting and spite? Why is sex obscene and a leering joke? Why degradation and torture? Why the continuance of religions that have long ago lost their love and hope and charity? […] *I ask these questions because those so often asked by teachers are the*

> *unimportant ones*, [emphasis added] the ones about French or ancient history or what not when these subjects don't matter a jot compared to the larger questions of life's fulfilment – of man's inner happiness.(Summerhill School, 2013)

The French project, the LAP, undermines the EU'S claim to "transversal skills" by turning them into possible tools for critical literacy that are aimed at practicing democracy through debating. This position acknowledges the diverse social and cultural background of the students and puts the negotiation of those differences into the center of its curriculum:

> It [transversal skills] corresponds to general know-how implemented by one or many teachers in various disciplines. It can go beyond the subject limits and can also take place in the base group, the weekly assembly in which all the learners are incited to speak, to argue, and to finally vote on the propositions made about the good functioning of our structure.[2] (Lycée Autogéré de Paris, 2012, p. 57, translated by the author)

Transversal skills are important to achieve what they call "transdisciplanarity", i.e. a range of educational approaches which break boundaries between subjects. It is hoped to allow students to see the objects studied as "alive" and "global" (Lycée Autogéré de Paris, 2012, p. 55). Re-establishing bridges between subjects (ibid, 50) is not achived by advocating pluridisciplinary approaches as they only bring two subjects closer without breaking their boundaries. It can be achieved by a transdisciplinary approach that means "activities that, in high school, are embedded in knowledge or skills indifferently to boundaries set between disciplines" (Lycée Autogéré de Paris 2012, p. 55). At the same time, even the ideal of pluridisciplinarity or interdisciplinarity is limited by the final exam imperative the LAP must follow as a dependent institution from the French ministry of education (Lycée Autogéré de Paris 2012, p. 53). The dilemma for LAP is resolved by a compromise: transdisciplinary activities take place outside the curriculum, under the form of various democratic practices and optional projects blending subjects together, and is embedded in critical literacy since they ask general questions about the meaning of elements from the social world, such as "the city", the idea of "west" or "totalitarianism" (Lycée Autogéré de Paris 2009, p. 44). Pluridisciplinarity on the other hand takes place in institutional subjects such as the *Travaux Personnels Encadrés*, which goal is to add one subject to the final examination, i.e. the *Baccalauréat*, and for which two teachers from respectively two different disciplines bring together their knowledge and experience, hence the unchanging boundaries between subjects:

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[2] In the Original « Cette activité correspond à des savoir-faire mis en œuvre dans plusieurs disciplines et peut être menée à bien par un ou plusieurs enseignants. Elle peut échapper au cadre disciplinaire stricto sensu et avoir lieu aussi dans le groupe de base, réunion hebdomadaire où tous les élèves sont amenés à prendre la parole, argumenter et finalement voter des propositions relatives au bon fonctionnement de notre structure ».

> Whereas we benefit, according to our status inside the National Education system, from a total pedagogical freedom in the *seconde* class [the first of the three high school years], the *première* and *terminale* classes [the two last high school years] –preparing students for the *Baccalauréat* – follow a curriculum more in accordance to what is done elsewhere. It means that we have to follow more strictly the prescribed norm with a view to the examination the students will have to be confronted with at the end of the year, if we do not want them to be punished for a lack of practice. Interdisciplinarity does not take on the same form according to the different levels we deal with. (Lycée Autogéré de Paris 2012, p. 53, translation by the author)[3]

There lies the essential contradiction of a school like LAP that we can encounter in its discourse: it benefits from material support only if it follows the imperative of training students to fit the requirements of the state-imposed *Baccalauréat* exam, which is embedded in the neoliberal approach to education. It is torn between institutional imperatives and a liberating goal.

6. Conclusion

I have shown that the European commission conceives education according to a purely utilitarian logic, aimed at adapting education to a world-economy of "free movement" that is taken for granted as if available for anyone provided they acquire the "appropriate skills."

On the other hand, the alternative texts drawing from democratic education praxis are an optimistic break from this hegemonic neoliberal order in the sense that they step aside the discourses of meritocracy and argue for discourses of democratic participation in shaping the curriculum and the relations of interaction on a daily basis while at school. The question that remains though is: to what extent and how can such practices be introduced elsewhere?

A period of social and cultural crisis like the one we are currently going through can be a potentially good moment to try. Crises can bring to light the interiorized habitus of the workers of education and make them realize that adhering to the value of an individualized achievement promoted by the dominant ideology of competition is a form psychological and moral alienation which is trying to consolidate the system that is in fact in crisis as an effect of such values and institutions (Accardo, 2003). My reading of the current situation is not necessarily an instance of idealism. It is reinforced by what Myles Horton has said

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[3] In the original « Alors que nous disposons d'une liberté pédagogique totale en classe de seconde conformément à notre statut au sein de l'Education Nationale, les classes de première et de terminale –classes à examen – suivent un cursus plus en conformité avec ce qui se fait ailleurs. Cela suppose qu'en vue des épreuves auxquelles nos élèves seront confrontés lors de ces échéances, nous devons nous ranger davantage dans la norme prescrite si nous ne voulons pas qu'ils soient sanctionnés par manque d'entraînement. L'interdisciplinarité ne revêt donc pas la même forme si nous parlons de ces trois niveaux. »

about the chances of change in education, namely the importance of structural changes that follow from the dialectical relationship between habitus, i.e., the institutional practices and economic structures:

> It's the structures of society we've got to change. We don't change men's hearts… it doesn't make a great deal of difference what the people are; if they're in the system, they're going to function like the system dictates they function… I've been more concerned with structural changes than I have with changing the hearts of the people. (Horton & Freire, 1990, p. 103)

In Freire's articulation:

> when the revolutionary cry is in power, then revolutionary education will take on another dimension: what was before an education to contest and challenge [like alternative projects such as Summerhill and LAP] becomes a systematized education, recreating, helping the reinvention of society (Freire, 1970, as cit. in Gadotti, 1994, p. 63).

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Literacy in Hungary – a short country report based on ELINET framework

Abstract
The European Literacy Policy Network, ELINET, was established in February 2014 with the aim to improve literacy policies in order to reduce the number of children, young people and adults with low literacy skills. The network was founded to complete a two-year work programme targeted to develop evidence-based tools for all actors in the diverse field of literacy, as well as support existing and initiate new activities. ELINET intended to further expand and deepen the knowledge on literacy in working out separate Literacy Country Reports for all involved countries including Hungary based on ELINET framework. The aim of the article is to present the results of a study carried out in Hungary in the years 2014–2016 within the ELINET project'.
Keywords: country report, literacy performance, ELINET framework, policy areas, literacy instruction

This report on the state of literacy in Hungary is based on one of a series produced in 2015 and 2016 by ELINET, the European Literacy Policy Network. ELINET was founded in February 2014 and had 78 partner organisations in 28 European countries. ELINET aimed to improve literacy policies in its member countries in order to reduce the number of children, young people and adults with low literacy skills. One major tool to achieve this aim is to produce a set of reliable, up-to-date and comprehensive reports on the state of literacy in each country where ELINET has one or more partners, and to provide guidance towards improving literacy policies in those countries. The reports[1] are based (wherever possible)

[1] The article contains extracts of a document Ildikó Szabó & Veronika Szinger, contributing authors (in alphabetical order): Christine Garbe, Lucia Kákonyi, Dominique Lafontaine, David Mallows, Judit Reményi-Somlai, Gerry Shiel, Renate Valtin, Katalin Varga (2016). This document has been published by the European Literacy Policy Network (ELINET) and is available at: http://www.eli-net.eu/fileadmin/ELINET/Redaktion/user_upload/Hungary_Short_Report1.pdf.

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on available, internationally comparable performance data, as well as reliable national data provided (and translated) by our partners.

ELINET continues the work of the European Union High Level Group of Experts on Literacy (HLG) which was established by the European Commission in January 2011 and reported in September 2012[2]. All country reports produced by ELINET use a common theoretical framework which is described here: *ELINET Country Reports – Frame of Reference*[3].

The Country Reports are organised around the three recommendations of the HLG´s literacy report:

1. Creating a literate environment; 2. Improving the quality of teaching; 3. Increasing participation, inclusion (and equity)[4].

Within its two-year funding period ELINET has completed Literacy Country Reports for all 30 ELINET member countries. In most cases separate Long Reports for specific age groups (Children/Adolescents and Adults), in some cases comprehensive reports covering all age groups were published. Additionally, for all 30 countries, Short Reports were published covering all age groups, containing the summary of performance data and policy messages of the Long Reports.

This article introduces the results of age-group Children/Adolescents, and the results since the ending of the project regarding this age group.

2. Literacy Performance Data[5]

Hungary participated in IEA's PIRLS (4th graders reading comprehension) in 2001, 2006 and 2011, in OECD's PISA (15 year-olds' reading literacy) since 2000, and in OECD's PIAAC (adults' reading literacy) in 2012.

Hungary performed at the EU average in PIRLS 2011 (539 vs. 535 EU-average) and at the EU average in PISA 2012 (488 vs. 489 EU average). While the performance in PIRLS slightly decreased (4 points) between 2001 and 2011, it has slightly increased in PISA between 2000 and 2012. However, a great shock was caused by PISA 2015 results as they show that Hungarian students have an achievement much lower than their OECD counterparts.

In PIRLS, 19% of students performed at or below the Low benchmark on overall reading. This is very similar to the EU average (20%). In Hungary, 12% of

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[2] In the following, the report of the EU High Level Group of Experts on Literacy is referred as "HLG report". The report can be downloaded under the link: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/school/doc/literacy-report_en.pdf.

[3] See http://www.eli-net.eu/research/country-reports/.

[4] Equity was added by ELINET.

[5] See http://www.eli-net.eu/fileadmin/ELINET/Redaktion/user_upload/Hungary_Short_Report1.pdf, p. 8.

students achieve at the Advanced benchmark. This is above the EU average (9%). Hungary's standard deviation of 78 is 8 points higher than the EU-24 average, indicating a wider spread of achievement in Hungary. The proportion of low-performing readers was even higher in 2000: it gradually and drastically decreased between 2000 and 2011 (from nearly 40% in 2001 to 29% in 2011). In PISA 2012, the percentage of low-performing readers was the same as in the European countries on average (19,7% vs. 19.7%). The proportion of high-performing readers is somewhat smaller lower than in European countries. Between 2000 and 2012, the proportion of low-performing readers has slightly decreased (by – 3 %) in Hungary, mostly among girls (– 4,9%).

The proportion of top-performing readers was high in PIRLS (12% vs. 9% in EU) and lower than the EU average in PISA (5,6% vs. 7% in EU). However, PISA 2015 results were very low; the Hungarian 15-year-old students' score were the third lowest among the OECD states, much lower than the average. Taking the tendency since 2000 into consideration, Hungarian results seem to be stagnating until 2006; when the results were improving, reaching the peak point in 2006. They were lowering a bit in 2012, and in 2015 a dramatic dropping with the lowest ever scores can be detected. The ratio of students with excellent scores in OECD countries was 8,3 %, while that of Hungary was only 4,3%; it means that less than one-fifth of the Hungarian students had excellent scores, which is about half of the OECD average. The average of students with scores under the basic level is expected to be between 18% and 20%. In 2012 this number of students was already 19,7%, in 2015 it increased to 27,5%. What makes the situation even worse is the low achievement in digital literacy. These results show that the 15-year-old Hungarian students' achievement in PISA 2015 is not only very low, but is decreasing; it has reached its lowest point. Another shocking element is that the number of students with outstanding achievement is just the half of the OECD average. On the other hand, the number of students with the lowest results has increased with the half of the OECD average; their level equals to that of functional illiterates. Their ration in their age group is one-fourth, 25%.

Regarding the gender gap, in PIRLS girls in Hungary achieved a mean score on overall reading that was higher than boys (16 vs. 12 on average) in 2011. Interestingly, the gap had fallen to 5 point in 2006, before rising again in 2011. In Hungary in PISA, between 2000 and 2012 the performance very slightly increased among boys (+ 3 score points); the girls' performance increased more (+ 12 score points). Nevertheless, one can observe that the increase in reading performance was higher in 2009, especially for boys (+ 10 score points).

4. Key Literacy Policy Areas for Development

4.1. Pre-Primary Years

According to ELINET report[6] the importance of parental attitudes to reading is shown by the fact that in Hungary there are great differences in reading performance at grade 4 between children whose parents like to read (average achievement 570) and those who do not (average achievement 501). The availability of children's books in the home is very close to the EU figures in Hungary, 13,8 % of students in Hungary had 10 or fewer children`s books at home, compared with a European average of 12.

There is a need for more family literacy programs with a focus on supporting parents and carers working with minority children in understanding and fostering the literacy development of their children.

4.2 Primary Children and Adolescents

As it is stated in ELINET report[7], just a very little proportion of students in Hungary (5%) are taught by teachers who use a variety of children's books as a basis for reading instruction, compared with an EU average of 29%. Ninety-seven per cent of pupils in Grade 4 in Hungary are taught by teachers who use textbooks as the basis of reading instruction, compared with an EU average of 70%. Three per cent of students in Hungary are taught by teachers who report that computer software is used as a basis of reading instruction – about the same as the EU-24 average (5%) – while 39% of students in Hungary use computer software as a supplement, compared with 47% on average across EU countries (Mullis et al. 2012, exh. 8.12, p. 236, EU averages obtained from PIRLS 2011 database, s. Table H1 in Appendix). Based on data provided by their teachers, PIRLS shows that 79.9% of students in Hungary are in classrooms which have class libraries – above the corresponding EU – 24 average of 73% (ELINET PIRLS 2011 Appendix, Table H2). In Hungary, 12.5% of students were in classrooms with more than 50 books, which is below the EU-24 average of 21%.

In Hungary in the recent years the role of the public libraries in reading promotion has increased significantly. Libraries are not the only actors in reading promotion. In cooperation with them or as of their own initiatives other organizations – state or civil – also offer a great variety of programmes to foster reading engagement among children of all ages – both at regional and national level. HUNRA, the Hungarian Reading Association stands out as an exemplary

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[6] See http://www.eli-net.eu/fileadmin/ELINET/Redaktion/user_upload/Hungary_Short_Report1.pdf , p. 10.

[7] See http://www.eli-net.eu/fileadmin/ELINET/Redaktion/user_upload/Hungary_Short_Report1.pdf , pp. 10–11.

initiator of such projects. A large scale national project titled *My library* partly aims to improve the efficiency and efficacy of Hungarian education by offering competence-based, skill developing library services that also promote learning skills. Moreover the project has a national advisory board which is a network 40 professionals closely working together with schools all over the country. The project is run by Metropolitan Ervin Szabó Library, and it involves all the 19 county libraries, the Library Institute of National Széchényi Library, National Educational Library and Museum, and other professional bodies. The objectives of the project are to improve reading culture, digital literacy, reading literacy, individual and collaborative learning. The programme also gives an opportunity to do researches. New methodology and sample programme sets are to be designed. By collecting and sharing 90 good practices they are to be integrated in libraries nationwide. An outstandingly important aspect of the project is to help to avoid early school leaving. Four accredited training courses are developed to help to modernise librarian profession. Eighty different multifunctional events – including a conference and a workshop – are in the project to promote professional communication. There is going to be a national library and reading promotion campaign organized in the first quarter of 2019. By the end of the project period a methodology publication series is to come out[8].

5. Improving the Quality of Teaching

5.1. Pre-Primary Years

The ELINET report[9] states that Hungary has a preschool curriculum. It is the *National Core Programme* both for kindergarten/nursery school and creche education in Hungary, which apply to all kindergartens/nursery school and creches respectively, regardless of the maintainer. Both are a core curriculum defining the general pedagogic principles and objectives of education and care. The staff in each kindergarten/nursery school and creche is responsible for developing the local educational programme (i.e., local curriculum) in line with the *National Core Programme* Fostering the development of emergent literacy skills is an important function of pre-school institutions, providing a basis for formal literacy instruction in primary school. Pre-school programmes should focus on developing children's emergent literacy skills through playful experience rather than systematic training in phonics or teaching the alphabet.

[8] See http://www.azenkonyvtaram.hu/, p. 10.

[9] See http://www.eli-net.eu/fileadmin/ELINET/Redaktion/user_upload/Hungary_Short_Report1.pdf , p. 12.

5.2. Primary Children and Adolescents

The new *National Core Curriculum* referred to in ELINET report[10] was adopted in May 2012 and it recognizes literacy as a basic and transversal skill which has to be developed in the whole education. This recent version of curricula in Hungary is much closer to the modern definition of literacy, but basic literacy skills are still developed mostly on primary school level. Requirements of useful literacy skills getting higher, that is the very reason for the need of more time of teaching basic literacy skills, not only in primary level. The Core Curriculum makes a reference to the 8 key competences and describes them as essential competences for the 21st century. Literacy is mentioned in the description of communication in the mother tongue and learning to learn. Learning to learn is a key competence which must be addressed by every teacher in every subject. Literacy is included in the developmental tasks of Language, Literature, Foreign language, Mathematics and Media Literacy. However, it is not mentioned in the parts belonging to sciences. Literacy remains an accented area at upper primary / lower secondary and secondary level as well. Reading comprehension and text construction at these stages too constitute part of the Hungarian Language and Literature framework curricula but appear as separate and focused areas to be improved.

The curriculum pays more attention on functional literacy, literacy in everyday life in primary, elementary and middle schools. *National Curriculum* takes care about teaching, learning functional, digital literacy skills. This appears on cross curricular level, for instance in the field of teaching methods and strategies.

In Hungary initial teacher education needs a compulsory focus on developing literacy expertise among future primary and secondary teachers, suggests the ELINET report[11]. The problem is that literacy is still regarded to be the expertise of primary teachers or teachers of Hungarian literature and language both in primary and secondary levels. There are only few other disciplines (e.g., physics) of which teachers deal with content area literacy. Teachers of lower primary section (grade 1–4) think that developing (content area) literacy is not an expectation in secondary section. They think that reading skills should be acquired in the lower primary section and later should be automatically applied. Secondary teachers think that incorporating development of literacy skills into their disciplinary lessons is time-consuming. Only just few of them understand that it is a means of making teaching and learning processes more efficient. It is mainly the conductive teachers who could appreciate such a course, however, they do not teach whole classes and they are not disciplinary teachers.

[10] http://www.eli-net.eu/fileadmin/ELINET/Redaktion/user_upload/Hungary_Short_Report1.pdf , p. 13.

[11] See http://www.eli-net.eu/fileadmin/ELINET/Redaktion/user_upload/Hungary_Short_Report1.pdf p. 14.

6. Conclusion

Although in the new *National Curriculum* (2012) and frameworks (2013) literacy is spread throughout the whole curriculum, it is known from research that education is the field where changes happen very slowly. Because of this, it is important to inform principals, decision makers in conferences, workshops, seminars about the state-of-the art research results, and convince them about the importance to teach literacy across the curriculum.

Content Area Literacy (CAL)-courses are still not widely known. There was not enough time given and devoted to make them known among education professionals and/or teachers themselves. Still, there is huge potential in such a course. In Hungary education has been undergoing significant changes in the past years. Innovation and reforms could be really efficient if they are large-scale and ongoing (no "one-shot" events). Enhancing CAL-courses could have such effects. Improving the quality and participation rates in continuing professional development targeted at building literacy expertise of teachers is a challenge for Hungary.

There is a need to mainstream reading / writing literacy across the curriculum and to offer content area literacy instruction in all school subjects throughout primary and secondary education, whether academic or vocational. Requirements of useful literacy skills are getting higher, that is the very reason for the need of more time of teaching basic literacy skills, not only in primary level. Other subjects, disciplines do not pay attention on literacy skills, literacy is mainly included in language and literature. It would be worthwhile to sharpen the literacy focus to help teachers of all subjects to become literacy teachers. Schools and teachers should be provided with tools and means to implement literacy aspect of the curricula effectively and the implementation process should regularly be monitored and supported. There is a strong need for change in attitude and content area literacy training both in initial and in-service teacher training.

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Diverse nature of literacy: The sociocultural perspective

ABSTRACT
Considering the pace of the contemporary changes in the world, largely due to global trends and rapid development of media technology, it is commonly accepted that literacy cannot connote reading and writing any more as it did until several years ago. Much broader conceptualisations of what literary practices stand for are needed as people actually use literacy in diverse contexts and for different purposes. These are offered by sociocultural theories and approaches, which, despite being dissimilar with one another, do not undermine the traditional views on literacy and its practices but forward new complex and inclusive ways of understanding the phenomenon.
Keywords: literacy, sociocultural orientation, diverse approaches

1. Introduction

Literacy is a complex dimension of thought involving numerous perspectives. Ever since the term was coined, it has been subject to considerations of how it should be defined and applied (Leu, Everett-Cacopardo, H., Zawilinski, Mcverry, & O'Byrne, 2012, p. 1). The deictic nature of the concept concerns both the meaning of the term itself and the understanding of what literacy stands for forwarded in numerous theories describing the ways people become literate, access information, communicate and act (Freire, 2001, p. 106).

Before the 1970s, the term 'literacy' scarcely featured in formal discourse concerning education. The well-established words were 'reading' and 'writing'. The related notions referred to such features as the reader's phonemic awareness, fluency or comprehension. Different aspects of reading and writing conceptualized the then primary orientation which stressed the cognitive and psycholinguistic nature of literacy and based on cognitive and language processing theories. These defined language in terms of mental processing residing in individuals primarily

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engaged in processes like decoding, retrieving information, comprehension, inferring and so forth (Gee, 2015, p. 35). The notion of 'literacy' was used in relation to non-formal educational settings, particularly relating to illiterate adults involved in non-formal instruction. With time, it started to move from the marginal position in educational discourse to the very forefront of cultural policy, practice and research (Landshear & Knobel, 2011, pp. 3–4). Having progressed from a static notion denoting reading and writing into the one related to the socialization of a person, the concept was increasingly denoting "the ways of being in the world" (Gee, 1990, p. 17). The factors that spurred the change were, amongst others, the literacy crisis in the 1970s, the economic growth and well-being of western societies, efficiency and quality accountancy, as well as the appearance of sociocultural theories (Landshear & Knobel, 2011, pp. 3–4). Soon, numerous studies were developed which focused on the way people use literacy because ignoring the changes taking place in the world of information and communication was no longer possible.

The first sociocultural approaches originated in the last decades of the 20th century along with research conducted into adult, family and community by Street (1984), Heath (1983) or Barton and Hamilton (2000). The research concerned primarily with how literacy was used in everyday life so that reading and writing could become meaningful and relevant. These instances examined how literacy instantiates culture (Halliday, 1973; Gee, 1990); how it varies in cultural contexts (Bakhtin, 1986), or how its uses relate to power (Hymes, 1994). Soon, it was commonly acknowledged that language can never function independently of its sociocultural context. As Gee, Hull and Lankshear (1996) contend, it always comes "fully attached to other stuff: to social relations, cultural models, power and politics, perspective on experience, values and attitudes, as well as things and places in the world" (p. vii). Hence, communicative acts are nothing else but "facets of the cultural values and beliefs, social institutions and forms, roles and personalities" (Hymes, 1994, p. 12).

To fully understand literacy in use, a strong emphasis was put not only on culture but also on such notions as 'identity' and 'power', which responded to calls for investigating situated language use. This required scrutinizing contextual information and its role in conveying meaning. Accordingly, numerous case studies were conducted in ethnography, sociolinguistics or discourse to show the ways people used reading and writing in different contexts with different backgrounds. Variation visible in diverse practices made researchers assume that there is no single literacy but a variety of literary practices (Street, 2001, p. 430; Collins & Blot, 2003, p. 3). All of these endeavours have had their practical implications of how literacy is interpreted and what is expected of literacy learning and instruction.

Presently, the research findings are all included under the umbrella of the sociocultural stand on literacy, whose approaches concern social and cultural

contexts in which people practice literacy, involving at the same time power relations. The most influential perspectives in the broad field are *Literacy as social practice*, *Multiliteracies* and *Critical literacy*. All of these, as Perry (2012) informs, have their affordances and limitations but significantly contribute to the field by explaining how people relate to the world and make meaning multimodally (pp. 50–51).

2. Literacy as social practice

The first dominant sociocultural perspective on literacy is *Literacy as social practice* as it underpins the other approaches in the broad spectrum of the sociocultural stand. It draws heavily on Street's work (1984), who distinguishes between autonomous and ideological models of literacy, with the former one standing for neutral and decontextualised skills and the latter ¬ for practices grounded in specific contexts and thus "intrinsically linked to cultural and power structures in society" (Street, 2001, p. 433). Other theoreticians working in this tradition who added to the theory include Morrel (2004) and his interest in urban youth; Lewis, Enciso and Moje (2007) with their focus on identity, agency and power; Luke's (2004) institutional structure and power; Purcell-Gates, Duke & Martineau's (2007) communities and values; Gee's (2004) social mind, affinity groups; and Latour (2004) with her literacy as 'collective property'. These scholars' endeavours grouped under the umbrella of *New Literacy Studies (NLS)*, which, as Lankshear and Knobel (2003, p. 2) note, represent a new tradition in deliberations on literacy.

The developing theories on literacy as social practice insist that literacy is what people "do with reading, writing and texts in the real world". Such practices involve more than just actions with texts and they are better understood as "existing in the relationships between people, within groups and communities, rather than a set of properties residing in individuals" (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, pp. 7–8). In this line, literacy refers to a set of practices which can be inferred from discrete events mediated by written texts. These observable literacy events inform about literacy practices that relate to unobservable values, beliefs, attitudes and power structures. Thus, it is justifiable to speak about literacy practices − cultural ways of utilizing literacy patterned by beliefs, attitudes and values. Furthermore, all practices arise from institutional and power relationships with some being more dominant than others. In this context, literacy is seen as embedded in broader social goals and cultural practices, which change due to cultural modes and habits, often informal, appearing and making sense.

The fact that literacy so often connotes print and written words stems from the emphasis on traditional literacy events. It fact, it is a much broader cultural conception relating to "particular ways of thinking about and doing reading and writing in a cultural context" (Street, 2001, p. 11). The key notion here is the term

'context', which, in Gee's (2011) understanding, includes more than the physical setting in which a communication act takes place (p. 100). Context may also relate to everything that the setting involves, be it gestures, gaze, body movements, etc., in other words, participants' shared knowledge on how to act accordingly. For Barton and Hamilton (2000), context refers to the situatedness of the events, to the moments when they take place in the existing relations between people within communities (p. 8). Thus, new literacies are social as participating in any type of literary act unfolds in a social context, where readers and writers enact their roles as members of communities they represent. By doing so, they become part of the interactive process which posits "a shifting and dynamic relationship between text producers, text receivers and the text itself" (Wallace, 2003, p. 9).

The theory of literacy as social practice helps to describe what types of knowledge are needed in order to effectively engage in given literacy practices. In short, people do not only need lexico-syntactic and graphophonic knowledge, which consists of lexis and syntax to read and write. They also require cultural knowledge which includes beliefs, values and expectations, as well as genre knowledge, which informs about textual features, uses, purposes of use, and structural aspect of a particular genre to read and write meaningfully (Perry, 2012, p. 57). This knowledge can be acquired in a fluent or native-like way, when one gets embedded or apprenticed into a particular community. This way, they start appreciating language as members of the group in its social context (Wallace, 2003, p. 44). From a sociocultural perspective, the 'bits' accompanying reading and writing cannot be separated out from text-mediated practices, or form the 'non-print' bits, like values, contexts, tools or spaces (Landshear & Knobel, 2011, p. 13). This implies coordinating all elements to be "in sinc" in order to involve socially recognized ways of doing things (Landshear & Knobel, 2007a, p. 4).

The duality existing in everything that is done with language is clearly explained by Gee (1990/2008, p. 121), who distinguishes between language alone and Discourses (spelt with capitalized D). Texts, whether written or spoken, construct some favoured positions from which they are supposed to be received. This positioning indicates how language is embedded in society and its institutions, families, school or clubs. It is not just language and action that must "fit" appropriately. In a socioculturally situated language use, one must simultaneously say the right thing, do the right thing, and in such saying and doing also express the right beliefs, values and attitudes (Gee, 1990/2008, p. 151). Being recognised, say, as an agent, a journalist or a student, ensures being part of Discourse (Lankshear & Knobel, 2007a, p. 3). If one does not act accordingly, s/he takes a resistant position. Ergo, people do not read and write texts, they *do* things with them, things that involve more than just reading and writing. They interact with others – often with those who share a significant social identity, i.e. lawyers, academics, gamers, etc. If they do it well, they are judged as 'insiders' (Gee, 2015, p. 36). Thus, it is not about

the individual, as in the cognitive tradition, but about the individual's membership in various social and cultural groups. What determines what types of experiences a person has and how they pay attention to the elements of these experiences is their participation in the practices of different groups.

In short, as the *NLS* followers argue, literacy is something people do in the world with their achievement centring in social and cultural practices. Being a primarily sociocultural phenomenon, literacy should be studied in a full range of contexts and practices. Written language is used differently in different practices and employed in different ways by different social and cultural groups. However, it never functions all by itself. It is rarely cut off from oral language and action; that is acting and interacting; knowing, valuing and believing; using different sorts of technologies (Gee, 2015, p. 36). As texts are part and parcel of innumerable everyday "lived, talked, enacted, value-and-belief laden practices" (Gee et al., 1996, p. 3), those involved in different social processes read and write differently, and these different ways with words are part of different ways of being and doing life.

Furthermore, it is not possible to disregard rules and conventions, which determine whether people act appropriately. Cultural competence involves competence with the meaning system of any social practice; be it political debates, committee meetings, lectures or small talk. Thus, as Lankshear and Knobel (2011) stress, the orientation concentrates on texts in relation to contexts and knowledge what given contexts of practice make for appropriateness and inappropriateness of particular ways of reading and writing (p. 18).

3. Multiliteracies perspective

The second distinct orientation, an offspring of the *NLS* research, is the approach of *Multiliteracies,* developed by the New London Group. As Cope and Kalantizis (2000) note, the theory responds to issues of the changing world and the new demands placed upon people as makers of meaning in their changing workplaces, own spaces and dimensions – their life-worlds (p. 4). With an increasing emphasis on digitality, the fundamental ways of becoming literate are modified as they involve being able to access information, using communication technologies and taking action (Leu, 2007, p. 1). Additionally, the nature of literary practices, which go far beyond print, has been redefined by the Internet and other forms of information and communication technologies (ICTs). Being embedded in popular culture, they are mediated by reading and writing as well as various tools (Gee, 2015, p. 44).

The perspective of literacy as *Multiliteracies* again emphasizes the real-world contexts where literacy is performed, as well as the significance of power relationships. It differs from the first perspective in that it suggests engaging with the multiplicity of communication channels and media and an increasing salience of cultural and linguistic diversity (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, p. 5). Accordingly,

it focuses much more on other modes, i.e. multimodal and multimedial aspects of communication, which can be gathered under the umbrella of 'multimodality' (Kress, 2010). Multimodality implies that meaning-making occurs through a variety of communicative channels in which "written-linguistic modes of meaning are part and parcel of visual, radio, and spatial patterns of meaning" (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, p. 5). It is a writing system that is inseparable from cultural organization in which meanings act as semiotic features. Print literacy, a privileged literacy in the school context, is just one of the forms of representations and meaning-making. Also, 'text' stands for more than print and includes a variety of print matters and systems (Godhe & Mangusson, 2017, p. 845). Thus, literacy should be perceived as a semiotic organization appearing in different realizations (Kress, 2010, p. 99). The broader scope of interest in different types of texts stems from the latest research conducted on reading comprehension which shows that reading online and offline is not fully isomorphic as skills required in both contexts are different (Leu et al., 2007, p. 2).

Due to a greater emphasis placed on modes of representation and digital technologies, multiliteracies are often associated with the term 'new literacies' – literary practices linked to new technologies or practices akin to changing contexts (Lankshear and Knobel 2003: x). Furthermore, the scholars who advocate the perspective focus on globalization stress how it impacts social life, power relationships and how language adapts in response to enable people to participate in a "networked society in which new technologies enable new ways of being and accomplishing things" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2007b, p. 14).

However, new literacies are not solely about new technological stuff. They are about 'a new ethos' in which literary practices are seen as participative, collaborative and multimodal (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011, pp. 184–185). These, in Bawden's (2008) understanding involve "engaging with meaning in intensified digital environments" (p. 19). Another crucial concept linked to the technological stuff and networks is that of 'the new mindset'. People acknowledging changes accept new ways in which literacy unfolds, i.e. multiple spaces, remade hybrid spaces or travelling across them, which are accessible if appropriate principles of collaboration, leverage and participation are followed (Landshear & Knobel, 2007b: 6). They see the world as de-centred, post-industrial, enabling services and participation, where expertise and authority are distributed and open, enabling new social relations to emerge. They celebrate post-industrial reality because it celebrates inclusion, membership in affinity spaces and collective expertise. It makes criteria and norms for success in enterprise explicit and possible. Also, rather than thinking about new technologies enabling new practices, scholars agree that sometimes it is the new practices that make new technologies emerge. Websites exemplify the very points of what Landkshear and Knobel (2011, p. x) call 'new ethos'. The chosen sites invite people to interact with content in ways

that make such concepts as 'participatory culture', 'collaboration' and 'distributed expertise' meaningful. Accordingly, doing things requires substantive changes in the ways people approach the contemporary world. By interacting with others, they participate in affinities, enact relationships, share interests or contribute collectively to making sense in chosen affinity groups (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011, p. 80). Ever advancing technologies determine who will or will not be available to interact in a participatory culture.

Other terms appearing in the context in educational documents include 'digital literacy' or '21st century literacies'. As Martin (2008) proposes, digital literacy is an "awareness, attitude and ability of individuals to appropriately use digital tools and facilities" (p. 167). The tools are employed to access, manage, evaluate, and construct new knowledge, create media expressions and communicate with others in the context of specific life situations. In other words, they enable "constructive social action and reflect upon this process". In short, new literacies combine digitality with new social acts (Davies, 2012, p. 20). The new social acts in turn require new skills including word processing, hypertext, lab cams, digital streaming podcasts and many more; managing, analysing and synthesizing multiple streams of simultaneous information; building relationships with others by posing and solving problems collaboratively and cross-culturally; knowing how to sample flows rather than work their way through queues; designing and sharing information for global communities to meet a variety of purposes as well as attending to the ethical responsibilities required by these complex environments. All these are central to individual and community success (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011, pp. 24–25).

Duly, the 'stuff" of new literacies, be it the new ethos, the new mindset or the technological stuff, has multiple implications in the real world. It impacts many domains of people's public and individualized lives relating to education, doing research or functioning in an increasingly complex world.

4. Critical literacy perspective

The last major social perspective on literacy, i.e., *Critical literacy orientation*, to some extent considered by the above two paradigms, regards the significance of power relationships. It sees literacy as demonstrating its ideological nature shaped by dominant and privileged groups and their values. Indeed, "versions of sociocultural theory that would better address the issues of power, identity and agency" become indispensable (Lewis et al., 2007, p. 2). It is because, as Freire (2001) notices, literacy stands for people's relationship to the world, which, if consciously established, can make words be used for purposes of empowerment (p. 173). In other words, it implies a meaningful ability "to reflect about their capacity of reflection about the world, about their position in the world, about the encounter of consciousness" (p. 106). Literary practices must implicate conscious

acting as they "supply different access routes, different degrees of sponsoring power, and different scales of monetary worth to the practices in use" (Brandt, 2001, p. 251).

Accordingly, the critical dimension of literacy involves an awareness that all social practices, including literacies, are culturally constructed and elective. They include some representations and classification – values, purposes, rules, standards and perspectives at the same time excluding others. To participate effectively and productively in any literary practice, people must be socialized into it. However, if individuals are socialized into a social practice without realizing that it is selective, and that it can be acted upon and transformed, they cannot play an active role in changing it. Hence, the critical dimension of literacy is the basis for ensuring that individuals are not merely able to participate in some existing literacy and make meanings within it but that they are able to transform and actively produce it in various ways (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011, p. 18).

There are several models that help increase one's proficiency and understanding of literary texts. They all draw on the functional language analysis approach (FLA), developed by Halliday (1978), which provides a foundation for principles in scrutinising text to show how its features enable it to mean what it does. FLA has helped other analytical resources like a related Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to investigate what text does. Those using the CDA approach can describe, interpret and explain the relationship among language and important issues like economic trends, national policies or educational practices (Rogers, 2004, p. 3). Furthermore, they can identify patterns of language use at the societal level, which are of educational and cultural significance (Wallace, 2003, p. 46). Many other linguists, i.e., Gee (2011), Lankshear & Knobel (2007b), Lewis (2007) or Fairclough (2003), to name just a few, seem to investigate how conscious people perform social acts through literary practices, how they say things, do things and present themselves.

The CDA model was widely accepted and popularised by Fairclough (1992/2003). Fairclough's analytical procedures involve a three-tiered scheme which includes description, interpretation and explanation of discursive relations and social practices at the local, institutional and societal domains of analysis. This analytical framework was further developed by incorporating elements of systematic functional linguistics. These comprised genre, discourse and style as the three properties of language that operate within and among the local, institutional and societal domains (Chouliarki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 7). Such a widened approach won recognition as it allowed analysts to move between a micro- and macro-investigation of texts.

A more practical and accessible strand in CDA was initiated by Gee's work (1996, 1999, 2011). Gees's formerly discussed distinction between D/d discourse serves as a model on which any analysis may be conducted. The small 'd'iscourse,

the language in use, helps to understand how people write or say things to constitute what they do. In turn, what is written or said informs who the text's participants are at a given time and where the social practices take place, i.e. it determines the participants' social identities. In short, Gee (2004) sees texts as choices, artefacts, made by authors and publishers about events or entities to foreground required information (p. 48). In this respect, Discourse is not merely a pattern of social interactions but it is connected with identity and the way texts are distributed (Gee, 1999/2011, p. 60). Seeing how Discourse operates can move people beyond mere "reading off the effects" achieved due to particular grammar choices (Wallace, 2003, p. 35). By analysing the wording that constructs the participants' roles and the place where the social practice happens, one can get access to more abstract levels of judgement and interpretation and identify "socially recognized ways of using language," which equals with improving literacy (Gee in Lankshear & Knobel, 2007a, p. 3). It is so as CDA, besides relating form and function, involves empirical analyses on how such form-function relationships correlate to specific social practices. It thus seems logical to place the main emphasis on grammatical and semantic analysis to understand social usage of linguistic messages (Fairclough, 2003, p. 6). It may help see texts as strategies in which content is more or less explicit through the structure of narratives.

All in all, being critical involves questioning and not taking for granted everything that language presupposes. It means being reflexive, considering how one's positionality impacts one's interpretation of things; that is paying attention to texts' similarities, differences and the implications which these may have.

5. Conclusions

Given that the sociocultural stand defines literacy so widely, the perspective may easily be critiqued and challenged as too broad. Nevertheless, it has much to offer and its orientations are relevant and in no way mutually exclusive. They all share some elements and conceptualise literacy as something one does. They shed light on the ways in which practices may vary across different communities and the varied ways in which people communicate and make meaning. Being literate requires skills that go beyond decoding, vocabulary and syntax and involves understanding the cultural context, gestures, genre futures, or pragmatics. Any definition of literacy must also involve possessing skills required to effectively engage in the literary practices of a given context. Nowadays, it implies the use of some combination of texting, Facebook, Google, Google disc, Chrome and several mobile apps. Tomorrow these might be different means. Finally, sociocultural theories focus on the meaningful and purposeful ways people actually use literacy and their resulting implications. These entail having an understanding of how texts are used in the world to achieve social purposes, as well as having enough knowledge to ensure their own development. All this seems central to what people

do with their lives with literacy being decisive in full civic, economic and personal participation in a global community. Likewise, it has its implications in the present and future designing of educational curricula and syllabi.

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When the print meets the screen: Towards a model of L1 and L2 reading comprehension

ABSTRACT
The spread of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has been changing literacy practices and activities. Consequently, the traditional view of literacy as the ability to read and write needs to be revised to encompass new forms of literacy called e-literacy, or "digital/silicon/electronic literacies" (Murray & McPherson, 2006, p. 132) as well as "hyperreading" (Usó-Juan & Ruiz-Madrid, 2009, p. 59). The members of the 21st century "global", "fluid" and "networked" (Jewitt, 2008) societies engage in activities that the access to the WWW makes possible.
The aim of the paper is to discuss print-based models of reading, identify similarities and differences between online and offline text comprehension, also with respect to the foreign/second language (L2) reading. Online texts entail the necessity to use different sets of skills and strategies which have to be incorporated into a model of electronic text comprehension. Suggestions as to what such a model might include, based on theoretical underpinnings and empirical findings, are presented.
Keywords: offline and online reading, models of reading, foreign/ second language reading comprehension

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, ways of getting information, acquiring knowledge, communicating with others, exchanging views and opinions, doing shopping, getting entertainment, or establishing formal or informal networks have been changing due to a fast progress in information and communication technologies (ICTs). ICTs have also had an impact on employment, professional qualifications and working conditions. To get information, knowledge, and skills, the 21st century citizents have access not only to traditional, printed materials but also unlimited possibilities to use vast and varied resources available on the Internet. This suggests that traditional literacy skills, understood as the ability to read

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and write, do not suffice to effectively use the available resources. An ability to read both traditional and digital texts is indispensable in contemporary media landscape.

Reading in any language is ”the process of receiving and interpreting information encoded in language form via the medium of print” (Urquhart & Weir, 1998, p. 22) which entails text decoding and comprehension. It is “the ability to extract visual information from the page and comprehend the meaning of the text” (Rayner & Pollatsek, 1989, p. 23). Both definitions refer to “print” and “page”, the two elements that are absent in online texts that are not printed nor do they physically appear on page but on the computer (or other mobile device’s) screen. The reader’s interaction with the text is modified by the nature of this text. Currently communication has moved from “*telling the world* to *showing the world*” (Kress, 2003, p.117, italics in the original).

Reading involves interaction between the reader and the text, both conventional and digital. Electronic versions of conventional texts derive from print in terms of language use and structure while Internet-specific texts “include texts such as web home pages or the texts produced by search engines” (Lipscomb 2002, as cit. in Murray & McPherson, 2006, p. 134), blogs, Wiki, short text messages and e-mails (Braun, 2007), and many other. While printed texts are linear, static, bimodal as they contain language and graphics, neatly divided into pages read one by one, from the left to the right, Internet-specific texts are dynamic, multimodal non-linear hypertexts that are read from the top to the bottom (Coiro, 2003; Coiro & Dobler 2007; Piasecka, 2012, 2013; Usó-Juan & Ruiz-Madrid, 2009). Multimodality refers to the fact that these texts

> integrate a range of symbols and multiple-media formats including graphics, animated symbols, photographs, cartoons, advertisements, audio and video clips, virtual reality environments, and new forms of information with non-traditional combinations of font size and color (Coiro, 2003, p. 459–460).

Given such a wealth of multiple information formats, the person processing an Internet text has to decide what to focus on, how not to get distracted from the main purpose of reading the text, to understand what has been encoded in a variety of forms and relate it to their knowledge structures. Researchers concerned with online text comprehension (Coiro 2003; Coiro & Dobler 2007; Murray & McPherson 2006) agree that it shares a number of similarities with offline reading comprehension. It includes lower and higher level processes pertaining to print text comprehension that lead to developing a personal interpretation of the text. In addition, due to multimodality, the meaning of Internet-specific texts is not limited to language used in them but it is also shaped by acoustic, spatial and visual modes of communication (Rowsell & Burke, 2009). These require new skills and strategies that will help the reader process such texts successfully.

The following section presents L1 reading comprehension models that have been developed on the basis of theory and empirical findings pertaining to the nature of reading traditional print texts. These models would serve as a reference point for an online reading model. In what follows, the terms "reading models", "models of reading comprehension" and "models of reading literacy" are used synonymously since reading always involves comprehension, understanding and interpretation. Actually, the term "reading literacy", which tends to replace the term "reading comprehension", refers to the simultaneous interaction of text decoding processes, processes of understanding and interpreting the text, reflection on the text, and its use in a variety of socio-cultural contexts (Piasecka, 2008).

2. Models of reading print texts

Models of reading comprehension developed so far have reflected the scholars' understanding of the reading process itself. Structural linguists who interpreted reading as "speech written down" (Silberstein, 1987, p. 28), were concerned mostly with associating sounds with letters, thus focusing on linguistic abilities and entirely disregarding thought processes (Piasecka, 2000). However, with the advent of cognitive psychology and generative linguistics, this approach has changed and thought processes were brought into focus along with linguistic processes.

2.1. L1 reading models

Cognitivists have adopted an information processing approach to learning, that is the reception, storage, integration, retrieval and use of information, based on the tripartite model of human memory. This approach is at the roots of the models of reading developed with respect to print texts. The models are classified into three categories, that is bottom-up, top-down and interactive. Reading processes included in the models are similar but they work differently (Rayner & Pollatsek, 1989).

Bottom-up, also called text-driven, models (eg., Gough, 1972) are concerned with processes that account for letter recognition in the readers' mind. Gough's model shows the processing in a very detailed way: it starts with eye-fixation on the visual representation of the sound, then moves from one memory store to another to arrive at the understanding of the sentence on the basis of syntactic and semantic rules. The model accounts mostly for letter recognition processes but is not concerned with higher-level comprehension processes.

Top-down (concept-driven, hypothesis-testing) models (eg., Goodman, 1967, 1988; Smith, 1978) show that due to the limited capacity of the visual processing system, the processing of the visual information may be slowed down by the so-called "bottlenecks". When such a situation occurs, the reader predicts what will come next, verifies it against the incoming information and accepts it, when it is correct or rejects it when the prediction is not confirmed. The predictions

are made on the basis of prior knowledge, both linguistic and general. However, this group of models was also criticised because the research on predictions and good readers shown that these readers do not make predictions on the basis of their linguistic knowledge but decode the text very fast due to automatic word recognition (Stanovich, 1980).

Neither bottom-up nor top-down models have accurately presented processes involved in reading. Reading was envisioned as a linear sequence of distinct stages in which information moves from lower to higher processing levels, however the movement in the opposite direction (from higher to lower levels) is not considered. This spurred the development of the interactive models in which information may flow from lower to higher and from higher to lower stages of processing, thus influencing the reader's visual perception.

Where is the interaction in interactive models of reading? First, it occurs when lower (decoding) and higher (comprehension) level processes come together to allow text comprehension (eg., Rumelhart, 1977). Second, linguistic knowledge interacts with general knowledge to bring about the understanding of the messages included in the text while eye fixations are controlled by the meaning the reader stores in working memory (Just & Carpenter, 1980). In Rayner and Pollatsek's model, foveal and parafoveal word processing is included and well as the component that is responsible for consistent understanding of the text. It controls eye movements and syntactic parsing when problems with understanding appear. Last but not least, there is Stanovich's (1980) interactive-compensatory model which applies both to skilled and unskilled readers. It is based on the premise that readers have some knowledge of spelling, vocabulary, syntax and semantics but these knowledge sources do not have to be equally strong. When a struggling reader has problems with word recognition but has some knowledge of the topic, they may make predictions about words and phrases on the basis of this knowledge. Thus various sources of knowledge, both linguistic and general, interact and support each other to compensate for inadequate knowledge in any of the systems.

Interactive models, then, combine both lower and higher level processes which support each other in text comprehension Reading always starts with the recognition of the scripted form that has to be lexically accessed and further processed to result in understanding. The models are based on the assumption "that skills at all levels are interactively available to process and interpret the text" (Grabe, 1988, p. 59). In addition, they are activated simultaneously, according to the processing needs of the readers.

At this point, it seems justified to devote some space to two terms that appear across the models, ie., decoding and comprehension. Decoding refers to the lower-level, or bottom-up processes such as word recognition, syntactic parsing, meaning proposition encoding and working memory activation. Word recognition, in turn, may follow either an orthographic path (a word is recognised letter-by-letter or

another graphic representation) or a phonological one when the reader knows the spoken form of the word, or both.

Higher-level, or top-down processes account for the construction of meaning that is based on a text model of reader comprehension, a situation model of reader interpretation, comprehension monitoring as well as attentional processes, goal setting, strategy use, and metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness. (Grabe, 2009). Text comprehension emerges from the interaction of these processes, the interaction of microstructure and macrostructure.

From the perspective of cognitive psychology, lower level processes account for the formulation of the so-called microstructure of the text. It is based on word meanings with the assigned syntactic roles that are used to build idea units called propositions which create a network of relations called the microstructure. The microstructure is the basis for building the macrostructure that reflects the global structure of the text, its topic or the "gist". Microstructure and macrostructure, also called the textbase, represent the literal, explicit meaning of the text, but not a more in-depth comprehension. This requires the reader to build a situation model of the text in which text information, prior knowledge and the reader's goals are integrated. (Kintsch & Van Dijk, 1978; Kintsch & Rawson, 2005). A situational model is not based on the verbal domain exclusively but also on "imagery, emotions, and personal experiences" (Kintsch & Rawson, 2005, p. 211).

Although comprehension processes are assumed to be the same across languages, there is much individual variation at the level of text comprehension that results from decoding speed and accuracy, semantic, syntactic and discourse knowledge, general knowledge, memory capacity and reading span.

Development of reading skills is associated with entering formal educational systems though the instances of young children learning to read on their own are not rare. Since reading abilities develop dynamically, readers encounter increasingly complex texts that require more advanced language along with general and specific knowledge to be comprehended. Thus, the present discussion focuses on educated learners of foreign languages of varying ages and abilities.

The models briefly sketched above refer to reading printed texts in the native language but they may also be adopted to foreign/second language reading. The most important characteristic of a foreign/second language reader is the fact that the person is at least bilingual and when starting to read in the foreign language, they may have already developed L1 literacy. In a bilingual mind the knowledge of two (or more languages) interacts and affects the ways in which a foreign text is processed and comprehended. Therefore, the next section presents models of foreign/second language reading.

2.2. Models of foreign/second language reading

Bernardt's model (1991, 2005, 2011) has evolved over the years and currently

it includes factors that are relevant to foreign/second language reading. Like Stanovich's, Bernhardt's model is interactive and compensatory. The following variables have been included into the model:

- L1 literacy (eg., the knowledge of alphabet, vocabulary, text structure, beliefs about word and sentence configuration).
- L2 knowledge (eg., morpho-syntactic and lexical knowledge, cognates, distance between L1 and L2).
- Unexplained variance (eg., comprehension strategies, content and domain knowledge, engagement, interest, motivation) (Bernhardt, 2011).

According to the model, L1 literacy explains about 20% of a reader's comprehension, L2 knowledge accounts for about 30% while unexplained variance accounts for the remaining 50% of text comprehension. The model was supported by several studies but a lot of variance was reported for L1 literacy and L2 knowledge (Brevik, Olsen & Hellekjær, 2016). In one of the studies L1 (English) literacy accounted for 10%–16%, and L2 (Spanish) knowledge for 30%–38% of the variance (Bernhardt & Kamil, 1995) while in another study L1 (Korean) literacy explained 3% and L2 (English) knowledge 57% of the variance (Lee & Schallert, 1997). Brevik et al. (2016) argue that this variability probably results from the distance or differences between L1 and L2.

Taking a cross-linguistic perspective, Koda (2005) argues that L2 sentence processing is affected by L1 morphosyntactic knowledge along with the L2 knowledge base, typological differences between L1 and L2 (orthographic distance, for example) as well as universal principles. In addition, she underscores the importance of background knowledge and domain-specific knowledge for text comprehension as they may compensate for limited L2 linguistic and rhetorical resources.

Piasecka (2008) proposed a model of L1 and L2 reading based on empirical findings of her study (see Fig. 1).

The knowledge of two languages is central to reading. Moreover, certain processes are the same in two languages and therefore the languages interact and slightly overlap. TCPF stands for Text Processing Conceptual Framework that is responsible for the recognition and interpretation of letters, words, and entire phrases in the reader's mind. The central element – knowledge of L1 and L2 (and also of other foreign languages, not included in the model) – is surrounded by another circle that represents individual learner differences, that is attitudes, language aptitude, dyslexia, reading practices and reading preferences. This circle is embedded in yet another circle that represents the reader's social context including the family socio-economic status, literacy leisure activities, school success, print-rich environment and access to the Internet (*sic!)*. Possibly, the environment-related factors identified by Piasecka may be assigned to Bernhardt's unexplained variance group. The multiplicity of factors and their configurations imply how complex the process of L2 reading is.

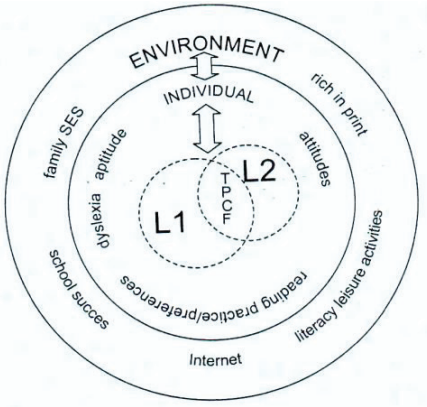

Figure 1. A model of L1 and L2 reading – an interplay of psycholinguistic and sociocultural factors (Piasecka, 2008, p. 187)

L1 literate L2/FL learners, both educated adolescents and adults, are usually familiar with the alphabet, they are aware of what words and longer utterances are made of, they are able to recognise a range of text types, they usually engage in some literacy practices. While they may not experience serious problems on the level of letter recognition, they may stumble on lexical access, ie., they may not be familiar with vocabulary and/or grammatical structures and forms used in the text. This may lead to further problems with text processing and discourage and demotivate learners from reading. Therefore it is extremely important to help them develop reading skills and strategies. New technologies and the Internet may become quite helpful in this respect. The following section addresses online reading models in L1 and L2.

3. Online reading model(s)

According to Internet Users Statistics (https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm), there were 4,383,810,342 Internet users worldwide on March 31st, 2019, which is 56.8 % of the world population (7,716,223,209). This is an impressive number and it is going to increase. Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, Castek, and Henry (2013, p. 1159) observe:

> Never in the history of civilization have we seen a new technology adopted by so many, in so many different places, in such a short period of time, with such powerful consequences for both literacy and life.

Advances in new technologies result in new text forms that require new ways of processing and, consequently, new literacies (Leu, 2000). The literacies connected with ICTs change very quickly so they have been termed "deictic" (Leu et al., 2013, p. 1150) because new literacies are new today but tomorrow

there will be other new literacies. In such a situation it is extremely challenging to "develop adequate theory when the object that we seek to study is itself ephemeral, continuously being redefined by a changing context" (Leu et al., 2013, p. 1151).

As signalled in the Introduction, researchers (Coiro, 2003; Coiro & Dobler, 2007; Piasecka, 2012, 2013; Murray & McPherson, 2006) find similarities between online and offline text comprehension, especially when processing verbal messages is considered. However, Internet users also have access to multimodal information formats that accompany verbal information and require additional processing that involves new online reading comprehension skills. Members of the New Literacies Research Lab suggest that the following online reading comprehension skills are necessary: "(1) identifying important questions; (2) locating information; (3) analyzing information; (4) synthesizing information; and (5) communicating information" (Mokhtari, Kymes & Edwards, 2008, pp. 354–355). In a way, these skills are similar to offline skills but in the Internet environmet the reader has to quickly process much more information than in a classical library with printed books that were reviewed, revised, and selected on the basis of certain criteria, and catalogues that group books in various ways so the preselection of resources has already been done for the reader. Moreover, navigating online texts differs from leafing book pages as it is more demanding to return to the same passage online unless it has been highlighted.

Reading online to find answers to the important questions that the reader has formulated involves the necessity to individually locate and select relevant information. Since the Internet is an open resource where everybody may publish what they want, the reader has to develop the skill of finding reliable information effectively. Addressing this issue, Henry (2006, p. 617) has proposed a set of basic search skills that are represented by the SEARCH acronym:

1. **S**et a purpose for searching.
2. **E**mploy effective search strategies.
3. **A**nalyze search-engine results.
4. **R**ead critically and synthesize information.
5. **C**ite your sources.
6. **H**ow successful was your search?

When the information has been located, selected and assessed for appropriacy and quality, the readers need to comprehend both the language with its nuances as well as the visual and acoustic clues. They have to be ready to cope with the content in a non-linear fashion, being aware of the distractors in the form of the hyperlinks, popping-up ads in the background, and others. Most important, they "need a critical awareness of the semiotics of language, (i.e., language as design), which is essential to the critical understanding of the composition and production

of digital texts" (Rowsell & Burke, 2009, p. 117).

Despite the fact that new/online literacy is such a complex and dynamic phenomenon, an attempt has been made to build a componential-interactive process model of online text comprehension. It combines the elements of print reading models with the empirical findings and theoretical considerations with respect to online reading.

Online reading involves the following non-linear processes that interact to bring about comprehension of online text that differs qualitatively from print texts (cf. Coiro, 2003, Introduction to this paper). The quotations in the brackets refer to the online reading skills discussed above (Mokhtari et al., 2008):

- setting a goal of reading ("identifying important questions");
- effective searching of information online
- analysing web-search results } ("locating information")
- selecting relevant information (in terms of the goal, with the support of prior knowledge)
- reading it critically (using lower and higher level processes, evaluating its relevance to the goal)
- synthesizing information from multiple sources ("synthesizing information")
- communicating information in various modes and to various individuals or groups ("communicating information")

Processes of print and online Internet text reading have been compared to show the degree of overlap between them as well as the factors that make reading in these two conditions distinct. Figure 2 shows the results of the comparison.

The figure clearly illustrates that there is a substantial overlap between the two modes of reading yet the differences also appear. They refer to the types of texts processed, to finding relevant and reliable information as well as to the idea of sharing information that is inseparable from using the Internet. Present day reading has been gradually losing its private character and becomes more and more a group activity

Another important characteristic of the comparison is the interdependence between print and online reading that has been empirically supported. Coiro (2011) carried out a study of offline and online reading comprehension and found out that offline reading accounted for 35.1% of the variance in online reading comprehension while prior knowledge explained only 7.1 % variance and its effects were statistcally significant for low performing readers. The findings of the study suggest that some of the online comprehension skills are similar to offline comprehension skills but others are unique to online comprehension and reflect its complexity.

The picture of online reading comprehension becomes even more complex when reading online in L2 is considered. The major difference be-

tween L1 and L2 online reading comprehension rests in the L2 proficiency and literacy level which account for breaking the

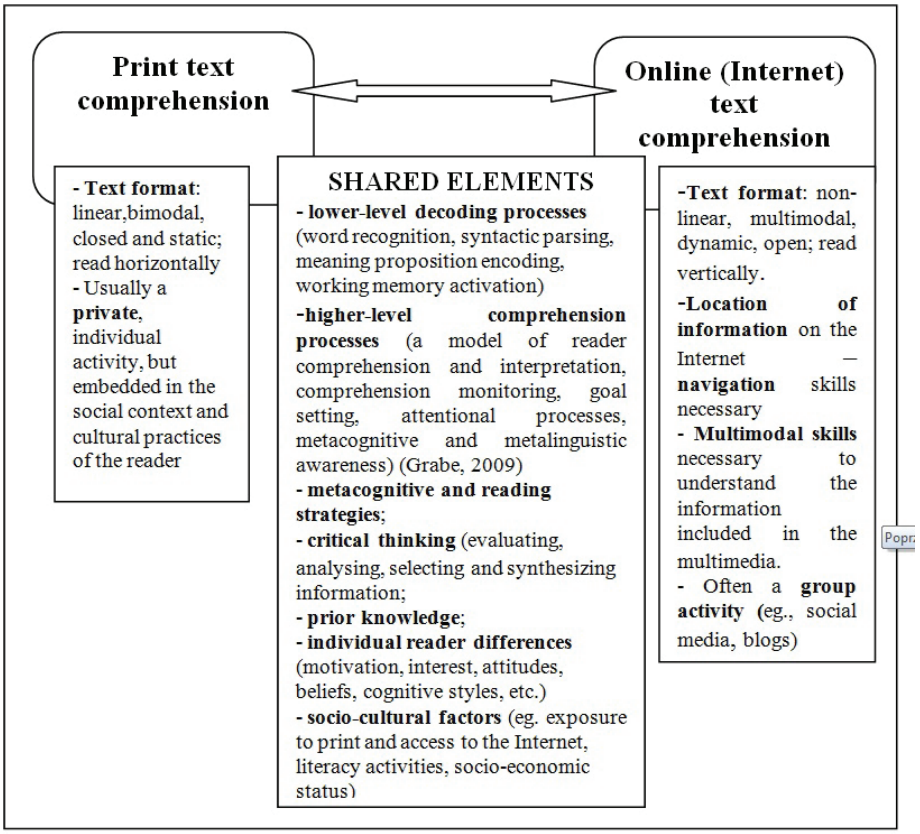

Figure 2. Comparison of print and online (Internet) text comprehension.

linguistic code and extracting meaning from the text. For this reason, L2 readers may rely more heavily on prior knowledge and predicting strategies when they encounter problems with comprehension. Since the carryover of L1 search and navigation skills is more than likely, L2 online readers have to become familiar with L2 online text conventions if and when such appear. With a goal of reading set, they may search for information effectively, critically analyse and read the search results in order to synthesize and communicate the results, if need be.

A model of L1 and L2 online reading comprehension is presented in Fig. 3. It synthesizes Piasecka's 2008 model and the comparison of print and online reading comprehension in terms of one or more languages.

In the model, the factors contributing to text comprehension have been placed against the backdrop of individual and socio-cultural factors that account for

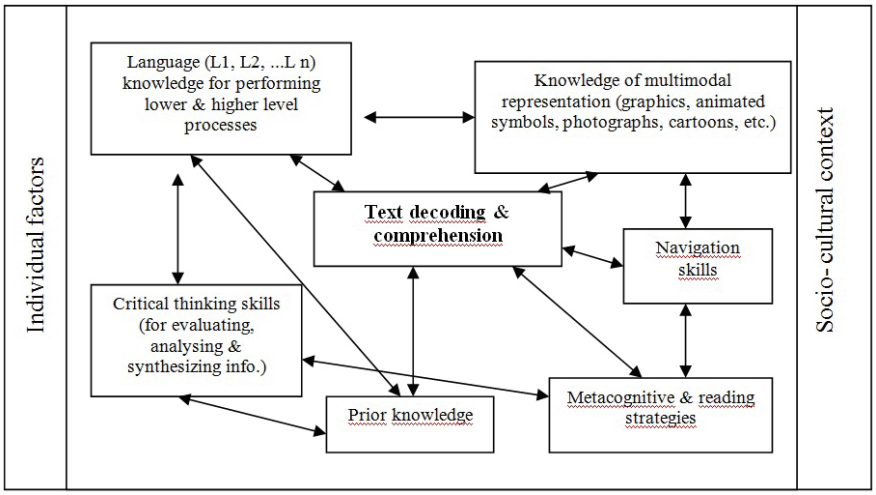

Figure 3. A model of online L1 and L2 reading comprehension

differences in reading performance. Thus, comprehension of an online L2 text is based on the knowledge of two or more languages that interact in the reader's mind in a dynamic manner and allow them to use all the linguistic resources they have access to. It also involves the reader's familiarity with multimedia that carry non-verbal meanings (cf. Coiro, 2003, the Introduction to this paper) that contribute to (or disturb) verbal messages. Another new element in the model refers to navigation skills that allow the reader to consult a number of internet resources to find information necessary to comprehend the text (eg., online dictionaries animations, slide shows, video clips, etc.). Metacognitive and reading strategies combine print and digital reading strategies and also include goal setting as a metacognitive strategy. Prior knowledge supports comprehension and may compensate for gaps in language knowledge. Critical thinking skills are indispensable for building a situational model of text comprehension, for an in-depth analysis of the information as well as for integrating information from multiple sources. The arrows indicate dynamic relations among the factors that operate within other dynamic systems of individual differences, social contexts and cultural heritage.

Working on L2 Internet texts is beneficial for foreign/second language learners because they handle texts that are authentic, they may choose the ones that match their interests, their comprehension may be supported by multimodal text elements. In addition, successful reading of self-selected texts, for example, may motivate the readers to read more. Japanese university students have been reported to prefer reading screen-based over paper based books (Walker, 2016). When learners read more, they develop the skills and strategies indispensable for effective online reading.

4. Conclusions

The Internet is present in many spheres of contemporary life and over a half of the world's population use it for a variety of reasons and purposes. To benefit from the resources available on the Internet, its users need a repertoire of online reading skills and strategies, included in the proposed model of online reading comprehension, which should become an integral part of school curricula at different levels of education. Moreover, these new literacy skills should not be taught and practised in isolation but in the context of various school subjects.

The proposed model combines print-related components with skills that refer exclusively to the online environment such as navigation skills and an ability to make sense of multimodal text elements. Moreover, it can apply to reading in one's native language as well as to reading in other languages that the reader is familiar with. Yet, crucial to all reading is the knowledge of the language which cannot be replaced even by very sophisticated multimedia.

The features of online texts, however, may have both a positive or a negative effect on comprehension. It has been shown that the colour of font and of the background influence decoding, for example blue text has a negative effect on readability (Nielsen, 1999). On the other hand, when the reader has used the link and its color changed to purple, it has a positive effect on readability because the readers know which spaces of the hypertextual setting they have visited. Readability is also enhanced when texts are lexically dense but include nominalizations and information which is organized into chunks by means of lists, boxes or short paragraphs. In addition, objective language, headings and bold or coloured key words have been found to contribute to higher readability.

Interestingly, though the readers prefer to scroll the text vertically rather than horizontally, vertical scrolling makes them feel disoriented and lost. Readers' feelings of disorientation and confusion may increase due to poor and chaotic design of Web pages. Checking the links in the hypertext, evaluating them, making navigational choices and processing many fast sensory stimuli they may experience information overload that may bring about distraction from the purpose of reading and, consequently, further confusion (Murray & McPherson, 2006; Usó-Juan & Ruiz-Madrid, 2009; Carr, 2010). Moreover, such factors as screen resolution and screen glare result in eyestrain, which also accounts for difficulties in digital reading (Morrison in Usó-Juan & Ruiz-Madrid, 2009). In addition, hypertexts displayed on the computer screen may distract the reader's attention because of popping up adds, hyperlinks, the blinking screen, and so on.

There is also a danger connected with fast processing of online information. Internet users can locate short pieces of information, usually the size of the computer screen, and make connections between and among them, but they have problems focusing on longer texts. They may loose "the literary mind-set" (Tucker, 2010, p. 61) that requires patience, concentration and engagement with the text.

Recently, Internet users coined an acronym "TL;DR" which means "too long; didn't read" (Dukaj, 2010). This kind of response may result from information overload and the lack of time to read carefully what the user wants to read and what other users think this user may wish to read.

However, over five hundred years of printed books and other documents cannot and should not be ignored – a history of books is also a history of progress and development of human civilization. Reading printed matter, people have developed literate minds along with a wide range of meaning making skills and strategies that may also serve them well in the online environment. Actually, readers frequently switch between print and screen presentations of written language and this way they do not turn into mere text decoders. They also have a possibility to develop a deeper insight into the texts and their meanings.

Print and screen texts as well as skills and reading dispositions do not exclude but support and complement each other as shown by the following quotation:

> In the transmission of knowledge the children and teachers of the future should not be faced with the choice between books and screens, between newspapers and capsuled versions of the news on the Internet, or between print and other media. Our transition generation has an opportunity, if we seize it, to pause and use our most reflective capacities, to use everything at our disposal to prepare for the formation of what will come next (Wolf, 2008, p. 228).

N.B. When I was working on this text, I used both printed and Internet resources, switching between them as the need arose. And I enjoyed it!

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Strategic reading: Towards a better understanding of its role in L2/FL learning and teaching contexts

ABSTRACT
Evolving approaches to the conceptualization of reading have created conducive grounds for rethinking the role of strategic reading in second/foreign language contexts. However, despite a wide recognition of the effectiveness of strategic reading, such critical issues as strategy identification, modelling reading strategy taxonomies, and their implications for establishing principles for actual classroom practice are still being debated on. This article intends to look more closely at current insights into the strategy dimension of the reading process, which, according to the current author, play an enlightening role in defining the utility of reading strategies in helping second/foreign language learners reach their goals in reading and through reading. Hence, the article mainly focuses on promoting text comprehension, language and reading skills improvement, and content learning from text. The author articulates the need for a better understanding of how the potential effects of strategic text processing can be addressed in L2 reading practice.
Keywords: L2 reading, strategic text processing, reading strategy, reading to learn, metacognitive awareness

1. Introduction

While enhancing learners' reading skills is an unquestionable goal in modern education, be it in a first (L1), second (L2) or foreign language (FL), many problems pertaining to the development of reading skills in formal conditions have still not received sufficient clarity. It is worth noting that despite divergences between the three learning situations mentioned above, the reading process and its development share a wealth of similarities. In fact, due to advances in theoretical and empirical research conducted in a variety of monolingual or multilingual reading environments, the interpretation of the reading process has been rethought. The picture of reading contemporary language teachers get shows a construct based on the interaction of a multitude of processes and factors. This characteristic of reading is well-captured by Alexander et al. (2012) as the multidimensionality

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of reading, which results from an interplay between cognitive, neurophysiological, sociocultural, and motivational processes.

A consideration of the highly interactive nature of reading in recent years has brought about, among others, a change in rendering two vital issues. The first concerns the dichotomy between 'learning to read' and 'reading to learn', which used to be interpreted as two self-contained stages in reading development. The updated view maintains that it is the two interrelated processes that operate simultaneously (for further discussion see Chodkiewicz, 2014). The other shift in thinking that has taken place has addressed the juxtaposition between reading as unobservable text processing and reading as a product, that is a level of comprehension reached by the reader. The recent position holds that the reading process and the product cannot be kept apart due to "a recursive interaction" between them (Rapp & van den Broek, 2005, p. 278). As a consequence of the interactivity of components including readers' memory, their background knowledge, language and cognitive skills, as well as text properties, individual readers embark on highly varied paths, which lead them to different reading outcomes.

As far as classroom reading practice is concerned, it is typically organized into a sequence of cooperative events in which both learners and teachers play well-defined roles. While an array of reading strategies are explicitly taught or embedded into classroom tasks, many other strategies become part of learners' competences in a natural way, as a consequence of their cognitive growth. What is more, incorporating reading strategies into L2/FL classrooms, which can substantially raise the quality of teaching, requires specialist knowledge on strategy development and use. Yet, referring to the definitions and taxonomies of reading strategies available in the relevant literature, teachers have to be fully aware of the fact that the knowledge they consult is intricate and may not be fully helpful in formulating goals for their reading-based instruction.

The current article reflects on some issues which appear to be particularly significant in guiding L2/FL learners in becoming strategic readers, and which are believed to be of practical value to classroom teachers. The problems raised concern the status of the strategy dimension in the process of reading, conceptualization of L2 reading strategies, and their classification, as well as insights drawn with the purpose of creating well-informed guidelines for classroom practice. Support is given to Oxford's (2017) following opinion: "L2 learners need reading as a major resource in their lives, and it must be taught explicitly in ways that will stimulate interest and self-efficacy. As part of L2 reading instruction, it is crucial to teach reading strategies" (p. 471).

2. The reading process in L1 and L2 and its strategy dimension

Before the conceptual explanations of reading strategies per se are addressed, it is useful to look more closely at the status of reading strategies from the perspective

of modelling the reading process. In language teaching, it is commonplace to interpret reading as discourse processing, which captures how a global representation of text meaning is constructed by embracing word identification and sentence parsing operations, previously described in separate models (Rayner & Reichle, 2010). A dominating cognitive constructionist approach assumes that the reader gets involved in three concurrently activated processes. First, in search of the main units of meaning the reader processes the surface code, that is language material found on the page. Then, a number of propositions (text base) are formulated as a result of the reader processing linguistic knowledge and discourse conventions with an important role played by inferencing processes. All those cognitively-driven operations lead to a gradual construction of the situation model of the text in readers' minds, and due to its integration with background knowledge, personal interpretations of the text can be reached. If any comprehension breakdown is to appear, strategies helpful in providing some repair are called for (e.g., Kintsch, 2005, 2012; Ruddell & Unrau, 2013; van den Broek, Espin, McMaster, & Helder, 2017).

A key issue in interpreting reading from the cognitive constructionist perspective concerns purpose-orientation of the reading act. In performing multi-level operations while processing textual information, readers employ a range of strategies consistent with the goals set forth for a given task. The goal-directedness of the reading process is commonly linked to the concept of 'standard of coherence', which defines a degree of comprehension the reader intends to reach in his/her individual interpretation of the text (Graesser, 2007; van den Broek, 2012; van den Broek et al., 2017). Coherence building strategies are found to play a highly significant role as they enable readers to make up for their limitations in attentional capacity and working memory, and activate background knowledge so as to integrate different portions of the text (van den Broek, 2012). A recent suggestion from Britt, Rouet and Durik (2018, p. 30) is that a finer distinction be kept between quantitative and qualitative senses of standard of coherence, the former denoting effort invested by the reader (e.g., in memorization), and the latter indicating different dimensions of coherence reached in an individualized way.

With the recognition of the notion of strategy as a component of the reading process, another vital distinction is manifest, namely that between strategic vs. automatic (skill-related) processing of information (Rapp & van den Broek, 2005; Afflerbach, Pearson, & Paris, 2008; van den Broek et al. 2017). Strategic processes are invoked when automatic processing does not ensure a satisfactory comprehension result, that is in the case of comprehension failure, when the repair is needed. Readers can reread the text, use discourse markers or consult their prior knowledge. If further inferences are to be made, both text signals such as headers or font, as well as background knowledge, and other sources can be used (Rapp & van den Broek, 2005; van den Broek et al., 2017).

Despite an adherence to universal models of reading in language-related instruction, the specificity of L2/FL reading has also been tackled. It is obvious that apart from comprehension and knowledge acquisition while reading a text, the goal of L2/FL readers is to improve their command of the target language. This requires that they focus on language resources which are indispensable in lexical processing, parsing and inferencing, and which underlie the reading process. Hence, in identifying word meanings while reading, L2 learners' attention will be directed to the available contextual clues, and parsing processes will lead to noticing how phases and sentence segments are built (e.g., Birch, 2002; Dakowska, 2015; Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Grabe, 2009; Hudson, 2007; Bernhardt, 2005, 2011). One of the key issues investigated in L2/FL reading has concerned the complex relationship between content processing and vocabulary. Recent research findings have confirmed that the potential of strategy use in the pursuit of the established task goals not only directs text processing but also impacts the amount of incidental vocabulary learned in L2 (e.g., Horiba & Fukaya, 2015).

A step forward in exploring L2 reading phenomena has undoubtedly been the made with the development of a compensatory approach (Bernhardt, 2005, 2011; Mc Neil, 2012; Bunch, Walqui, & Pearson, 2014; Chodkiewicz, 2014). The L2 compensatory reading model offered by Bernhardt (2005, 2011) aims to account for the interrelated processing of different factors in L2 reading and their capability of compensating for each other. The researcher assigns 50% of variance to two well-researched factors, that is L1 literacy (alphabetics, vocabulary, etc.) and L2 language knowledge (grammatical form, vocabulary knowledge, cognates, etc.), and the remaining 50% of unexplained variance to under-researched factors, including background knowledge, interest, engagement, motivation, reading strategies, etc. Having further analysed relevant empirical research, McNeil (2012) provides a modified compensatory model, in which he reduces the amount of unexplained variance by half through the incorporation of two more factors, namely strategic knowledge and background knowledge. Importantly, by referring to strategic knowledge, McNeil is able to propose a difference between lower and higher proficiency readers. It is lower-proficiency readers who are claimed to depend on L2 language knowledge and background knowledge much more than on their L1 reading ability and strategic knowledge, while higher-proficiency readers use the same amount of L1 reading ability, yet a reduced amount of L2 language knowledge and background knowledge, because these are compensated for with a substantial use of strategic knowledge. By implication, systematic enhancement of the strategicness of learners' reading skills contributes to an increase in their literacy attainment.

A new development in modelling text processing is connected with the conceptualization of multiple text reading, typical of content area education. The so-called 'Transitional Extensions Model' (Fox & Alexander, 2009) broadens

the interpretation of text processing by referring to between-text connections found in all the text types, be it informational or argumentative, static or fluid (hypertexts). Responding to texts collaboratively and critically, readers refer to the topic or domain knowledge built across texts. In a similar vein, the so- called 'Documents Model' maintains that reading multiple texts on a given topic requires an expansion of a situational model of text comprehension across a number of texts in order to integrate the authors' views, even conflicting ones. A claim is thus made that an 'Intertext Model' be combined with the 'Integrated Model' so that a general situation model of the text be based both on the content of the text as well as on the information coming from other sources exploited by readers. Reaching one's goals in multiple text reading is possible only when readers apply a full repertoire of reading strategies (Bråten & Strømsø, 2011; Britt, Rouet, & Braasch, 2013; Britt et al., 2018).

3. Conceptualising reading strategies and clarifying some vital distinctions

The debate on the scope of the concept of reading strategies in both L1 and L2 contexts, which has continued since the 1980s, has drawn attention to many pedagogically relevant problems including the importance of the outcomes of the reading comprehension process, text difficulty, as well as the structure of reading tasks performed by readers (e.g., Koda, 2005; Perfetti & Adlof, 2012; Britt et al., 2018). Reading strategies, defined as procedural knowledge intentionally used by readers, have been found to be a powerful tool in enhancing reading flexibility and deliberate control over reading goals, with the possibility of revising them when necessary (Afflerbach, Pearson & Paris, 2008; Anmarkrud & Bråten, 2012; Chodkiewicz, 2014). Koda (2005) suggests that strategies should be characterized as being "deliberate, goal/problem-oriented and reader-initiated and controlled" (p. 205). Likewise, Alexander and the Laboratory (2012) emphasize the intentionality of strategy use and their purpose-orientedness, yet they also note the importance of effort their application requires. Of didactic value is the fact that reading strategies are learned and automatized with practice, which means that they can be taught in a systematic way either implicitly or explicitly (van den Broek, 2012).

Despite the fact that researchers have created numerous taxonomies of reading strategies arranging many item lists of strategy types into well-thought out hierarchies, continued discussions on reading strategies have led to an increased understanding of some more general distinctions of pedagogic worth. One of them concerns the classification of reading strategies into surface vs. deep level strategies, which highlights the difference between readers' responses to some minor reading problems (e.g., restating, rereading, or checking word meaning) and deeper reader interventions as required in analyzing a problem, questioning the author or looking for evidence (Alexander et al., 2012). Indeed, the depth of text processing has

become a primary issue in reading-based instruction in both L1 and L2 settings when special interest was taken in reading to learn, that is in designing reading tasks with an emphasis on knowledge acquisition (see Chodkiewicz, 2014 for further discussion). McNamara (2011) draws attention to deep reflective reading, whose effectiveness is ensured by strategies which augment readers' inferences and connections between prior and newly acquired knowledge. Similarly, Bråten and Anmarkrud (2013) underline the pivotal role of inferential processing of text content, which depends on the depth of its comprehension. McNamara (2011) adds that the strategies readers employ determine both the depth of text processing and the amount of time readers take to complete their tasks. Yet, teachers do not have direct access to reader strategies as they are not verbally expressed; it is only by examining students' retrospective self-reports that they can find out which strategies their learners use.

An interesting suggestion comes from Koda (2005), who proposes a twofold division into a narrower and a broader definition of reading strategies. Her intention is to stress a difference between strategies defined as text processing understood in terms of acquisition, storage, and retrieval and some overt activities based on a combination of mental learning processes and underlying reading strategies. Koda (2005) also notes that although readers are guided by their own 'internally generated' purposes, in formal instruction, which is also purpose-driven, they are expected to work with 'externally imposed' goals. Therefore, teachers need professional knowledge about the ways in which both reader-initiated behaviours and those induced by pedagogical tasks can contribute to reading-based practices.

A similar argumentation has been brought forward by Kobayashi (2009, p. 131), who suggests using the term 'external strategies' in order to indicate the cases in which readers perform cognitive operations based on deeper processing of information, accompanied by such activities as paraphrasing, summarizing, organizing, explaining, or evaluating. In Kobayashi's view, external strategies cover text highlighting and different forms of notetaking (including explanations, summaries, and intertextual elements), as well as personal ideas.

Apart from theoretical considerations concerning the characteristics of reading strategies and the scope of the concept, varfying attempts have been made to find ways of classifying reading strategies. In the sections to follow, some L2 strategy taxonomies recognized as influential in recent literature will be selectively overviewed.

4. Towards a classification of reading strategies – focus on L2/FL classroom perspective

As rightly underscored by Britt et al. (2018), one of the main problems teachers face is establishing goals that enable readers to process a text or a sequence of texts and learn from them while simultaneously pursuing other purposes set forth in

classroom tasks. In capturing the specificity of L2/FL reading-oriented instruction, the major goals can be defined as follows: (1) understanding the content of a particular text (reading comprehension), (2) learning from the content of the text (disciplinary reading), (3) furthering language development, and (4) enhancing reading skills and strategies (e.g., Hudson, 2007; Grabe, 2009; Bernhardt, 2010; Chodkiewicz, 2014, 2018). The attainment of such goals undeniably requires that learners adopt a large repertoire of reading strategies, a number of which have already been mentioned in the discussion so far.

The emergence of different classifications of L2 reading strategies means that their authors take varying perspectives on the main facets of reading. Koda (2005) makes a pertinent observation that "although differences in the reported strategies are modest, deviations occur in the way they are classified, as a consequence of researchers' own disparate view of reading processes and strategies" (p. 207). Indeed, of special interest to L2 teachers, as already pointed out, is understanding how particular strategies can be incorporated into overt classroom activities so that they are consistent with the learning and teaching goals pursued. In the sections below, some insights emerging from reading strategy classifications found of relevance to L2 settings will be touched upon.

For example, based on a set of eneral learning strategies, Anmarkrud and Bråten (2012) classify reading strategies into memorization, organization, elaboration, and monitoring strategies. The four types of strategies refer to the main operations which determine how content information is acquired, organized, and transformed by readers moving on purposefully through a text. Thus, memorization strategies, limited to selecting and rehearsing information, underlie highlighting or repeating sentences. Grouping or ordering information, that is organization strategies, play a key role in text summarization and outlining. Integrating information from the text and other sources, as well as linking text content with readers' background knowledge requires the use of elaboration strategies. Finally, monitoring strategies exhibit the power of regulating comprehension processes by detecting problems and solving them. It is worth noting that all those strategies can be associated with some kind of deliberate activities L2 readers are prone to take up in the process of reading.

Likewise, a broad distinction between cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies widely adopted in L2/FL instruction has its source in a general taxonomy of learning strategies (cf. O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Whereas cognitive strategies are defined as deliberate actions which help manipulate information to enhance learning, metacognitive strategies are taken to have the power of regulating cognitive processing by planning, monitoring, and evaluating learning. An exemplary hierarchy of L2 reading strategies offered by Ediger (2006, p. 305–306) comprises over 50 reading strategies grouped into metacognitive strategies (purpose-oriented and comprehension-monitoring strategies), and cognitive

strategies (for interacting with the author and the text, involving different ways of reading, for handling unknown words, and involving prior knowledge). Some other specialists (e.g., Hudson, 2007; Grabe, 2009) present the view that it is the readers' metacognition level that helps them pursue their goals consciously and select the strategies they need. Grabe (2009) states: "metacognition about comprehension represents what we know about strategies and how to use them effectively" (p. 224). The concept of metacognitive awareness of reading strategies has been accepted in the so-called Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategy Inventory (MARSI), a well validated questionnaire, also successfully used with reference to L2 academic reading for 16 years (Mokhtari & Shorey, 2002; Mokhtari, Dimitrov, & Reichard, 2018).

A range of reading strategies have been assigned to a broader category of 'reading to learn', which defines strategies aimed at learning from text to realize readers' complex purposes (Chodkiewicz, 2014; Grabe & Stoller, 2019). Such reading goals require that both readers' interests and attitudes are involved in deep processing of text content so that newly gained information is integrated with their prior knowledge, reflected on and evaluated (Grabe, 2009; Aukerman, Brown, Mokhtari, Valencia & Palincsar, 2015)). In Ediger's (2006) view, reading to learn strategies encompass reflecting on what one has read, underlining the text, paraphrasing it, notetaking, and thinking about its future use. Grabe and Stoller (2019) note that reading to learn tasks, enriched with an element of cooperative learning, can help naturally consolidate content knowledge, reinforce language structures and skills, recycle vocabulary as well as practice reading and study skills.

As argued above, also language aspects are a focal point in L2/FL reading. Lexical, grammatical and syntactic processing of the text supports L2 or FL learners in tackling their language deficiencies. Anderson's (1991) typology, for instance, ascribes considerable value to paraphrase strategies, which support text comprehension by finding cognates between L1 and L2, analysing lexical items, translating words into L1, or simply paraphrasing the text. Ediger (2006, p. 306) singles out a self-contained category of handling unknown words which includes using contextual information and checking a word in a dictionary, but also skipping unknown words. A broader category developed by McNamara, Ozuru, Best and O'Reilly (2007, p. 467), called 'Strategies to Interpret Words, Sentences, and Ideas in the Text', entails such text-focused strategies as marking, annotating, and close reading of the text, which are helpful in creating a text base. Dakowska (2016), on the other hand, claims that EFL reading-based practice requires special adjustment of strategies so that readers' attention can be drawn to discourse level. She underscores the importance of discourse processing as it raises readers' awareness of how written discourse is created. Some helpful activities are: inserting paragraph titles, memorizing lexical phrases, filling in close tests, retelling, or summarising.

Another preferred typology comprising pre-, while-, and post-reading strategies is consistent with natural reading processes and compatible with the well-known organization of L2/FL reading-based lessons into the pre-, while-, and post-reading stages. A fairly detailed sequential approach to the implementation of L2 reading strategies advocated by Hudson (2007) is based on the taxonomy of general reading comprehension strategies developed by Paris, Wasik and Turner (1996). With as many as 11 strategies in each category, readers are first assumed to set goals for their reading, identify the text genre, and make predictions. While processing the text, they concentrate on checking comprehension and generating inferences so as to identify main ideas. Consolidating and applying new information and evaluation belong to post-reading strategies (Hudson, 2007, pp. 108–110). On balance, the taxonomy sets forth useful guidelines both for activity design and the progression of L2 classroom tasks.

In a similar vein, Grabe and Stoller (2019) highlight the beneficial effects of sequencing reading activities and strategies during the pre-, while-, and post-reading stages regarding reading to learn contexts, with content becoming a core focus of pedagogical practice. In their opinion, however, the while-reading stage seems to be the most neglected component of teachers' decisions in this respect. Generally, the sequential use of reading strategies that ensures natural processing of textual material can be a vital factor in L2 and FL instructional contexts.

5. Implications for second/foreign reading practice

Having analysed a range of issues dominating recent discussions on strategic reading in L2/FL settings, it is imperative to underline that despite the lack of unanimity of experts' opinions, it is obvious that organizing efficient L2 reading practice requires deep understanding of an interplay of numerous variables, strategic reading being one of them. The most important recommendation is that from primary to tertiary educational levels, L2 readers should be provided with optimal assistance in coping with their limited language proficiency so that both content and language-oriented goals can be reached. Although classroom teachers implement activities built on and around a selected reading passage, they have to be fully aware of L2/FL long-term teaching goals that go much beyond promoting single-text comprehension. Exposed to multiple texts, L2 learners should be given an opportunity to acquire new content through reading while simultaneously improving their reading literacy skills and general language competence. All this can be achieved only when they develop into strategic readers, capable of reaching the goals set before them.

In an effort to enhance strategy-oriented reading instruction provided to second/foreign language learners, teachers should make informed decisions concerning appropriate task design so that specific strategy types can be deployed either explicitly or implicitly. Yet, they also have to be aware of the fact that

learners will use some strategies beyond teachers' reach as their personal tools. What requires teacher reflection, as pointed out by numerous specialists (e.g., Hudson, 2007; Dakowska, 2016; Grabe & Stoller, 2019), is the problem of adequate sequencing and integration of strategy-based reading tasks. Finally, L2/FL teachers should bear in mind that reading and learning from text gives a good ground for promoting learners' critical thinking skills and reading appreciation, as well as increasing their motivation to read more in future.

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Teacher competencies in supporting reading in English as a foreign language

ABSTRACT
Based on a small-scale survey and discussion with teacher-learners in a postgraduate teacher education program in Poland, this paper aims to investigate their understanding of 'learning to read in L2 English' and the current state of their competencies in teaching reading. Descriptors taken from the European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages, EPOSTL, are used are used as criteria to analyze the qualitative data. It is found that while there appears to be awareness and indication of application of some competencies, the participants seem confused as to how to support younger elementary L2 learners in developing basic reading skills and may lack understanding of theories to underpin their practice.
Keywords: teacher competencies, supporting reading, postgraduate teacher education.

1. Introduction

This article describes a pilot case study designed to investigate the competencies of teachers of English as a foreign language in supporting reading among primary aged learners (7–15 years). Research findings from large scale research conducted in Poland indicate that a substantial proportion of learners at the end of key stage 3 (year 9 at the time of the studies, age 15–16) are under-achieving in reading comprehension skills when compared to curricular targets of A2 on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (65% in the European Survey of Language Competences, (Dyszkiewicz et al., 2013, p. 30); 58% in BUNJO (Study of Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in Lower Secondary School), (Dyszkiewicz, Marczak, Paczuska, Pitura & Kutyłowska, 2015, p. 29).

Changes to the national core curriculum for primary school (Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej (MEN), 2017) and a new national examination in English at the end of year 8, beginning in spring 2019, have extended the range of sub-skills of reading to include the ability to recognize relationships between different parts

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of a text, (an ability found most challenging for the participants in the BUNJO study) and to distinguish fact from opinion. In addition, the new examination also requires test-takers to use mediation skills to work between languages, with information given in texts in the foreign language summarized in the first language, or vice versa.

A second challenge facing teachers has been brought about by the new core curriculum and changes to the school system. Previously the target language level in primary school was for learners to attain level A1 (CEFR) at the end of class 6. The changes made in the school year 2017/2018 mean that suddenly the level A1 should be achieved by learners at the end of class 3. Learners in class 4 primary are consequently now faced with a considerably more demanding programme. In short, the demands made on learners of English in primary classes have undergone sudden change with little prior warning. This has been accompanied by new syllabi and course books, with the result that teachers and learners of English in primary school face particular challenges.

2. Teacher competencies in teaching reading

In this context we define teacher competencies as "abilities, skills, knowledge and attitudes required to achieve professional goals proficiently" (Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications, 2003, p.9). When considering the particular competencies for teaching reading in a foreign language we turned to the European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages, EPOSTL, (Newby et al., 2007) as participants would be students in a language teacher education programme. Secondly, EPOSTL descriptors relate directly to the Common European Framework of Reference for Modern Languages (CEFR) (European Centre for Modern Languages, n.d., EPOSTL presentation, slides 43–44) to which the Polish national core curriculum is also closely aligned (MEN, 2017, pp. 10–12). Consequently, it was felt that the EPOSTL descriptors of teacher competencies in reading were pertinent to the context and could be used to operationalize the construct.

EPOSTL includes the following descriptors for teacher competencies in teaching reading:

> I can select texts appropriate to the needs, interests and language level of the learners.
> I can provide a range of pre-reading activities to help learners to orientate themselves to a text.
> I can encourage learners to use their knowledge of a topic and their expectations about a text when reading.
> I can apply appropriate ways of reading a text in class (e.g., aloud, silently, in groups etc.).
> I can set different activities in order to practise and develop different reading strategies according to the purpose of reading (skimming, scanning etc.).
> I can help learners to develop different strategies to cope with difficult or unknown vocabulary in a text.

> I can evaluate and select a variety of post-reading tasks to provide a bridge between reading and other skills.
> I can recommend books appropriate to the needs, interests and language level of the learners.
> I can help learners to develop critical reading skills (reflection, interpretation, analysis etc.). (Newby et al., 2007, p. 26)

EPOSTL is not simply a checklist, but is intended to encourage reflection on the theories, principles, beliefs and values which underlie the descriptors (Newby et al., 2007, p. 87). With this in mind, in the next section we consider the theoretical background to teaching reading in a foreign language, with particular consideration for the early stages of introducing reading to younger learners in primary school.

3. Theoretical background

Current theories on second/foreign language (L2) reading build on theories from research done on first language (L1) reading (Grabe, 2014). While earlier work considered L2 reading in isolation, recent studies (e.g., Koda, 2005; 2007; Koda & Miller, 2018) indicate how L2 reading ability combines L1 reading skills with proficiency in the L2. Thus, first we will give a very brief overview of the reading construct as seen in L1 research.

Successful reading comprehension involves a complex interaction between different skills, often referred to as lower level and higher level processes (e.g., Pearson & Cervetti, 2013), where the lower level focuses on the word and the higher level on the text. The basic model begins with word recognition, a process of decoding, which means finding the relationship between the written form and its representation in the mental lexicon, although how this takes place is the subject of some controversy. While some believe that phonological awareness of how a written form is pronounced is needed (e.g., Ehri, 2006), others propose a dual-route model, where words are 'sounded' only if they are not known or they are 'opaque' (Pearson & Cervetti, 2014, p. 509).

Pearson & Cervetti (2015), in a review of the history of theories of reading comprehension, suggest that current views favour the Construction-Integration model (Kintsch, 1998). This cognitive approach recognizes the importance of interaction between the reader and the text and, while acknowledging the context as part of the model, reduces the scope of its influence from the schema theories proposed in the 1990's. The reader's aim is to try to create a coherent mental representation from the text (Pearson & Cervetti, 2015, p.10) moving from 'surface form' to 'textbase' and finally to a 'situation model' (Kintsch, 1988, 1998). So the reader builds a model of text comprehension, working from meaning units (propositions) to create a semantic network map of main idea comprehension (Kintsch & Welch, 1991), using background knowledge, inferencing, strategic

processing (cognitive strategies, e.g., using contextual cues in text to infer meaning; metacognitive strategies, "those used for planning, monitoring or reviewing how the interaction with the…text will take place" (Taylor, Stevens, & Asher, 2006, p. 216) and attitudes to text information.

Reading in a second or foreign language could be perceived as following a similar pattern, as the L2 reader already has experience of reading in the L1. Cummins (1979), in the Interdependence Hypothesis, poses a "common underlying proficiency" of reading, suggesting skills from the L1 can be transferred to the L2 provided that the L1 skills are well-developed. Sparks and Ganschow (1991) in the Linguistic Coding Differences Hypothesis proposed that the level of ability in the L2 is linked to L1 competences. Sparks, Patton, Ganschowe, Humbach & Javorsky (2008) found that L1 word decoding skills were a reliable predictor of the ability to decode in the L2, and L1 reading comprehension skills were a good predictor of L2 reading comprehension ability. Koda (2005, 2007) suggests that metalinguistic awareness in L1 assists the learner with the L2. In short, there is now considerable evidence for a strong relationship between reading skills in the first and foreign languages (see Melby-Lervåg & Lervåg, 2011 for a meta-analysis). Recent research is considering the role of working memory in reading comprehension (e.g., Harrington & Sawyer, 1992; Alptekin & Ercetin, 2009) and the additional role played by prior or back ground knowledge in this process (Shin, Dronjic, & Park, 2019).

Despite these commonalities, there are key differences when we consider elementary L2 readers and compare them with L1 readers. At early stages of L2 reading learners have limited linguistic resources, and in particular limited lexical knowledge (Grabe, 2014). Unlike L1 readers, the L2 elementary reader may be 'meeting' in print words they do not previously know. While some of their experience of reading in L1 may help them, they can be adversely affected by differences between L1 and L2 phonological processing (Koda, 2005) which may negatively impact on comprehension.

It has been shown that reading fluency can be improved by helping learners build grapheme-phoneme relationships (Ehri, 2006; Cain & Oakhill, 2012; Rayner, Pollatsek, Ashby, & Clifton, 2012) and by giving specific instruction in strategies for developing an understanding of a text (Pressley, 2006; Grabe & Stoller, 2013). In L1 settings developing fluency in reading is tackled by a variety of approaches. These include reading aloud with guidance; reading aloud along with a recording of the text; repeated reading aloud of short, simplified texts; extensive reading programmes; and timed reading (where the student reads aloud a familiar text suitable for their level and is timed. The learner then re-reads the text which is timed again and the times are compared. This process may be iterative). Reading aloud by the teacher has also been found helpful (National Reading Panel, 2000). There are also comprehensive approaches such as Reading Recovery, based on the

work of Clay (2005a, 2005b) which has been extensively researched and found to have a significant and lasting impact on developing reading skills (see e.g., Hurry & Fridkin, 2018).

In second or foreign language settings extensive reading programmes have also been found beneficial for development of reading skills (see Beglar & Hunt, 2014). Additionally, a meta-analysis by Briggs and Walter (2016) found that extensive reading had a positive effect for motivation and attitudes in young learners. Chodkiewicz (2016) investigated the relationship between secondary school learners' interest and the type of text they read.

Reading fluency development is also of research interest. Taguchi, Gorsuch, Lems, & Rosszell (2016) compared the outcomes for elementary learners from two forms of scaffolding: repeated reading and reading along with a recording. Chang and Millett (2013) found a positive effect for timed repeated reading in a study of college level students in Taiwan.

Other research studies strategy use in various forms. Teng (2019) for example, in a small scale study in Hong Kong, found ESL young learners' reading was improved through raising awareness of metacognitive reading strategies. Taki (2019) compared use of online reading strategies in L1 and L2.

In order to be successful, in addition to specific focus on aspects of reading, the L2 learner also needs to develop their linguistic skills, as language proficiency has been found to correlate with achievement in reading comprehension in the early stages of language learning (Mihaljevič Djigunovič, 2010; Nikolov & Csapo, 2010).

Thus, by implication, the L2 reading teacher needs to have knowledge of the processes of reading, especially at early stages, and a good awareness of the differences between L1 and L2 processing. Those teaching elementary L2 readers need a repertoire of techniques and related activities to support the building of grapheme-phoneme expertise in learners. In addition, analytic/diagnostic skills are needed to enable the teacher to identify difficulties learners are having with reading. This implies that the teacher needs to have an understanding of both cognitive and metacognitive strategic processing and a range of approaches to modeling and supporting strategy use. This we see as comprising the knowledge and skill set which underlies the competencies underlying the EPOSTL descriptors.

4. Research design and procedure

This section describes a pilot study conducted in a university in Poland with the aims of

- identifying how developing and future teachers perceive reading in English and the development of L2 reading.

It also aimed

- to identify competencies in teaching reading the (future) teachers appear to have, and

- to discover if there were competencies which seemed in need of development.

This was a pilot study with a view to developing a questionnaire and semi-structured interview questions which could be used with a larger population of teachers, both practising and teachers-to-be.

4.1. Participants

The study was conducted with 10 second (final) year students on a two-year post-graduate MA English programme, with a specialization in language teacher methodology, which ends in a state-recognized teaching qualification. It was a convenience sample, of women (there were no males in the group) ranging in age from the early twenties to the early thirties, with the majority (6) in the first category. They represent a range of teaching experience, with one having no experience at all, six having between 1 and 3 years, one with between 4 and 6 years and two with 10–12 years' experience. Participants gave their consent to take part in the research.

4.2. Research instruments

Data was collected by means of a printed questionnaire and a group discussion. The questionnaire comprised two sections, the first with closed questions to obtain background information on the participant and the second with open questions on a number of topic areas, each then broken down with a number of sub-questions. The topic areas included the following:

1. What do you think a pupil in primary class 4 (age 10–11) needs to do to be able to read in English? (7 sub-questions)
2. How do learners get better at reading? How does this skill develop?
3. In the course book you are using with your pupils there are texts to read. How would you typically approach a reading text in class? (5 sub-questions)
4. What kind of problems do your pupils have with reading in English?

Before implementation, the questionnaire was shown to two practising teachers, who were asked to read it and indicate any parts they felt unclear or to suggest improvements. The questions for the group discussion were drafted in writing beforehand, based on the areas addressed in the questionnaire. However, if other points emerged in the talk further questions were added spontaneously during the discussion.

4.3. Group discussion

After completing the questionnaire six of the teachers took part in a semi-structured discussion of their responses and follow-up questions. The researcher took field notes and then wrote an account immediately afterwards.

5. Analysis

The list of EPOSTL can do statements (see above) were used as search criteria to analyze the open answers in the questionnaires. For example, the can do statement "I can provide a range of pre-reading activities to help learners to orientate themselves to a text" was condensed to the notions "provide range of pre-reading activities" plus "purpose, orientate learners to text." The use of such criteria, or codes, serves to systematize the data analysis, disciplining the interpretation to what is indeed reported, following the focus given by the respondents. In this way bias in the interpretation is limited.

First readings of the questionnaires focused on finding evidence of mention of the criteria. It was discovered during this reading process that participants explored the criteria at different levels, so two categories were created: *mention*, defined as the writer making allusion to the criteria, which was taken as suggesting the participant had awareness of it; and *description of practice*, defined as the writer providing information about application of the criteria in their teaching, which was taken as suggesting this was part the participant's repertoire of teaching skills. Initially the categories were analyzed quantitatively, counting frequency of mention and description with the aim of identifying predominant themes.

The field notes from the group discussion were analyzed in the same way, to track the EPOSTL criteria and note any additional themes.

6. Limitations of the study

This is a pilot study of a small number of participants in a convenience sample. Analysis of the data from both the open answers in the questionnaire and from the discussion was done by a single researcher and no independent verification was carried out, laying the interpretation open to charges of subjectivity. The group discussion data is based on ethnographic notes, which were taken during the discussion, but no recording was made to allow verification of their reliability. Consequently, making generalizations from the data is not advised. However, the researcher found much to reflect on as a result of the analysis and these thoughts will be offered in place of implications from the research.

7. Findings

In this section findings from the questionnaires and group discussion are presented. For reasons of space, only the four criteria most frequently mentioned in the questionnaires will be described and discussed.

7.1. Questionnaire

Pre-reading activities

All 10 teachers claim they use a variety of ways of introducing the topic of the text before the reading, such as using pictures, discussing the topic, or

guessing what the text will be about from the title. While there was some evidence of predicting the content, and encouraging learners to make use of background knowledge, this was limited.

Coping with unfamiliar vocabulary

In general, the approach taken appears to be to tackle unfamiliar words during or after reading, with only a few mentions (3) of pre-teaching of key words. Some while-reading approaches were teacher-focused responses, such as telling learners to underline new words during the reading to return to later; answering questions from learners during reading, or asking if other students can explain the unfamiliar word. Other teachers report the more collaborative approach of encouraging learners to work with a partner, or build autonomy by promoting the use of a dictionary. There was one mention of strategy training, where the teacher shows a learner how to guess from context, and scaffolds the learner in doing this through the use of guided questions. As a post-reading activity it was reported that new words are written on board, explained, and then students may be asked to make sentences using them.

Reading in class

In the teachers' responses there was a strong focus on word and text level decoding as being a dominant feature of the approach to a text in class. Some teachers reported they have learners read aloud and correct their pronunciation. In term of comprehension, there appears to be a trend to work from general questions on the text to more specific questions, all of which appear come from the course book. Some teachers mention asking students to summarize the text in own words, while others mention 'discussion' of text, but it was not clear if this means the teacher talks about it, or everyone.

Helping learners develop use of different reading strategies

Some evidence was found of awareness that learners need to use cognitive strategies, however, focus in many cases was on *knowledge* of grammar and vocabulary and the ability to guess words from context, which seems to suggest awareness may be superficial. Only limited evidence of awareness of metacognitive strategies was noted, particularly with regard to pre-reading. The only description of practice in developing use of reading strategies was the one of guessing from context given in the previous section.

Other: what causes learners problems in reading

A variety of different problems were reported. Some of these were to do with difficulties at word and text level decoding, such as mispronunciation of words caused by interference from L1 processing and related "frustration" that learners

have with lack of reading fluency. Other difficulties were to do with vocabulary, where some highlighted the learners' limited lexis, with learners wanting to check every new word, while other teachers reported the learners were "unable to guess meaning" of unfamiliar words, which in some cases was said to lead to embarrassment in the learner.

Motivation, problems with attention and focus were also reported, which in some cases was linked to the topic or level of texts in the course book. One teacher, who works with secondary school students, reported that comprehension questions which required inferencing were problematic.

7.2. Group discussion

The first question asked the teachers to look back on their own memories of learning to read in English and consider what was helpful in the process. Most of the memories were from reading in lessons at school, where the general agreement was that this involved reading aloud from a course book text around the class. Opinions on this were negative. "The focus was on pronunciation and the meaning was lost" was one comment. The participants reported that as the teacher asked learners in turn, it was easy to count ahead, find which part you would have to read and practice that, rather than listening to the others. The participants talked of their gradual realization that the spelling of a word and its pronunciation differed and so "it was not that simple".

As the participants are concurrently on teaching practice and observing lessons in school they were asked to talk about how they have seen reading being dealt with. Discussion arose on the question "What was the text about" as something they proposed the teacher should ask the learners. One teacher, with experience of practice in early years education abroad, commented that "students don't read to enjoy, they focus on answering questions" and that this focus on comprehension questions "makes the learner miss the experience of the text." Others concurred, drawing attention to the treatment of reading in elementary course books, where it was felt the purpose of a written text was to introduce new language structures, rather than to develop the reading skill. One person commented, " In fact they could learn new structures from a text: if you're left to yourself you see things and think 'What's that? Why is that being used?' but the student doesn't do that, because of those questions."

The discussion then moved to comprehension of a text. Commenting from the perspective of experience of one-to one tutoring of young learners of English, one teacher explained how a pupil had mastered doing comprehension tasks without understanding the text at all. Having deduced that a typical question was direct reference (i.e., contained the same words in the question as in the text), the pupil used a matching strategy, simply scanning the text for the words from the question. The other participants agreed this was common practice. In another example the

same participant reported a different learner who in answering a question gave more information than was in the text. When asked how this was possible the pupil explained she had used the pictures surrounding the text, rather than reading. "There was so much information in the pictures on the page with the text that the student didn't need to read!"

In talking about the mechanics of reading, the participants reflected that in early stages it is necessary to "know a word already, then you just look at it and guess." This ability, they felt, was developed through listening to a text and seeing it at the same time. The difficulty of reading was illustrated by an example given by a participant from a teaching practice observation. The pupils were working on past simple and were able to read sentences in the present tense. One target sentence included the word "know" which the pupils read aloud without difficulty. However, when trying to say the past form "knew", they resorted to L1 decoding, while at the same time carrying over the L2 knowledge from the present tense that "k" is silent, resulting in /nev/.

A teacher from a different ethnic context described a 4 year old boy in individual tutoring who "had a complex that he would never learn to read English because the words are pronounced differently." The teacher explained how she had been able to encourage him using a book on how to teach reading in English. She had extended the practice by finding a simplified reader with "pictures and simple sentences" on dogs, a topic of interest for her learner, who thanks to her help learnt to read English successfully. At this, one participant commented that during her observations in primary school "I've never seen anyone teaching reading, they all assume the children all know how to read in Polish so they can read in English." All of the other participants agreed.

In conclusion, it can be seen that during the discussion the teachers draw on own experiences as learners, on observation of other teachers, and on their own teaching experience.

8. Discussion

In this section the research questions are discussed in turn.

8.1 How developing and future teachers perceive reading in English and the development of L2 reading

It would appear that in both the questionnaire and the discussion there is some evidence that the participants are aware of how L2 reading develops in the early stages of learning. While the participants themselves are L2 learners, they were unable to recall how they started to read in English. As with all the processes we learn which then become automatized, we quickly forget the individual stages which were necessary to perfect through conscious and effortful practice on the way to becoming proficient. (Consider learning how to drive a car, for example).

Through the opportunity to discuss together, however, we see that illustrations given by individuals of teaching experiences with early L2 reading, help the teachers to collectively begin to build a picture of the L2 reading process. This is reinforced by information from the questionnaires on what causes learners difficulty in reading, where references are made to L1 interference. It does seem, however, that understanding of the process is somewhat hazy. While there are many instances of mentions of awareness of difficulty with the grapheme-phoneme issue (Ehri, 2006; Koda, 2005; Rayner et al., 2012), with the exception of the teacher who used worked systematically with the 4 year old with the help of a dedicated "how to teach reading" book, there are no descriptions of practice. The comment that she had never seen anyone teaching reading in English from one participant was said in a way which suggested it was a moment of epiphany for her. The participant description of using the "how to" book promoted interest and others were disappointed to find that the book was written in another language. Another indicator, perhaps, that the notion that there is a systematic approach to teaching reading in English is unfamiliar. This would seem to echo Grabe (2009) in the introduction to his book. Much research in L2 reading draws on L1 reading research (see Melby-Lervåg & Lervåg, 2011). Here, however, we are referring to research on L1 reading in English put into practice. The participants appear to be drawing on their personal experiences from L1 reading in Polish and the idea that they could draw on L1 English reading research and practice (such as the National Reading Panel, 2000) seems unfamiliar.

8.2. Competencies in teaching reading the (future) teachers appear to have and competencies which seem in need of development.

When we move to the competencies in teaching reading the (future) teachers appear to have, we can see clearly that knowledge and practice of pre-reading activities seems to be firmly in place. However, when we consider the awareness of reading strategies and apparent lack of any mention of metacognitive strategies (Taylor et al., 2006), we may wonder if the pre-reading activities simply represent techniques which have been learnt, with no deeper understanding of why or how these support reading or comprehension. This appears to be an extension of the haziness of understanding of L2 reading processes expressed above. If the teacher does not really understand how L2 reading develops or how comprehension comes about, then it is logical that they are not able to place pre-reading tasks into that process, or to fully grasp their role. The teacher appears to have learnt that certain approaches are preferred, or expected as good practice, and conforms without understanding the underlying theory.

This seems to be borne out when we consider treatment of unfamiliar vocabulary, and in particular the expectation that the elementary L2 reader will be able to guess unfamiliar words from context. Despite it now being accepted

from research that knowledge of around 98% words in a text is needed before such guessing is possible (Stahl & Nagy, 2006), this still commonly appears in methodology books, most of which do not cater for teachers of young L2 learners in primary school. The child who is at A1 or earlier stages of language development is well below the threshold needed to be able to guess any word in a text. Their working memory and other executive functions are entirely focused on the problem of decoding, first at word level and then, very slowly, at combining the deciphered words into a sentence and then seeing the text as a whole (Grabe, 2009, pp. 36–37). Guessing at this level is trying to guess what a word is from looking at the first few letters and recognizing it, rather than having to sound each letter out and build up a phonological representation. In short, the theory the teachers seem to be able to draw on is not adequate for the teaching situations many of them are engaged in, as it does not cover early L2 reading. Until the decoding process becomes automatic the young learner is going to have great difficulty comprehending the meaning of a text (Grabe, 2009 p. 23). Consequently, it is hardly surprising that some of the learners described have developed strategies to support them in this, using pictures rather than the text, or 'matching' words in the question with words from the text. These teachers are reporting insights from one-to-one teaching. Imagine the difficulty of the teacher who has not had this experience, in a group of fifteen learners. It is likely that they would, erroneously, get the impression that the students could understand the text, with potentially negative consequences as the course progresses, particularly for those learners who are having difficulty with reading.

9. Reflections arising from the analysis

As indicated earlier, because of the scope of this case study generalizations will not be made. As a teacher educator planning courses on a postgraduate programme and working in seminars with teacher-learners who need to read academic texts I see two possible ways forward to support (future) teachers in their work. First, within teaching methodology courses there is a strong need for space for and tasks which help participants integrate earlier learned theories, with personal experience and practice (see Ellis, 2018, for a suggestion of how this might be done) with a view to raising awareness and promoting lifelong learning. Methodology at the MA level needs to return to the "how to" techniques taught in the BA programme and revisit them, attempting to place them within a clearer understanding of "why" and "how" they are needed. Thus the MA course content should not be only "wider" than the BA, but above all "deeper" and more integrated, pulling together educational psychology, general education and pedagogy in addition to subject-specific content. Within this revisiting, there needs to be clear focus on early L2 reading and attention to L1 reading in English research and its application in schooling. There would also appear to be scope for critical analysis of how

reading is approached in school course books and a comparison between this and current L2 reading theories.

Secondly, within the practical language components of the MA programme and the seminar there are opportunities for modeling many and varied strategies for dealing with advanced texts, which by implication may broaden the (future) teacher's repertoire, based on the hypothesis that personal experience will strengthen understanding of the importance and use of strategies, which may encourage the teacher to develop these with their learners.

In conclusion, this exploratory study indicates that there are many avenues still to be explored in future research, particularly in supporting early L2 reading in primary school.

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Reading as a core component of developing academic literacy skills in L2 settings

ABSTRACT
Academic reading has gained considerable interest among language theoreticians and practitioners as a key component of generally understood academic literacy competencies. Yet, despite the unquestionable importance of developing advanced reading skills in both L1 and L2 academic settings, a definition of the concept of academic reading is still not easy to formulate. In an attempt to better understand the notion of academic reading, this article first, provides an overview of the goals of academic reading comprehension, with special focus on reading to learn, and then, discusses the relationship of academic reading to other concepts currently employed with reference to academic literacy. The article finishes with some guidelines for L2 reading instruction developed at the academic level.
Keywords: academic literacy, academic reading, reading to learn

1. Introduction

It may be observed that over the last two decades the skill of reading has gained a special status in subject matter instruction in academic settings and it is treated as an essential skill for students in achieving their education-related goals. Academic reading is typically taken to be an aspect of a multi-component construct of academic literacy which can be explained as "ways of thinking, reading, speaking, and writing dominant in the academic setting; […] ways of receiving knowledge, managing knowledge and creating knowledge for the benefit of a field of study" (Neeley, 2005, p. 8). Such a perspective on academic literacy suggests that even though the term 'academic reading' refers predominantly to the skill of reading, it is inextricably bound with all of the other elements of academic literacy, as noted by Neeley (2005). In the opinion of some scholars, however, it is academic reading and academic writing that constitute two central and integral skills underlying all the other academic skills and competences (Peelo, 1994; Norris & Phillips, 2009; Chodkiewicz, 2014; McCulloch, 2013; Hirvela, 2016; Lillis & Tuck, 2016;

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McGrath, Berggren, & Mežek, 2016). Thus, it seems to be highly justified to explore the notion of academic reading as an aspect of academic literacy.

2. Defining academic reading and its purposes

A frequent attempt at defining academic reading concerns the discussion of its prime objectives. Clearly, academic settings require that reading is conceptualised as much more than general comprehension, searching for simple information or skimming the text. Yet, these aims are unquestionably also present when reading at the academic level as they represent the most fundamental and universal reasons for text processing. There are, however, a number of more specific purposes for reading that are characteristic of academic-related educational situations.

Due to the fact that academic reading is closely connected with the idea of working with multiple texts, reading to integrate information is regarded as one of main purposes for reading (Urquhart & Weir, 1998; Mayer, 2002; Rouet, 2006; Britt, Rouet, & Durik, 2018). As explained by Grabe and Stoller (2011), readers are expected to select relevant ideas from different sources, interpret them, and, finally, restructure. Integrating information from multiple texts is frequently associated with another purpose for reading, that is reading to critique. In fact, having a critical stance towards expository texts is an elementary feature of an academically literate person (Wallace, 2003). One more reason for reading which occurs naturally in formal education settings concerns reading to write (Grabe & Stoller, 2011). As already mentioned, developing one's academic literacy and content-area knowledge frequently involves the integration of these two receptive and productive skills.

Since reading and learning processes typically get interwoven in instructional contexts, another objective of academic reading closely connected with those listed above is reading to learn (Harrison & Perry, 2004; Chodkiewicz, 2014; Oakhill, Cain, & Elbro, 2015). Underlining the mutual relation between reading and learning, Grabe and Stoller (2019) recognize knowledge acquisition as the final goal of text processing. They point out that reading to learn is a purposeful activity performed by learners as well as by experts in a given field due to diverse inner and external stimuli. It is important to note that this purpose for reading is often perceived by researchers as a separate concept that is also referred to as 'reading to study', 'learning by reading', 'learning from reading', 'learning from text', 'studying from text', 'content-based reading' and 'knowledge-based reading' (Chodkiewicz, 2014, 2015b). Although different terms have been launched by reading specialists, they generally depict reading to learn as a multi-layered concept based on interrelated components and processes.

Koda (2019) identifies three interrelated operations that constitute the foundations of any effective reading to learn experience. They concern building text-meaning, constructing personal-meaning, and refining knowledge. In other

words, readers get involved in creating the meaning of a particular text by analysing its linguistic and discursive features. Also, apart from activating own background knowledge of the subject matter, they reflect on the similarities and discrepancies between the current state of their knowledge and the content of the text they read (Koda, 2019; Koda & Yamashita, 2019). There are a number of what Grabe and Stoller (2019) call 'reading abilities' that L2/FL readers employ while performing such operations (p. 9). They include, among others, reading for main ideas and details, inferencing, using relevant reading strategies, analysing text structure and discourse, integrating information from multiple texts, and rereading texts purposefully. The analysis of both the quantity and the cognitive complexity of these abilities makes it apparent that reading to learn is a complex construct.

3. Academic reading in light of current approaches to L1 and L2 literacy

Issues in developing advanced reading skills have been discussed with reference not only to the concept of academic reading but also to a range of other approaches or frameworks connected with L1/L2 literacy. They include, for instance, English for academic purposes, English for specific purposes, content-based instruction, content-area reading, disciplinary literacy, and critical literacy. It is crucial to take them into consideration while exploring the concept of academic reading as they seem to either partially overlap with it or to be closely related to it.

For a long time academic reading skills have been found to be closely connected with English for academic purposes (EAP) (Hirvela, 2016; Hyland, 2016; Hyland & Shaw, 2016; Lillis & Tuck, 2016). However, due to the fact that the scope of the concept has evolved, and that nowadays it is used with reference to both research and practice-focused contexts, a further distinction between language used for general academic purposes and for more specific academic purposes has been proposed (Hyland, 2012; Charles, 2013; Humphrey, 2016; McGrath et al., 2016; Stoller, 2016; Wilson, 2016). Hyland (2016) suggests using two terms which clearly point at this demarcation, namely 'English for general academic purposes' (EGAP) and 'English for specific academic purposes' (ESAP) (p. 18). The former is connected with teaching elements of language skills and subsystems that are universal and shared by all disciplines first, and then, moving to those that are more discipline-specific. The latter, on the other hand, advocates instructing students from the very beginning on the so-called specialised features of academic English. This distinction signals a two-fold goal of academic reading instruction which should assist students in noticing not only general features of academic expository texts but also the ones that are characteristic of disciplinary texts.

Researchers often find it important to look at academic reading as related to a variety of educational situations covered by the concept of English for specific purposes (ESP). Evidently, a commonly accepted view nowadays is that academic reading events should be analysed in the context of particular academic

courses or programmes (Hirvela, 2013; Paltridge, 2013; Parkinson, 2013). It is widely acknowledged that developing students' ESP reading skills should involve explicit instruction on the identification of rhetorical features in texts exploited in the classroom as well as shaping students' discourse analytic skills (Martinez, 2002; Hyland, 2012; van Dijk, 2012; Hirvela, 2013).

Academic reading is also regarded as one of the key skills to be promoted in content-based instruction (CBI), which means teaching a second language in parallel with the content of a given subject area. Adopting the principles of CBI provides students with opportunities to use academic language in meaningful contexts and become familiarised with discipline-specific vocabulary (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008; Chodkiewicz, 2015a). Importantly, this approach draws attention to the fact that attending to lexical-grammatical structures of written texts can enhance content knowledge acquisition. This means that language instruction demands that the content of reading material should be processed appropriately so that the text becomes logical and rational to its readers (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Twyman, McCleery, & Tindal, 2006).

It is justified, then, to treat academic literacy and academic reading as tightly connected with subject-matter learning. Content-area reading, also referred to as 'reading in content areas' (Herber, 1970), encourages the idea that developing students' reading comprehension skills should be a naturally embedded element of content subject instruction (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). Adopting this approach to reading on a regular basis guarantees that students are provided with meaningful purposes for reading, authentic content materials, systematic practice in text comprehension and, importantly, training in developing proper study skills (Handsfield, 2016).

Since academic reading has commonly been explored in relation to specific disciplines of knowledge, a distinction between the so-called subject-matter/subject-area/content-area literacy and disciplinary literacy has been recognized (Moje, 2008). Content-area literacy instruction denotes the development of students' general capability of reading and writing to learn from subject-matter texts while adopting a range of cognitive strategies, and it is commonly referred to as reading expository texts across diverse content areas (Fang & Coatoam, 2013). The basic assumption behind disciplinary literacy, on the other hand, is that there exist profound rhetorical and linguistic differences between specific disciplines (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008, 2012). By way of illustration, as it emerges from corpus linguistics literature, while authors of computer science texts typically take advantage of verbs that are of formal character (e.g., *prove, define*), the authors of texts belonging to the field of linguistics use verbs related to verbal communication (e.g., *argue*) and cognition (e.g., *see, feel*) (Teich & Fankhauser, 2010). It is mandatory for students, then, to focus on the unique features of disciplinary texts in order to succeed in constructing experiential meaning, interpersonal meaning, and textual meaning of a particular text (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008; Hillman, 2014; Humphrey, 2016). What is more,

disciplinary literacy practices involve the adoption of certain skills and strategies typically employed by experts responsible for co-construction of knowledge in a particular discipline (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012). This means a shift from the use of general subject-matter study skills and strategies to more specialized and more advanced ones. As a consequence, students are to be supported in developing literacy practices, cognitive skills, and the knowledge of language and discourse characteristics of a particular discipline (Fang & Coatoam, 2013; Hillman, 2014).

Apart from being looked at as a cognitive-based and knowledge-driven process, reading at higher levels of education is approached as a social process and realistic practice to be analysed, discussed, and finally, evaluated. Indeed, critical thinking underlies the study of academic disciplines and constitutes one of the major educational goals in the western world (Wilson, 2016). The significance of taking a personal stance by students on the information to be learnt is depicted in the well-known Taxonomy of Educational Objectives developed by Bloom et al. (1956) and in its revised version proposed by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001). Academic reading, therefore, should engage students, especially those at the university level, in creating their own perspective on the issues described in texts they read. In other words, academic reading demands a dialogical interaction with expository texts on the part of a reader, that is his or her 'critical engagement' (Abbott, 2013). In order to achieve this goal, critical literacy, as Janks (2010) calls it 'reading against texts' (p. 22), needs to be placed in the centre of instruction. Students have to become aware of the authors' beliefs on the content of texts they are exposed to, which can be expressed, for instance, by means of evaluative language (Hyland, 2005) as well as of the possible influence of such beliefs and language on the text interpretation. Simultaneously, readers need to learn how to analyse, interpret and question arguments, postulates and hypotheses expressed in target texts (Wallace, 2003; Wilson, 2016).

Taken together, it is believed that the discussion undertaken in this article demonstrates how complex the concept of academic reading is. In the opinion of the current author, it might be worth conceptualizing academic reading as a kind of 'umbrella term' combining diverse approaches to L1 and L2 literacies. Undoubtedly, academic reading is a broad notion which still deserves more reflection on the part of theoreticians and practitioners with regard to different academic disciplines studied in a diversity of educational environments. It should also be acknowledged that enhancing students' academic literacy, which is to a large extent based on the skill of academic reading, should undeniably constitute a major objective of both content-area and language instruction.

4. Drawing some guidelines for enhancing L2 academic reading skills

As pointed out above, developing students' academic reading skills in the context of formal education requires an implementation of explicit reading instruction (e.g., Koda, 2005; Fisher et al., 2008; Grabe & Stoller, 2014; Cliff Hodges, 2016;

Schwanenflugel & Knapp, 2016; Chodkiewicz, 2018). Much scholarly discussion of fostering academic reading skills of L2 students pertains to establishing general goals for reading instruction. Overall, they concern the enhancement of students' both lower-level and higher-level text processing skills (Handsfield, 2016; Chodkiewicz, 2018). Foreign language readers, in particular, are recommended to focus on creating abundant recognition vocabulary knowledge, improving word recognition skills and reading fluency, as well as identifying the main ideas conveyed in texts. They should also be assisted in developing their skills of synthesizing, inferencing, discourse processing, and text structure analysis as well as in using their prior knowledge and reading strategies purposefully (Grabe & Stoller, 2009). Although each of these aims of foreign language reading instruction is not to be undermined in formal education, a range of other dimensions of academic reading need attention as well.

One fundamental way of enhancing academic reading skills is to provide students with continuous exposure to authentic texts which are fully communicative in their nature and which contain representative features of the content area that the students study (Dakowska, 2016). Hence, it is significant that students are acquainted with structural, linguistic and discursive features characteristic of texts of a given field (Buehl, 2011; Grabe & Stoller, 2014). Also, they should receive practice in establishing schemata critical for raising the awareness of comprehension clues (Hall et al., 2005; Usó-Juan, 2006; Chodkiewicz, 2016). In order to foster readers' formation of schemata, the principles of genre-based reading instruction can be followed (Hirvela, 2013).

Furthermore, it is essential that authentic texts used in the classroom are accompanied by tasks relevant in terms of learner and text characteristics (Hudson, 2007; Chamot, 2009) Such tasks ought to be suitable for particular educational contexts, and they should ensure that the target behaviour of readers is enhanced. It is also important that the intended communicative purpose of the text is clear enough so that students are provoked to respond to it with their attitudes (Bråten, Gil, & Strømsø, 2011; Dakowska, 2016; McGrath et al., 2016). When engaged in academic reading tasks, L2/FL students can also be directed towards more extensive activation of their background content knowledge as well as their knowledge of the native and target languages and cultures (Mishan, 2005; Gabe & Stoller, 2019). Adopting the widely-accepted reading session pattern comprised of pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading/follow-up stages (Chamot, 2009; Grabe & Stoller, 2011, 2014; Dakowska 2015) can be beneficial for giving students opportunities to practise diverse reading sub-skills and strategies adopted by expert readers in the course of studying disciplinary texts (Waters & Waters, 2001; Harrison & Perry, 2004; Grabe & Stoller, 2019).

5. Concluding remarks

This paper has been an attempt to contribute to a discussion on the concept of academic reading acknowledged in recent years to be a critical element of academic

literacy. It is hoped that the account of the fundamental theoretical underpinnings concerning academic reading given herein has demonstrated not only how complex and multilayer this notion is, but also how vital it is to provide second language students with adequate instruction aimed at the development of this fundamental academic skill. It is of paramount importance that L2 academic teachers should introduce well-structured instruction on academic reading into their content-area classes. Before offering it, however, they undeniably have to become acquainted with both theoretical considerations and research-based perspectives on the relevant issues concerning academic reading practice in L2 contexts.

It is crucial, then, that L2/FL reading research will be broadened in the coming years. Evidently, it is not sufficient that the instructional frameworks that are currently adopted in the classrooms are grounded in theoretical principles but they also should be investigated empirically. The present author believes that further research studies are needed not only to verify the effectiveness of particular reading instruction procedures but also to get more understanding of the development academic reading skills over time when students are provided with specific reading treatment or training. Thus, it seems to be justified for researchers to consider carrying out explanatory longitudinal studies with the use of a broad range of available methodologies.

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Reading literacy skills in the new external exams in Poland

ABSTRACT
The way reading literacy is conceptualised has changed over the last decades. Regarding comprehension as deep processing, in which skimming or scanning neither encourage the reader to engage in texts nor lead to the expected levels of understanding has influenced the way reading literacy is taught and assessed. The aim of the article is to analyse new task types introduced to the external exams as well as to provide evidence that the changes in the exam format reflect the way reading comprehension skills have recently been conceptualised. The analysis of the exam tasks is preceded by an overview of the recent trends in conceptualising L2 reading literacy.
Keywords: reading skills, reading processes, literacy, reading assessment, external exams

1. Introduction

The recent years have witnessed a shift from spoken to written communication. It is mainly due to the prevalence of digital devices, which results in general preference for written messages (Gernsbacher, 2014). As Britt, Rouet and Durik (2018) put it: "[I]n post-industrial societies, the uses of print are pervading people's activities throughout the lifespan, from school learning to job finding, to communicating with friends and relatives, shopping online and participating in society. Consequences of being literate […] are increasingly concrete and important" (p. 1). Such a growth in the importance of reading literacy could not go unnoticed in the academic field, where researchers and theoreticians have set out to design what might be called new reading literacy, which undoubtedly influences the way in which the receptive skill in question is developed and evaluated.

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The article begins with an account of three major trends that have shaped the way reading comprehension is perceived in L2 pedagogy.

2. From product to process approach

A traditional way of looking at receptive skills is from the angle of its final outcome, namely comprehension, and many a practitioner tend to focus excessive attention on the product of reading in the form of answers to comprehension questions, whose design requires grasping merely an overall gist of a text and often test the recall of the text content (Field, 2008; Norrington-Davies, 2018). For the last two decades we have witnessed a general departure from the comprehension approach, as scholars began to notice that the answers to comprehension questions cannot be regarded as evidence of text comprehension. Hence the product approach towards the skill of reading has been replaced with the process approach and it has become common in the second language acquisition literature to divide the skill into a number of component processes, which in turn constitute a framework for investigating, developing and assessing reading comprehension.

Many researchers conceptualise the process of reading comprehension through the sub-processes that it entails. The very definition of reading provided by Grabe and Stoller (2013) underlines the fact that the ability to understand texts is a complex phenomenon, comprising several subordinate processes, each of which contributes to final understanding. Similarly, Grabe (2014), who draws on the psychological model of reading comprehension by Kintsch (2012), points to a set of common underlying processes which are activated as we read (see Table 1).

Table 1. Processes underlying reading comprehension (Grabe, 2014).

LOWER LEVEL PROCESSES	HIGHER LEVEL PROCESSES
(a) fast, automatic word recognition skills (b) automatic lexico-syntactic processing (c) semantic processing of the immediate clause into relevant meaning units (or propositions)	(d) form main idea meanings (e) recognize related and thematic information (f) build a text model of comprehension (an author-driven summary understanding) (g) use inferencing, background knowledge, strategic processing and context constraints to create a preferred personal interpretation

It needs to be emphasised that there is a general agreement among researchers as to how these two groups of processes operate – they are all activated simultaneously and interact with each other while the reader is making sense of a text (Grabe, 2011). While the interactive nature of reading sub-processes raises little controversy among researchers, there seems to be little unanimity concerning the level of difficulty of the sub-processes. Grabe (2014) points to the fact that these two groups do not really constitute a continuum in terms of complexity, i.e. the lower level processes are not easier than the higher-level ones. In fact, in some

respect, the former might be much harder to develop for L2 readers than the latter. Hudson (2007), however, notices, that in L2 reading pedagogy, developing reading skills implies a shift from lower- to higher-lever processes, which clearly implies that there does exist a hierarchy of reading skills to be worked on.

A similar process approach is also taken by Dakowska (2015), who notes that the processes underlying reading comprehension are usually referred to as bottom-up and top-down processes, depending on how the reader attends to the meaning of a text, beginning with either extracting information from the input and integrating it with the elaborate knowledge system, or with predicting possible meaning on the basis of prior knowledge and interpreting the input in the light of the created expectations (see Table 2).

Table 2. Processes underlying reading comprehension (Dakowska, 2015).

BOTTOM-UP	TOP-DOWN
refers to the information derived from the text and its context	refers to the various knowledge sources in the reader's memory, especially concepts and schemata relevant to the task at hand
initiated and dominated by the textual information on the printed page	knowledge sources in the reader's mind used to narrow down the expectations towards the text to be comprehended

Dakowska (2015), however, suggests yet another process approach to reading comprehension, in which she adopts a more communicative perspective towards text processing. She understands it as "a process of computing the writer's intention from his/her detailed instruction in the form of a text" (p. 250) and outlines the following processes: 1) parsing, 2) semanticising, 3) reconstructing the communicative intention, 4) personalisation and evaluation. It is mandatory to underline that the researcher points to the fact that we do not engage in these processes in a linear manner or in isolation; rather she focuses on the interactive nature of the whole process.

Clearly, in order to fully understand a text, a reader needs to perform a number of mental operations and engage in a set of processes comprising what is popularly referred to as reading comprehension. Such an outlook on reading bears a significant influence on reading pedagogy and evaluation, in which answering a number of closed questions following a text is no longer tantamount to successful text processing.

3. Defining the new skill

New technologies have been proved to considerably alter the ways in which people read and exchange information (Carr, 2010). While in the past the predominant interest in student reading literacy proficiency was the general understanding of

a text, it is now believed that proficient reading requires an array of minor skills to be flexibly applied in the process (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2018). For a number of years now, researchers have examined reading as a complex process, which comprises:

- the ability to understand, interpret and reflect upon single texts;
- the ability to analyse, synthesise, integrate and interpret relevant information from multiple text (or information) sources;
- the ability to effectively search, organise and filter a wealth of information (OECD, 2013).

Such a viewpoint has necessitated an improved and expanded explanation of reading and, consequently, a new definition of reading literacy has been put forward:

> Reading literacy is understanding, using, evaluating, reflecting on and engaging with texts in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential and to participate in society. (OECD, 2018, p. 11)

What should be emphasized is that the definition encompasses higher-level reading skills through which the reader arrives at the meaning of a text and is able to respond to its content by using previous knowledge and situational clues. The new framework for reading literacy, reported in the PISA document of 2018, which takes the definition above as a starting point for discussing the domain of reading, assumes that a competent reader utilizes a whole range of processes, subskills or strategies for locating information, monitoring understanding, as well as validating the relevance of information (Richter, 2015; van den Broek, Lorch, Linderhorm & Gustafson, 2001).

In the light of the new developments, reading literacy is undoubtedly a multifaceted process, which depends on deep processing of texts and engagement in the written discourse. There is an evident departure from the shallow kind of reading, built upon such activities as skimming and scanning. The fallacy of these has been brought to the attention of language educators, as there appear to be mental operations which do not contribute to the development of reading proficiency as we know it from the latest research findings (e.g., Kerr, 2009). As Thornbury (2011) puts it, "teachers were misled into thinking that, by having students skim or scan texts, they were developing the skill of reading" (para. 6). Another relevant argument against engaging learners in skimming and scanning comes from Kerr (2009), who points out: "[p]erhaps the most eloquent commentary on skimming and scanning is the complete omission of these terms from the index of Grabe's *Reading in a Second Language*" (p. 28). Again, the new reading literacy seems to rely much more heavily on thinking about and engaging in the content of texts, and thus encourages the use of higher-order thinking skills (Norrington-Davies, 2018).

4. Mediation and text processing

One final trend in ELT which has greatly influenced the reading comprehension task design is the concept of mediation. It is mandatory to explain that while the concept has only recently grown in popularity in ELT pedagogy, it in fact dates back to the beginning of the 20th century. In psychology, mediation originates from the Social Development Theory by Vygotsky and aims to explain how social interaction influences the development of cognition (Aimin, 2013). In second language acquisition, mediation is central to the socio-constructivist, or socio-cultural view of learning, and accounts for the dynamic nature of meaning, which is co-constructed through both the social and individual dimensions in language use and language learning (Lantolf, 2011).

In L2 pedagogy and assessment, mediation received a lot of attention after the publication of the new version of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* by the Council of Europe in 2018. While mediation appeared in the former versions of the document and defining mediating activities as those which "[i]n both the receptive and productive modes, (…) make communication possible between persons who are unable, for whatever reason, to communicate with each other directly" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 24) was widely accepted, the document was criticized for the limited attention given to the idea and the omission of illustrative descriptors (Komorowska, 2017; North & Piccardo, 2016). As a result, mediation processes in the 2018 edition of CEFR received due attention and became complementary to reception production and interaction, with a set of elaborate descriptors for each of the mediation activities and mediation strategies presented in Figure 1.

From the perspective of the present article it is mediating texts, i.e., "passing on to another person the content of a text to which they do not have access, often because of linguistic, cultural, semantic or technical barriers" (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 106), that seems the most relevant for developing and evaluating a student's text control. Similarly to how reading literacy is viewed in the light of the process approach or how it is conceptualized in the PISA document, mediation in text comprehension entails a considerable shift from answering closed comprehension questions in favour of greater engagement in the text. As it is stated in CEFR (2018):

> [p]rocessing text involves understanding the information and/or arguments included in the source text and then transferring these to another text, usually in a more condensed form, in a way that is appropriate to the context of situation. In other words, the outcome represents a condensing and/or reformulating of the original information and arguments, focusing on the main points and ideas in the source text (p. 110).

Such an approach makes it essential for exam tasks to involve such literacy subskills as summarizing, clarifying the content of a text, giving a personal account of what has been read, analyzing or interpreting certain aspects of the written discourse, to name just a few.

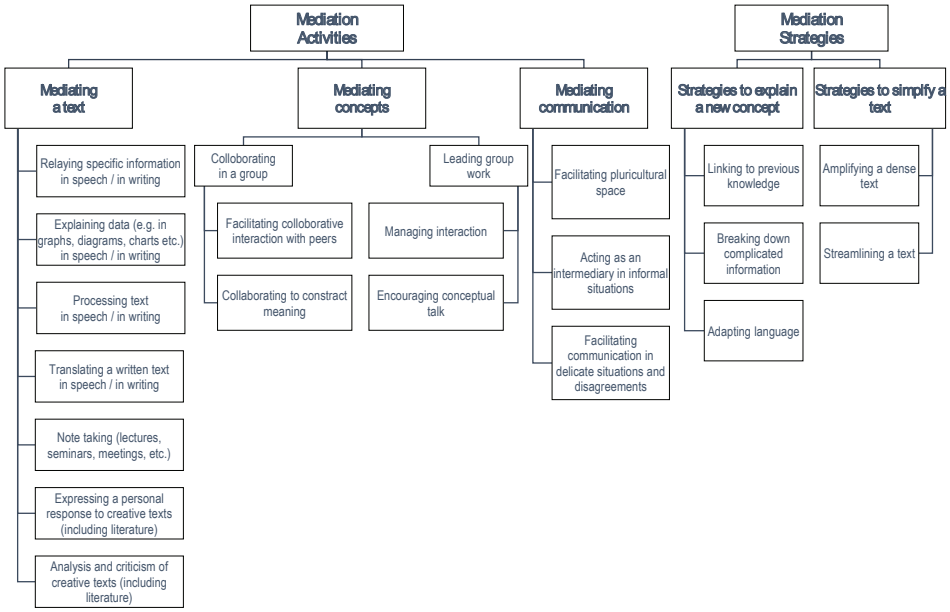


Figure 1. Types of mediation activities and mediation strategies (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 104).

5. Reading tasks in the new exam format

As it has been asserted above, the importance of receptive skills, especially reading, received due recognition in the latest version of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, which has proposed detailed band descriptors not only for reception but also mediation activities and strategies, clearly linked to various aspects of reception. Much in the same vein, the Polish Core Curriculum for Foreign Languages (Ministry of National Education [MEN], 2017a) acknowledged the significance of reception in that the projected levels of foreign language proficiency at each educational level for receptive skills are higher than for productive skills[1]. Also, similarly to CEFR, the core curriculum makes an explicit reference to mediation skills as one of five areas of general language competence (the remaining three being the knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, listening and reading – reception, speaking and writing – production, and using language functions – interaction).

The significant change in the way reading (or, for that matter, receptive skills in general) is currently operationalised is also noticeable in the Exam Information Booklet for the new eighth grader's exam, administered for the first time in April

[1] For example, the anticipated proficiency level of primary school graduates with respect to productive skills is A2+, while for receptive skills it has been defined as B1.

2019 (Central Examination Board [CKE], 2017a). The array of tasks presented in the booklet clearly shows that the testing of expeditious reading operations, defined by Hughes (2003) as fast and efficient reading taking the form of skimming, search reading and scanning, has been heavily supplemented by test tasks tapping more careful reading operations and tasks requiring mediations skills, i.e., understanding the content of a text (or texts) and presenting or relaying it in a modified form. This, in turn, has led to introducing a significant number of open, productive tasks, which are expected to constitute no less than one-fourth of all tasks in the reading part of the exam. The open task formats for testing receptive skills are a relatively new element in the Polish system of external exams, especially at the upper primary level, and as such are believed to constitute a challenge for test takers. Owing to the fact that the open tasks presented in the documents issued by the Central Examination Board differ in terms of specific abilities which students are expected to demonstrate, as well as in terms of text type and response attributes (all of which contribute to the general perception of task difficulty), selected examples of exam tasks will be presented and analysed below. It is mandatory to underline at this point that the selection to follow is rather limited due to the scarcity of exam papers issued so far by the Central Examination Board and therefore some of the reading subskills outlined in section 3 of this article cannot be exemplified.

One of the main sources of difficulty, which is common to many task types presented in the official exam documents, is that they require the employment of mediation-related skills. Mediation itself is a complex construct which consists of a number of subskills and components. As far as mediating texts in writing is concerned (which is specifically the kind of mediation activity the new exam involves), it can take a number of forms. These include, among others, summarizing, commenting on texts, reporting, translating and paraphrasing. The last of these literacy subskills is tested in the exam task presented in Figure 2 below.

The task in question requires that test-takers convey the meanings embedded in specific fragments of the text in their own words, as the prompts in the task are provided in the form of unfinished sentences eliciting responses in which using the words from the text verbatim is blocked. The ability to paraphrase texts is thus based on two essential elements: adequate understanding of the content of the source text and a large enough productive vocabulary to present the meanings effectively. Clearly, such new testing techniques require adopting a more conscious approach to teaching both the language subsystems and the language skills, in which integrated practice of various elements of language competence is introduced. Therefore, as far as teaching paraphrasing skills is concerned, first of all, it seems justified to expand students' productive lexicons and raise awareness of language idiomaticity. Additionally, it is claimed that paraphrasing skills develop best when practised at the interface between reading and writing,

THE MYSTERY OF THE REAL ROBINSON CRUSOE

Everybody knows the story of Robinson Crusoe, a sailor who lived on a desert island near South America. Not many people know, however, that there was a real person who had inspired Daniel Defoe, the author of the book. The real Robinson was a Scotsman named Alexander Selkirk. He was born in a small village near Edinburgh. His father was a shoemaker.

The boy was interested in the sea and wanted to become a sailor. Selkirk had a difficult character and often got into trouble. When he was only seventeen, he ran away from home and became a pirate. He often disagreed with the crew. One day, after a fight with the captain, they decided to leave Selkirk all alone on a tropical island near the coast of Chile. He was hoping for a quick rescue. Unfortunately, only Spanish ships came to the island. The Spanish were enemies and Selkirk was afraid of them. He spent four years and four months on the island before an English crew arrived and he was able to leave the island with them.

Na podstawie: www.telegraph.co.uk

9.1. Daniel Defoe was inspired by the story of a real man who came from _____.

9.2. Selkirk's dream was to _____.

9.3. He was left on the island because _____ with the captain.

9.4. Selkirk was saved by _____.

Figure 2. Example of a reading task involving paraphrasing skills (CKE, 2017b, p. 9).

especially when achieving academic success is one of the goals of language instruction (e.g., Grabe & Zhang, 2013; Hirvela & Du, 2013).

The exam task shown in Figure 3 above is an example of a task in which summarising skills pay a central role. Similarly to paraphrasing, summarising skills entail both good understanding of the text (preferably involving deep level of processing) and a rich enough vocabulary to be able to present a single unit of meaning in different words. What makes summarising more difficult, however, are the necessary composing skills (e.g., Grabe & Zhang, 2013), which can be quite limited as far as foreign language context and age of learners are concerned (in the case of the present exam, the age of students is 13-14). While the task presented above is an example of a structured summary in that students are only expected to finish sentences with their own words, summarising one paragraph of the text in each sentence, it can be speculated that exams at higher educational levels may take summarising skills further. What should be emphasised here is that summarising skills involve higher-level processes, as defined by Grabe (2014), as in order to summarise, the reader has to build a text-model of comprehension. Furthermore, summarising often entails changing the style or form of the text,

A CLEVER GIRL

The young mother needed a few minutes of relaxation after a long day at work. However, her young daughter had other plans for her mother's time. She asked her mom to read her a story. "Give Mommy a few minutes to rest. Then I'll read you a story," said the mother and started to read a magazine.

The girl didn't want to wait and started to cry. The mother thought for a while and found a way to keep her daughter busy. She tore off the back page of the magazine she was reading. There was a full-page picture of the world. Then, she cut it into several pieces and asked her daughter to put the picture together. She promised to read her a story when the picture was completed. She hoped to have at least half an hour for herself.

The little girl finished the task after a few minutes. Her mother was really surprised when she saw the picture of the world perfectly arranged. "How did you do it so quickly?" she asked. The girl explained that on the other side of the page there was a picture of a little girl. "You see, Mommy, when I got the little girl together, the whole world came together."

Na podstawie: www.bizmove.com

17.1. What did the daughter want her mother to do?

The daughter wanted her mother to _____

_____.

17.2. What did the mother do to keep her daughter busy?

The mother _____

_____.

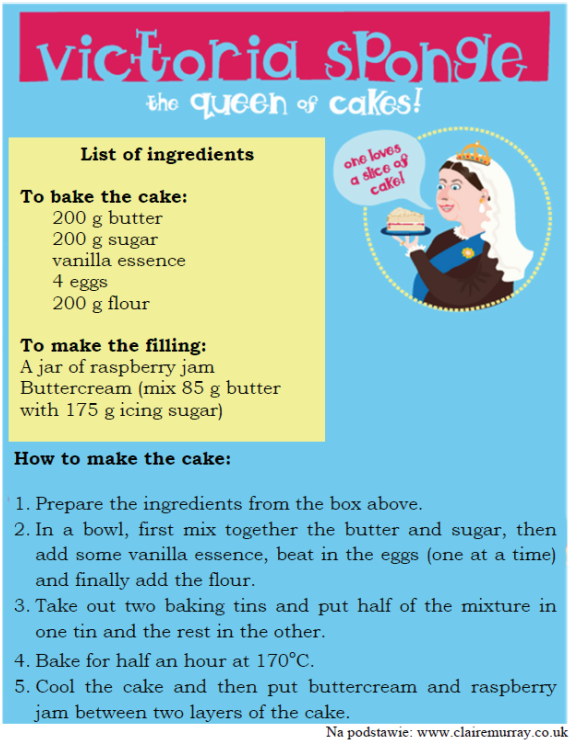
17.3. Why did the daughter complete the task so fast?

The daughter completed the task so fast because _____

Figure 3. Example of a reading task involving summarising skills (CKE, 2017a, p. 43).

for which constructing a situational model is required. This seems to support the claims put forward in the theoretical part of the present paper and prove that the current operationalisation of reading skills for the purpose of testing corresponds with the descriptions of the skill presented in the latest literature in the field.

One of the most popular mediation skills, which used to be commonly (and wrongly) identified as the main type of mediation, is translation. The exam task in Figure 4 shows how translation has been incorporated into the reading section of the eighth grader's exam. It needs to be emphasised that while translation on the word and phrase level is an established vocabulary presentation and practice technique in many foreign language classrooms, translation on the text level has not been practised widely so far. This is mainly due to the fact that this skill has been absent from the previously administered external exams and as such has not received due attention from both teachers and learners. An additional difficulty of the task shown above results from the fact that test-takers will need to depart from the traditional linear text processing and be able to operate on two texts simultaneously, drawing comparisons between text content and format as well as across languages. While in the example provided in Figure 4 there are two texts to



victoria sponge

the queen of cakes!

List of ingredients

To bake the cake:
200 g butter
200 g sugar
vanilla essence
4 eggs
200 g flour

To make the filling:
A jar of raspberry jam
Buttercream (mix 85 g butter with 175 g icing sugar)

How to make the cake:

1. Prepare the ingredients from the box above.
2. In a bowl, first mix together the butter and sugar, then add some vanilla essence, beat in the eggs (one at a time) and finally add the flour.
3. Take out two baking tins and put half of the mixture in one tin and the rest in the other.
4. Bake for half an hour at 170°C.
5. Cool the cake and then put buttercream and raspberry jam between two layers of the cake.

Na podstawie: www.clairemurray.co.uk

Wiadomość

Od:	Hania
Do:	Tomek
Temat:	Przepis

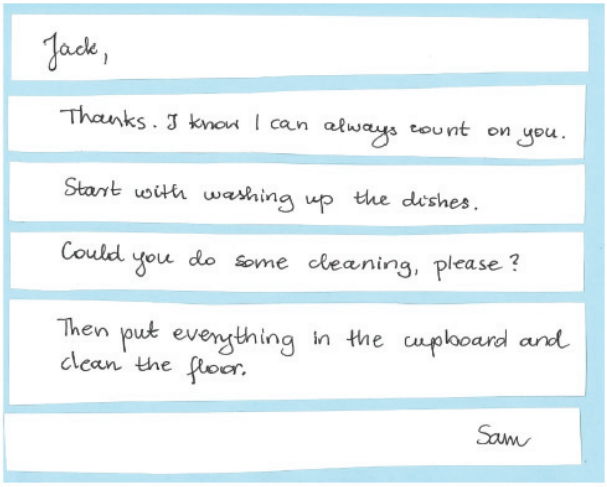
Tomku,
chciałeś upiec jakieś ciasto, żeby zaskoczyć rodziców. Przesyłam Ci przepis na *Victoria Sponge*. Jest bardzo prosty. Najpierw wszystkie składniki trzeba wymieszać, tylko pamiętaj, żeby **15.1.** _____ dodać na końcu.
Potem masę dzielimy na dwie części i pieczemy je przez **15.2.** _____.
W tym czasie trzeba przygotować krem z masła i cukru pudru. Kiedy ciasto jest gotowe i wystudzone, przekładamy je tym kremem oraz **15.3.** _____. Ale oczywiście możesz użyć też innego, jeśli wolisz.
Daj znać, jak Ci wyszło.
Hania

Figure 4. Example of a reading task involving translation (CKE, 2017a, pp. 39-40).

be tackled, that the new exam may also feature tasks requiring reading three texts at the same time. The information contained in two of them is to be synthesised so that examinees are able to complete the third text (in English or in Polish) with the missing information. This task format undoubtedly poses a challenge and demands that students engage in deeper text processing and employ higher

level reading processes. An important aspect of text comprehension in this case is determining a coherent and structured set of propositions typical of a recipe, which will enable the reader to establish a semantic structure of the text (Kintsch & VanDijk, 1978).

The last task which seems interesting from the point of view of task design is the one in which examinees are to put the sentences in the correct order. While the task in Figure 5 below is an example of a selection task in that students are to choose the correct answer rather than formulate it on their own, it still requires more than shallow reading or employing such subskills as skimming and scanning.



11.4. The correct order of the sentences in the message is

A. 3-1-4-2
B. 3-2-4-1
C. 2-4-3-1

Figure 5. Example of a receptive reading task requiring deep processing (CKE, 2017a, p. 33).

The task demands deeper processing of the information provided as there is no text proper which students are to read. In fact, in the process of ordering the pieces of information they create the text on their own. Despite the fact that the text appears rather short and uncomplicated, the task still creates opportunities for higher level reading processes to appear.

6. Conclusion

Having analysed the exam tasks as well as the sub-skills lying at the core of the test tasks specifications, it can be unequivocally stated that the changes in the core curriculum and the evaluation of key skills are congruent with the current trends in L2 reading theories.It needs to be underlined at this point that all the

examples provided above originate from the exam administered at the end of primary education. It can be forecast, however, that similar tasks will appear in the new version of the Matura exam, which secondary school graduates will take from the year 2023. In fact, it might be speculated that reading literacy skills will receive a lot of attention in that exam and will shift even more towards higher-level processes. Such speculations are based on some important notifications in the Core Curriculum for Secondary Education (MEN, 2017b). Firstly, the document points to reading literacy as one of the three main goals of education in general, which is unlikely to go unnoticed in the new exam. Secondly, the specific goals for text comprehension include some meaning-building processes, such as interpreting, inferencing or recognizing information expressed indirectly. Clearly, the new exam after secondary school will also follow suit when it comes to the general trends in evaluating reading literacy.

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The effect of extensive reading on Algerian university students' writing performance

ABSTRACT
This paper investigates the effect of extensive reading on first year Algerian university students' writing performance. An experiment was designed with two groups. The experimental group had to read 12 stories over three months. The control group received no treatment. Both groups were pre-tested and post-tested, and the subjects' writing compositions were marked using the TEEP Attribute Writing Scale. The results suggest a positive effect of the Extensive Reading Programme, as the experimental group outscored the control one on the narrative paragraph writing test. The integration of extensive reading into the first year writing syllabus was proposed.
Keywords: extensive reading, writing performance, Algerian EFL students, literacy skills, reading-writing connections

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the potential effect of extensive reading on first year English students' writing performance. The study consists of two main parts: a theoretical part examining reading–writing connections, extensive reading benefits and a practical one dealing with the research methodology, the presentation and discussion of the results together with the conclusions reached.

1.Theoretical Background

One of the issues underpinning current thinking about writing development is the relationship between reading and learning to write. Many researchers (e.g., Carson Eisterhold et. al., 1990; Shen, 2009; Alkhawaldeh, 2011) emphasized the importance of reading-writing connections, revealing that there is a high correlation between good writers and good readers. As reading and writing researchers (e.g., Langer & Flihan, 2000) attempted to explore these connections, they pointed out that the interdependence of these two language processes implies that reading influences

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writing, that writing influences reading, and that they interactively influence each other. One of the findings yielded by L1 reading-writing relationship studies is that the reading-writing model is superior to the writing-reading model (Carson Eisterhold, 1990). That is, reading contributes more to the development of writing than writing does to improve reading. A number of investigations (e.g,. Robb & Susser, 1989; Al-Mansour & Al Shorman, 2014) indicate that reading extensively contributes to improved writing ability.

Research on cognitive processes in the separate field of writing and reading has paved the way for the interrelationships between reading and writing, as both reading and writing are regarded as similar composing processes (Johns, 1997; Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000). Both skills are also considered to share common features as readers and writers use similar kinds of knowledge. According to Rubin and Hansen (1986), the knowledge (information, structural, transactional, aesthetic, and process knowledge) that is shared between reading and writing can strengthen a writer's ability to read and a reader's ability to write.

Hedge (2005, p.10) stresses the effect of extensive reading (ER) on writing by maintaining that teachers should not only provide good models for writing directly so as to analyse textual structure, but also "indirectly, by encouraging good reading habits". ER refers to the practice of reading at length for extended periods of time, often for pleasure with the intention of being entertained, but not tested. The reading of large amounts of materials should aim at global understanding (Susser & Robb, 1990). According to Krashen (2004a), as formal written language is too complex to be learned one rule at a time, it is "sensible to suppose that writing style is not consciously learned but is largely absorbed, or subconsciously acquired, from reading" (p. 133). The increasing interest in the role that Comprehensible Input may play in L2 acquisition highlights the need for ER as a valuable resource for promoting writing. Even though research on input underscores primarily oral communication, the findings have implications for the development of literacy skills, as Krashen (2004b) has put it, "the reading hypothesis is … consistent with the more general Comprehension Hypothesis, the hypothesis that we acquire language by understanding it". He further states, "our reading ability, our ability to write in an acceptable writing style, our spelling ability, vocabulary knowledge, and our ability to handle complex syntax is the result of reading".

Krashen (1987) argues that students can acquire language on their own provided they receive enough exposure to comprehensible language, and it is done in a stress-free atmosphere. ER satisfies both these conditions as it includes reading large amounts of relatively easy material, and with little follow up work or testing. The motivation behind the use of ER is the pleasure factor that prepares the ground in which language acquisition can germinate. The feeling of accomplishment engendered by experiencing the pleasure of completing a book

in a foreign language may serve as an incentive motivating students to read more (Rodrigo et. al., 2007). This feeling of accomplishment may promote learner autonomy that fosters a strong sense of learning success.

Reading relevant literature about reading-writing relationships constituted a worthwhile impetus for conducting this study, particularly because it is an area of research that received little attention in a foreign language context (Carson Eisterhold et. al., 1990). Attempting to compensate for the paucity of research seems a crucial goal. The objective of this study is to investigate the effect of ER on writing performance. Contrary to the majority of studies that dealt with the effect of extensive reading on writing stressing mainly language gains, this study seeks to report both the language and attitudinal benefits of extensive reading in relation to writing performance. This study attempts to answer the following research question: Does an Extensive Reading Programme have any effect on first year students' performance in paragraph writing?

The next part is devoted to the Experimental investigation.

2. The Experimental Investigation

2.1 Research Methodology

As the study seeks to examine the potential effect of extensive reading upon students' writing performance, the type of classroom research is *quasi-experimental*. This kind of classroom research involves a quantitative approach to data collection. For the sake of triangulation, it was highly desirable to collect qualitative data because "at least two perspectives are necessary if an accurate picture of a particular phenomenon is to be attained" (Allwright & Baily, 1991, p. 73). A questionnaire seeking to explore students' reactions towards the treatment, i.e., the extensive reading programme (ERP), was designed in addition to two tests (the pre- and post-tests). The study was basically a classroom investigation that sought to compare the performance of two groups on a test.

2.2. Population Sampling and Experimental Procedure

The subjects taking part in this study are 18-20-year-old intermediate Algerian students enrolled in the first year English degree course at the University of Algiers II. The subjects had five years of compulsory English at school before entering university. The experimental and control groups had to be matching for subject variables. Just like the 15 experimental subjects, the 15 control subjects were female, average-achievers in the writing pre-test, and they read in English only rarely.

The experimental treatment consisted of asking the experimental students to read 12 stories within a period of 3 months; i.e., they read one story per week. Both groups were tested before and after the set period for the experiment, and the means of both groups on the post-test were compared.

2.3 Description of the ERP

ERP is a programme developed by the researcher who first selected 12 stories. The reading materials should meet the criterion of appropriacy in terms of ability level, grading of the reading materials, interest and enjoyment, and variety (Day & Bamford, 1998). I started by offering a strong rationale for engaging the experimental students actively in the ERP, by raising their awareness of the importance of reading. I conveyed personal impressions about the reading materials to the students, and I tried to keep track of students' reactions by devoting time to them to react orally to what they read**.** Hence, a type of literary circle activity was created.

2.4. Data Collection Instruments

This study relies on the following data collection tools: A test (pre- and post) and a questionnaire. The objective of the pre-test (appendix 1) was to have two matching groups in terms of writing proficiency. The post-test (appendix 2) served to gather data in the form of scores which were compared. Regarding the content of both tests, the students were asked to write one-paragraph long composition. The writing prompts of the tests were selected to elicit narrative pattern.

A questionnaire was administered to the experimental subjects (Appendix 3) and another to the control subjects (Appendix 4). The questionnaire administered to the experimental students aimed at providing insights into the experimental subjects' attitudes towards ERP. The questionnaire administered to the control group was meant to gather some useful information for the sake of sampling a group comparable to the experimental one.

2.5. Data Analysis Procedure

The scoring procedure for subjects paragraph composing relies on the Test in English for Educational Purposes (TEEP) Attribute Writing Scale (Appendix 5). This analytic marking scheme is used for it favours an explicit set of features or constructs to guide judgments, which is important to reach the aim of objectivity of assessment. The assessment criteria cover both communicative effectiveness and degrees of accuracy. The subjects' writing compositions were marked by an experienced writing teacher. Both groups were scored out of 21 points as the mark of each criterion ranges from 0 to 3. Students' scores were divided into categories: The Low Achievers (those students whose scores ranged from 0→7 points), the Average Achievers (from 7→14 points), the Good Achievers (from 14→21 points). Both groups' scores on the pre-test ranged from 7 points to 14 points, and hence the subjects are labeled as *Average-Achievers*.

3.Presentation of the Results

A glance through the results will eventually allow us to answer our main research question.

3.1. The Results of the Pre-Test

The Experimental and control subjects were pre-tested a week before initiating the ERP. The results appear in Table 1.

Table 1: Scores on the Pre-test

Experimental group		Control group	
Students	Score	Students	Score
S1	8	S1	11
S2	9	S2	7
S3	7	S3	8
S4	9	S4	10
S5	10	S5	10
S6	14	S6	9
S7	10	S7	9
S8	12	S8	9
S9	9	S9	11
S10	7	S10	14
S11	10	S11	8
S12	8	S12	7
S13	9	S13	11
S14	11	S14	9
S15	9	S15	10
Sum of the scores	*142*	*143*	
Mean S.D	*9.46* *1.84*	*9.53* *1.80*	

As it is noticed from the table, the means of both groups were very close, and the standard deviations (SD) were very close too. The SD was small, so the students in both groups were distributed quite equitably. The internal validity was not therefore affected. Any differences between the two groups would be due to the experimental treatment and would not be caused by any initial imbalance between the groups.

3.2. The Results of the Post-Test

The scores of the post-test are displayed in Table 2. One meaningful result relates to the measure of variability (SD) for both groups which is again very close. This fact confirms that the groups are balanced. But, the means of the two groups were different.

Table 2: Scores on the Post-Test

Experimental group		Control group	
Student	Score	Student	Score
S1	10	S1	11
S2	10	S2	10
S3	12	S3	13
S4	10	S4	10
S5	14	S5	10
S6	16	S6	13
S7	14	S7	11
S8	15	S8	14
S9	10	S9	8
S10	11	S10	9
S11	15	S11	13
S12	10	S12	13
S13	14	S13	9
S14	11	S14	14
S15	13	S15	6
Sum of the scores	185	164	
Mean S.D	12.33 2.19	10.93 2.37	

As can be seen from Table 2, the means of both groups increased as both groups had been exposed to the lesson on *narration*. But, the experimental group outscored the control group. The effect of the experimental intervention on each criterion of the TEEP Attribute Writing Scale is worth considering. The first four criteria are referred to as *communicative effectiveness*; the other criteria are referred to as *accuracy*. The results are displayed in Table 3.

It is clear from the table that the experimental students' mean of accuracy increased after the ERP to 1.79. More particularly, the grammar criterion moved to a percentage of 20.51%, becoming thus the criterion the most positively affected by the ERP. There was no major change in the experimental students' mean of *communicative effectiveness* (+0.07), but it was apparent that the experimental group shifted enormously regarding accuracy (+0.89).

Table 3: Compared Assessment Criteria Mean of the Experimental Pre- and Post- Tests

Criteria	Pre-Test			Post-Test		
	Sum	Mean	%	Sum	Mean	%
Relevance and Adequacy of content	30	2.00	21.14	30	2.00	16.22
Compositional Organisation	30	2.00	21.14	31	2.06	16.70
Cohesion	21	1.4	14.8	22	1.46	11.48
Adequacy of vocabulary For purpose	19	1.26	13.31	21	1.4	11.35
Communicative Effectiveness Mean	1.66			1.73		
Grammar	15	1	10.57	38	2.53	20.51
Punctuation	13	0.86	9.09	20	1.33	10.78
Spelling	13	0.86	9.09	23	1.53	12.40
Accuracy Mean	0.90			1.79		

3.3. Presenting the Responses to the Questionnaires

The aim of the questionnaire administered in the same week as the post-test was to elicit the experimental subjects' reactions towards the experimental treatment. The completion of the questionnaire took about 30 minutes for the majority of the subjects. The main results related to students' responses to the questionnaire are presented as follows.

- None of the experimental subjects found reading the stories very difficult, and the majority considered the stories "of average difficulty".
- The whole sample of the experimental students found the reading materials enjoyable, by justifying that they found the stories exciting to such an extent that they had "flow" experiences, and their imagination was stimulated.
- All the experimental subjects found the stories interesting. In their opinion, they enabled them to learn a great deal about life, and they felt that they were immersed in a new culture underlying the language of these stories.
- 53.3% of the sample stated that the stories were "very useful" in improving their writing and 46.6% stated that reading the stories was "reasonably useful" for their English writing. They believed that the 12 stories were: a means to generate ideas and models of sentences to help them in constructing grammatical sentences, and a valuable tool not only to enrich one's vocabularies, but also to correct the spelling of already known words. It was noted that the majority of the students expressed their concern with formal features of language and their correctness.
- The majority of students perceived the ERP as a welcome boost for the development of genuine reading habits.
- Students' different reading interests and tastes due to personal preferences should be taken into account in trying to set up an ER library.

4. Discussion

This section aims at a holistic consideration of the findings. It seeks to answer the RQ.

4.1. Students' Writing Performance and Extensive Reading

In contemplating the findings, it is suggested that the ERP has brought about some marked differences of achievement in favour of the experimental group. It seems possible to extrapolate the finding of the study and suggest that reading a large amount of materials in English might develop writing performance in 1st year students. This finding is congruent with the relevant literature, as it goes hand in hand with the widely held belief that in order to be a good writer, a student needs to read a lot. These findings run counter Kirin's (2010) study suggesting that writing abilities did not improve despite additional reading experiences. Hence, we made the key point that greater importance should be devoted to receptive activities (ER) in order not to limit the learning experience to production only which may entail a reduced time available for language contact.

Another major finding worth contemplating is the remarkable increase in the experimental subjects' mean of accuracy. The positive effect of the ERP was most apparent in the area of "grammar". It is noted that the numerical results are congruent with the experimental students' responses to the questionnaire, whose majority stated that thanks to reading the stories, their grammar improved, which they found to be, a sign of good writing. The fact that linguistic correctness preceded communicative effectiveness may be justified on the ground that the experimental students prioritized bottom-up reading, and probably less focus was devoted to features of discourse. The transfer of grammatical knowledge and language mechanics from reading to writing came in the first position, because at this stage of language development (students' intermediate level), the reading-writing relationship is primarily based on grammar, spelling and punctuation aspects. At a further stage, knowledge transfer from reading to writing may differ to include other variables; i.e., in upper students' level of language development, the influence of ER on writing may cover other variables like compositional organization.

These assumptions are in line with Shanahan's (1997) Bidirectional Hypothesis which assumes that the reading-writing relationship changes at different stages of language development. In his earlier publication the researcher (1984, p. 467, as cit. in Carson Eisterhold, 1990, p. 92) states "what is learned at one stage of development can be qualitatively different from what is learned at another stage of development".

4.2. Students' Attitudes towards the ERP

In considering the extent to which the experimental students engaged in the ERP, we noticed that 66.6% of the experimental sample undertook the reading of more than 10 stories during 12 weeks. Many students engaged in reading the stories

though they were not in the habit of reading a lot in English. In terms of the experimental students' evaluation of the experience of reading extensively and its impact on their motivation, 100% of the experimental students viewed the stories as enjoyable and interesting. Hence, it may be assumed that the ERP has impacted the experimental students positively and is thus *successful*. Another asset of the ERP is that the experimental treatment stimulated the once reluctant readers to read more. This is a bridge to achieve "autonomy" which may create lifelong pleasure readers in English, hopefully proficient writers and life-long learners.

5. Pedagogical Recommendations

These proposals aim at promoting the teaching of EFL writing to first year students in the Department of English in order to underscore the importance and contribution of some neglected traditional sources of input, like ER, in promoting writing. To this end, setting up an ER library of varied, attractive books at an appropriate language level for students is suggested. The importance of teachers' roles in ERPs should be reinforced as the success of any ERP requires a careful planning and systematic implementation. At length, we propose that an ERP should be an integrated part of a regular first year writing instruction syllabus.

6. Limitations of the Study

To avoid tentative results, such kind of research studies should be conducted over a longer period of time. But owing to tight schedule and lack of reading materials, the present research could not exceed the 12 week period. Maturation of subjects is a non experimental variable likely to affect the dependent variable. But, in order to validate the results obtained by the experimental subjects, a control group was used. Experimental mortality is an extraneous variable that affected the outcome of the study. A logical solution resided in starting with a large number of subjects, expecting that not all of them were to do the readings on a regular basis.

Conclusion

The objective of the study was to explore the possible effect of the exposure to 12 stories on EFL students' performance in narrative writing. A three-month experiment consisting in urging 15 first year students to read a story on a weekly basis was designed. These experimental subjects were pre-tested and post-tested, and their scores were compared with those of a control group to validate the findings. I attempted to corroborate the quantitative data by asking students to fill out a questionnaire seeking to uncover their attitudes towards the ERP. The results of this investigation seem to provide further supportive empirical evidence that extensive reading affects positively first year students' writing performance. Such findings are to be taken as a positive indication that ER can indeed be beneficially employed as a supplement to first year university English course.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: The Pre-experiment Test / Write a 15-line paragraph on *ONE* of the following topics:

1. A funny experience you had at school.
2. An incident involving anger, disappointment or relief.

Appendix 2: The post- Experiment Test / Write a 15-line paragraph on *ONE* of the following topics:

1. Have you ever experienced a time in your life when you made the wrong decision or a mistake, or did something you were sorry about later? Recall this episode from your life.
2. Have you ever responded to some news or to an incident in a way that surprised you, either in a way that embarrassed you and made you feel ashamed, or in a way that you were proud of? Tell what happened.

Instructions to Students (for both pre- and post-test): Please answer on this sheet. Do not forget to write the number of the topic you choose. Write clearly and check up mistakes.

Appendix 3: The Experimental Subjects' Questionnaire

Name Date Age Gender (Male/Female)

1. Do you read in English? Yes No
   If yes:
   a) what type of material do you read?

   Stories ☐ (Other than the ones you have been given in class)

   Newspapers ☐ Other ☐ (Please specify)

   b) How often?
   very often ☐ often ☐ sometimes ☐ rarely ☐

2. Among the stories you have been asked to read, how many have you read up to now?
3. In general, did you find the stories: a)very easy b) of average difficulty c) very difficult
4. Did you find reading these stories enjoyable? Why or why not?
5. Did you find reading these stories interesting? Why or why not?
6. How useful have the stories been in improving your writing?
   A – Very useful B – reasonably useful C – little useful
   D – not very useful E – not at all useful
   – Give at least 2 reasons to illustrate your answer.
7. After the experience of reading a lot of stories in English, do you feel motivated to carry on reading in English in the future? Justify your answer.
8. If you had access to a library with a wide variety of books, what sort of books would you choose?
   Adventure ☐ Suspense ☐ Detective ☐ Romance ☐
   Science Fiction ☐ History ☐ Biography ☐ Humor ☐
   Science and Technology ☐ Children's and Adults' literature ☐
   Current events ☐ culture ☐
   – Why?
9. Please add any useful comments.

Appendix 4: The Control Subjects' Questionnaire

Name Date Age Gender (Male/Female)

1. Do you read in English? Yes ☐ No ☐
   If yes:
   a) what type of material do you read?
      Stories ☐ Newspapers ☐ Other (Please specify)
   b) How often?
      Very often ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ rarely ☐
2. If you had access to a library with a wide variety of books, what sort of books would you choose?
   Adventure ☐ Suspense ☐ Detective ☐ Romance ☐
   Science Fiction ☐ History ☐ Biography ☐ Humor ☐
   Science and Technology ☐ Children's and Adults' literature ☐
   Current events ☐ Culture ☐
   – Why?
3. Please add any comments that you might find useful.

Appendix 5: TEEP Attribute Writing Scale

Source: Weir, C. J. (1990). *Communicative Language Testing*. United Kingdom: Prentice Hall International. (first published 1988 by University of Exeter).

Criterion	0	1	2	3
Relevance and adequacy of content	Totally inadequate answer	Answer of limited relevance to the task	For the most part answers the tasks	Relevant and adequate answer to the task set
Compositional Organization	No apparent organization of content	Very little organization of content	Some organizational skills in evidence	Organizational skills adequately controlled
Cohesion	Cohesion almost totally absent	Unsatisfactory cohesion may cause difficulty in comprehension	For the most part satisfactory cohesion	Satisfactory use of cohesion resulting in effective communication
Adequacy of vocabulary for purpose	Vocabulary inadequate even for the most basic parts of the intended communication	Frequent inadequacies in vocabulary for the task	Some inadequacies in vocabulary for the task	Almost no inadequacies in vocabulary for the task
Grammar	Almost all grammatical patterns inaccurate	Frequent grammatical inaccuracies	Some grammatical inaccuracies	Almost no grammatical inaccuracies
Punctuation	Ignorance of conventions of punctuation	Low standard of accuracy in punctuation	Some inaccuracies in punctuation	Almost no inaccuracies in punctuation
Spelling	Almost all spelling inaccurate	Low standard of accuracy in spelling	Some inaccuracies in spelling	Almost no inaccuracies in spelling

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Confronting MA students' and seminar teachers' diverse agendas concerning academic literacy development through an EAP writing course

ABSTRACT
Academic courses aim to develop kinds of literacy that are significantly different from what students know from other contexts. Mastering ways of constructing knowledge in scholarly disciplines in a foreign language poses a considerable challenge, not only for the uninitiated. The challenge is none the less small for English for Academic Purposes (EAP) writing instructors as the currently observed diversity of student populations in master's programs compels them to revise some of their long-standing assumptions and practices. The article reports on a study aiming to compare MA seminar teachers' and beginner MA students' perceptions of writing needs and an EAP course expectations and suggests how the responses can be used constructively in writing pedagogy.
Keywords: EAP, academic writing courses, academic literacy, MA level writing needs, student and teacher expectations

1. Introduction

Today's academia is a place of diversity. While a decade or so ago candidates for philological studies displayed comparable readiness and capability for academic study and it was relatively easy to expect a certain English Philology student profile, today with the recruitment process no longer relying on entrance examinations or interviews with candidates, such expectations are hardly realistic. To illustrate, daily observation of and communication with the students and tutors of the MA program of English Studies at a large Polish university points to the following areas of diversity:

- general proficiency in English,
- cultural and linguistic background,
- time available for study due to half- or full-time employment,
- past educational histories,

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- expectations concerning instruction, tutor supervision and own involvement,
- awareness of own academic goals and interests,
- self-direction skills,
- type and strength of motivation,
- amount of general background knowledge related to English Studies (i.e. literature and linguistics),
- academic literacies already or simultaneously acquired in a native or foreign language other than English,
- other types of literacies acquired (e.g., digital)

The consequence of this diversity is that it is increasingly difficult for English for Academic Purposes (EAP) teachers to envisage what tasks and materials will be relevant and useful for the current populations of students. Increasingly, instructors have to opt for a compromise, which leaves more competent students dissatisfied and bored and still poses a challenge for the weaker ones. In academic writing courses these discrepancies are especially pronounced and aggravated by the fact that instructional groups consist of students from different specializations, who, in addition to general academic competence, are expected to develop literacy in a specific discipline.

Also, with a growing number of students undertaking other language studies in parallel with English studies, there are more and more multilingual students. As suggested by Pomerantz and Kearney (2012), these students have at their disposal access to multiple ways of modelling what is *good* writing; in other words, writing experiences and proficiency across more than two languages shape their perceptions of themselves as writers and their writing habits (p. 222). For the above reasons, the challenge for an EAP teacher is in the need to cater simultaneously for very diverse needs.

2. Importance and nature of writing in academia

Undeniably, writing is a key skill for those intending to successfully participate in the exchange of expertise with the view to building and verifying knowledge in the academy. Students who are less experienced members of the academic discourse community, or as Ivanić (1998, p. 297) refers to them "apprentices on the margins of community membership", need to master and demonstrate their command of the rules of academic writing because in this way they can show their understanding of disciplinary concepts and give structure to their thoughts on a given academic subject matter, which can be subsequently subjected to evaluation by more expert academics.

Writing is not merely the process of producing a text, but an action performed in response to a communicative motive that is an integral part of the rhetorical situation in which writing occurs. The rhetorical situation comprises the writer, the purpose of writing, the context, the audience or the readers to whom the written text is directed, etc. This multi-dimensional nature of academic prose is reflected

in global moves and local operations performed in texts (Wolsey, 2010, as cit. in Wolsey, Lapp, & Fischer, 2012, p. 715).

The global moves include engaging with disciplinary content, summarizing others' contributions, anticipating reactions, and situating one's point of view within the work of others. They are difficult to teach and learn because they require understanding of abstract notions, for example which ideas to attribute or how to relate evidence to claims. Especially problematic and not really expected of most students is a move that involves construction of one's identity as a knowledgeable participant with a unique voice and capable of making original and worthwhile contributions, not only synthesizing or replicating the expertise of other writers. Even if they are not capable of producing more advanced global moves in their writing, students need to engage with them to understand complex networks of meaning in academic prose.

The local moves, on the other hand, consist of the knowledge of linguistic conventions at the word and sentence level (e.g., discipline-specific terms, choice of pronouns, use of the passive, complex noun phrases and syntactic structures). According to Wolsey (2010), excessive attention to local moves can be counterproductive to students' understanding of global ones. The development of academic writing skills, including increasing students' control over both types of moves is the focus of writing instruction under the aegis of English for Academic Purposes.

3. The role of EAP writing instruction

The idea of EAP courses is that they play a supportive role to MA seminars and assist in preparing students for MA thesis writing. As Hyland (2018, p. 385) notes, in the subject literature EAP university courses are sometimes described in a critical or dismissive way. In addition to accusations of them weakening local academic discourses (Swales, 1997) and putting L2 writers in a passive position of subordination and conformity by imposing Anglo-American norms and values (Pennycook, 2001), EAP courses are regarded, especially if run by disciplinary non-specialists, as ineffective in teaching disciplinary conventions (Spack, 1988). As such they were reduced to a merely supportive or "'remedial service activity' on the periphery of university life" (Spack, 1988, as cit. in Hyland, 2018, p. 383). EAP teachers' role, in turn, is seen as that of 'linguistic service technicians' tasked with repairing the broken language of students in order for them to be 'successfully' processed by the institution" (Hadley, 2015, as cit. in Hyland, 2018, p. 389). The object of EAP writing instruction can be suspect to students themselves who were found to consider academic writing a skill they needed to learn to receive their degrees, but not needed in their future careers (Johanson, 2001, p. 31).

Seen in this light, academic writing courses may seem as purely instrumental, hermetic, subservient, and of little relevance to life outside the academy. Despite these reservations, EAP is an important aspect of university education (and an

area of intense research) as it introduces student writers to a type of literacy that is an intrinsic part of academic culture by bridging the gap between a more personal proficiency-oriented type of writing and serious and complex research-based writing (cf. Hyland, 2018).

4. The study

Despite reservations about EAP invoked in earlier sections of this paper, and out of the belief that EAP instruction may be relevant and useful provided academic writing teachers and seminar teachers delineate areas of responsibility and cooperation, a small-scale study was undertaken to explore a range of issues pertaining to writing instruction focus, some of which go beyond the scope of this article, including MA program entrants' conceptions of academic writing or MA seminar teachers' strategies for dealing with the growing diversity of students in terms modifications of expectations, course content or teaching techniques.

4.1 Rationale

To ensure that writing instruction within EAP is relevant and useful for its recipients, it is necessary to find out about their points of departure. As suggested above, these cannot be taken for granted anymore because of the currently adopted recruitment system at Polish universities. Also, according to the subject literature, investigating students' and teachers' expectations and needs is a worthwhile pursuit. Angélil-Carter (2000), among others, stresses that writing instructors' knowledge of the types of literacy experiences their students engaged in prior to their academic work is essential for the development of competence in academic writing. Finding out about students' needs and expectations, and particularly any discrepancies between students' and teachers' perceptions of their respective roles and responsibilities can assist in working out an appropriate approach to students' writing processes and outcomes (Wolsey et al. 2012, p. 714).

4.2 Aims

The focus of the study as reported in the present article is limited to selected aspects of the larger issue of needs, roles and expectations of those involved in development of academic literacy. Specifically the investigation set out to answer the following research questions:

1) What are students' perceptions of their own academic writing skills on entering MA level studies?
2) What are MA seminar teachers' entry expectations of 1st year students' academic writing skills?
3) What are the respective expectations of the students and MA seminar teachers towards academic writing (EAP) instructors with regard to the focus of the academic writing course?

4.3 Context and participants

- 70 students of 1st year MA studies in the Institute of English Studies at a Polish university, enrolled in seminars in linguistics, applied linguistics, British/American literature studies, and translation studies. All the students are obliged to attend a two-semester, 60-hour course in academic writing, for which they are divided in instructional groups of about 20 people each. The groups are mixed with regard to specialization types, with representatives of two or three specializations per group.
- 10 experienced academic teachers conducting seminars in the above disciplines.

4.4 Research instruments and procedure

The following instruments were used to collect the data:

- a 12-item questionnaire with open-ended questions for students. The questionnaire covered the following topics: academic interests, motivation to study at MA level, experience in academic reading, writing, and research, conception of academic writing, perceptions of own writing deficits, expectations towards MA thesis writing supervision, understandings of own role in the process of MA thesis writing, and expectations towards the academic writing course.
- an 8-item questionnaire with both closed and open-ended questions for seminar teachers. The topics included teachers' perceptions of 1st year MA students, strategies of accommodating diversity in classes, expectations about entry academic competences of MA studies entrants, perceptions of students' writing problems, and expectations towards the academic writing course.

The questionnaires were administered at the beginning of the academic year 2018/2019 and their completion took approximately 30 minutes. The questionnaires were filled in anonymously to keep the respondents' identities confidential. Because the majority of the data were of a qualitative kind, the responses provided to specific questions were analyzed for recurring themes and grouped around general categories that emerged in the process of analysis. The preliminary categorization was reviewed and adjusted in the light of the second and third re-reading of the data. To compare the teachers' and students' responses concerning the issues that this study set out to investigate, thematically corresponding items from the teachers' and the students' questionnaires were subjected to analysis.

4.5 Results

The first research question concerned students' perceptions of their own academic writing skills at the beginning of their MA level studies in terms of the problems they have. The chart below shows the distribution of the responses to Question 5

in the student questionnaire (i.e., SQ5: What are your greatest problems in writing academic texts?) within the identified categories in percentages.

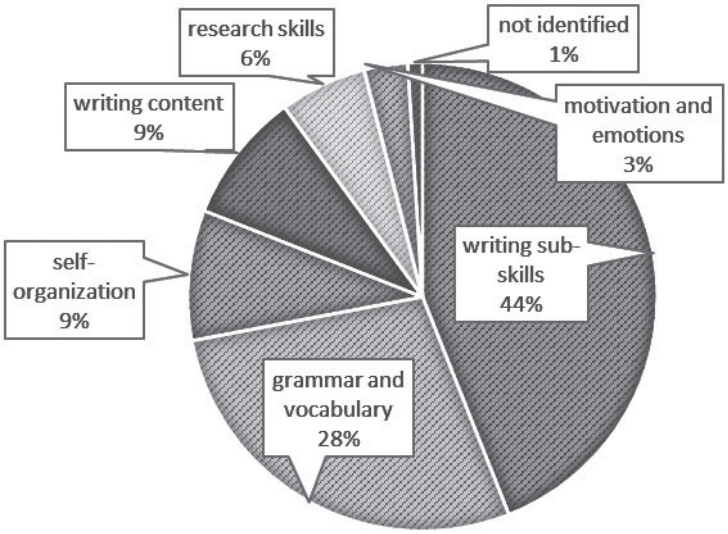

Figure 1. Students' perceptions of their writing skills

The above figure suggests some variability of the responses but it is noticeable that a large number of students see their major problems predominantly in the areas of a) various writing subskills[1] (e.g., *writing a thesis statement, ordering information, adding or leaving out unnecessary things, creating a text as a whole – not separate paragraphs,* etc., and b) (academic) language deficits (e.g., *exaggerated use of metaphorical expressions, structure of longer sentences, writing in a too complex/too simplistic way, problems with articles and commas, using incorrect grammar,* etc.) Incidentally, this correlates with the students' notion of academic prose in general, which, as transpires from their answers to another questionnaire item (i.e., SQ6: What is your definition of academic writing?), a third of the respondents (33%) tend to see it in terms of language or style features, describing it as *advanced, formal, sophisticated, impersonal, professional jargon, good quality, elegant, a style not everyone can master, a very correct and sophisticated language present at universities, but rarely used by native speakers*, etc., rather than for example in terms of aims and goals (4.5%) (e.g., *source for other scientific research, aims at development of certain studies, a means of transferring student's own research/expertise, written for consumption in academic circles/writing with a purpose of making a scientific discovery, etc*.). A view of academic writing that emerges from the

[1] Students' sample responses are provided in italics.

data is one in which academic prose is primarily associated by the students with hyper correct formal language, which is at the same time intimidating and highly desirable.

The second research questioned posed in the study focused on the expectations that MA seminar teachers have of their prospective students' writing skills at the beginning of their MA programs as inferred from the responses provided to Question 6 in the teacher questionnaire (i.e.,TQ6: What entry expectations do you have of 1st year MA students' writing skills?). The specific expectations, clustered around general categories and arranged from the most to the least frequently mentioned in the teachers' responses, are listed below:

a) Generic writing skills[2]. All teachers expressed their expectations concerning students' control of general aspects of writing texts in English, e.g.:

- Good writing habits: planning, outlining, drafting and revising
- Knowledge of paragraph structure
- Recognizing and producing different types of paragraphs
- Awareness of different types of texts with regard to their functions/ awareness of differences between genres
- Understanding the need to support claims with arguments
- Understanding the principles of the main thesis
- Awareness of the importance of cohesion and coherence (logic)
- Awareness of the need to study rules and models before writing practice
- Ability to use reference materials, including dictionaries

b) Academic writing skills. Seven out of ten seminar teachers expect some experience with different academic texts and some prior experience in research writing, e.g.:

- Ability to read and process academic sources (research articles, MA theses, PhD dissertations) and to produce similar (argumentative) texts themselves
- Familiarity with academic writing conventions: understanding the need to provide references when using other writers' ideas, understanding of the role of evaluation and attitude markers in academic texts;
- Criticality, including the ability to voice critical opinions on the content read, critical assessment of texts read, critical use of evidence

The table below summarizes the key findings regarding the students' perceptions of their own writing skills and the teachers' expectations concerning those skills at the beginning of MA studies.

In their majority, the students' responses tend to oscillate around general rather than academic writing difficulties, such as issues of relevance, coherence, structure, and appropriate register. A large proportion of the comments expressed

[2] Teachers' sample responses are provided in italics.

Table 1. Comparison of students' perceptions and teachers' expectations

Students' perceptions f their own writing skills	Teachers' expectations of students' writing skills
a) problems with generic writing subskills (content relevance, logic, coherence, overall text organization) b) language problems of register, choice, and accuracy	a) generic writing skills already developed b) some experience with academic texts expected c) no specific expectations concerning general or academic language ability

revolves around language accuracy and sophistication/formality level. Problems pertaining more specifically to academic writing were identified and signaled by only a few students (e.g., *choosing and summarizing ideas, paraphrasing)*, and they mostly concerned accessing and, less commonly, using sources (e.g., *finding credible sources, using the sources that I find*). Interestingly, the question of how to effectively integrate other writers' ideas with own text so as to, for example, avoid accusations of plagiarism was not mentioned.

Most of the student respondents were not able to identify more intricate problems that writers of academic prose struggle with, such as synthesizing contrasting viewpoints or maintaining the balance between own and other writers' views, which represent global moves in academic prose. Instead, issues of word choice, formality of register, and grammatical accuracy featured prominently. This could mean that the experience in writing academic texts gained during BA level studies may be rather limited and academic writing is mainly associated with superficial formal properties, embodied by local moves. As for the MA seminar teachers, it must be noted that within the two common themes that were identified in their contributions (i.e. general writing skills and academic writing skills), several unique and idiosyncratic expectations were voiced. Also, in contrast to the students, the teachers were not preoccupied by the notion of language accuracy as none of them made a reference to an expected proficiency level or emphasized issues of formal correctness. This is not because it is taken for granted, but because this does not seem to be a realistic expectation any more, something that the students' responses also testify to.

The last research question that the study aimed to investigate were the respective expectations of the students and MA seminar teachers towards the academic writing course. The chart below presents the distribution of the students' responses to the questionnaire item addressing this issue (i.e., SQ10: What are your expectations towards the academic writing course during your MA studies?).

With regard to course content, over a third of the respondents expressed interest in writing specific text types and suggested topics to be written about (e.g., *writing research papers, articles, summaries, paraphrases, book reviews, exam format assignments/topics adjusted to specializations, topics from many fields, topics related to modern technology, scientific, cultural, related to broad academic*

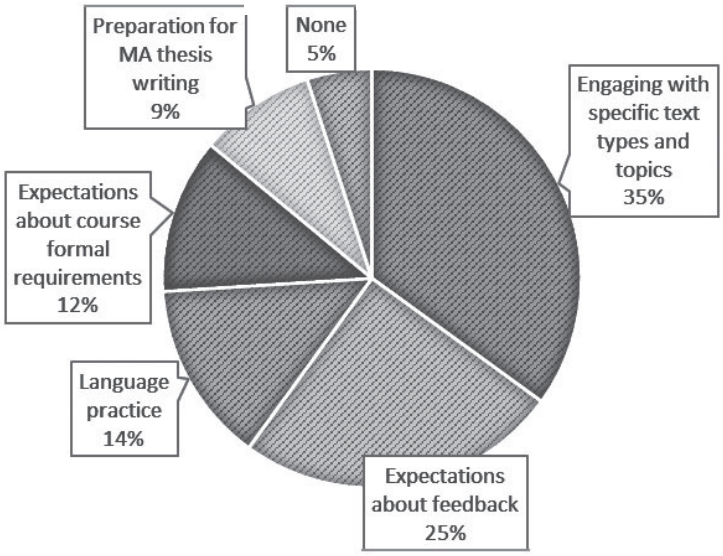

Figure 2. Students' expectations towards academic writing course

issues, contemporary, original, evoking emotions, etc.). Smooth cooperation with and regular feedback from the instructor was important for every fourth student (e.g., *possibility of consultation, helpful comments and questions, clear specific feedback on what is wrong/my biggest mistakes, systematic feedback,* etc.). Despite the concerns about the quality of their written language, only 14% of the respondents expected language work during the course (e.g., *improving professional vocabulary, working on formal academic style, paraphrasing badly written sentences, discussing grammar mistakes, exercises on error correction,* etc.). Even fewer students believed that the academic writing course is to help them prepare for their MA thesis writing. A similar number of responses concerned expectations about formal requirements to be met to get a pass grade (i.e., deadlines, number and balance of home/in-class assignments, number of allowed absences). A few students admitted to having no specific expectations about the course (e.g., *I accept what I'm given.)*. Despite naming various general writing problems in their answers to SQ5, the students do not necessarily see these problems in terms of needs to be addressed by the academic writing course, as they do not suggest any types of writing practice that would cater specifically for those deficits.

As for the writing course expectations of MA seminar teachers, these were far more detailed and varied than those found in the students' responses. In general, all teachers mentioned the need to focus on various aspects of academic texts and the process of composing, but their comments were quite idiosyncratic. In addition to that,

most of the teachers agree that further work on generic writing skills and instruction in formal academic register is needed. The teachers' ideas about the expected content of the course, organized around thematic categories, are listed below from the most to least frequently mentioned ones, with sample responses in italics:

a) Academic writing sub-skills (all teachers):

- Teaching formal academic register
- Teaching skills of paraphrasing, summarizing, note taking, outlining
- Making students familiar with the concept of using sources and documenting them properly
- Critical reading of texts and writing summaries which are a critical synthesis of ideas, not only enumeration of ideas of particular authors (e.g., *emphasizing synthetic abilities rather than reporting without critical insight 'who wrote what'*)
- Raising awareness of the differences between Polish and English academic writing (e.g., *how the way scientific claims/research findings are formulated in the two languages*)
- Focus on hedging, modality, the importance of various reporting verbs/ reporting structures (e.g., *categorical vs. tentative claims: this research proves vs. indicates/suggests…*)
- Analyzing markers of stance, attitude, and evaluation
- Teaching about conventions of writing in specific disciplines

b) General writing skills practice (9 teachers):

- Emphasis on cohesion and coherence (BUT: *too much emphasis on technicalities, e.g. the use of discourse markers makes students think it takes care of coherence*)
- Teaching argumentation skills
- Emphasis on writing as a thinking process
- Fostering critical thinking and reasoning skills as a foundation for writing
- Teaching proofreading skills

c) MA thesis-related work (5 teachers):

- Analyzing and discussing parts of MA theses, e.g., introductions, conclusions
- Producing shorter texts needed for MA thesis completion, e.g., abstracts, literature reviews

d) Issues of feedback and student-teacher cooperation (2 teachers):

- Developing students' autonomy through encouraging self-correction following the instructor's feedback rather than expecting correcting/editing (e.g., *fostering the perception of the instructor as a guide, feedback provider, NOT editor of students' texts*)
- Preparing students for and engaging them in peer review activities (e.g., *making students understand the benefits of peer writing and correction*)

e) Avoiding plagiarism (1 teacher)
f) Other skills (e.g. *mediation skills – writing texts in English based on Polish texts*) (1 teacher).

The juxtaposition of the students' and seminar teachers' respective expectations towards the academic writing course reveals a considerable difference with respect to specificity of these expectations. Putting aside the obvious reasons for this discrepancy stemming from different positions of experience, expertise, articulateness, and the control of the metalanguage of the two groups of respondents, it is noticeable that despite their BA level writing and research experience, the students tend to express their expectations in terms of organization and running of the course, and not in terms of relevance of course content to their writing needs, for example seeing it as a remedy to the various difficulties they admitted to. Nor are they able (with a few notable exceptions) to point to specific aspects of composing academic texts that they need to learn about. The teachers, on their part, formulated their expectations mostly in terms of different layers and nuances of academic literacy, clearly assuming that some basic level of academic literacy has already been achieved during BA studies.

5. Conclusions and implications

The small-scale study reported above allows for only tentative conclusions. One reflection is that paradoxically, a large proportion of students, unlike their seminar teachers, do not associate academic writing course with developing various aspects of strictly academic literacy. Also, their expectations were expressed in terms of wants rather than needs, understood as receiving help in coping with various writing problems they have. Secondly, the students' main area of concern about writing, general or academic, is quality of the language. A similar emphasis on language correctness, complexity and range was not reflected in the teachers' views. The teachers take a reasonable degree of language proficiency for granted, but do not necessarily see it as a prerequisite for academic skills development. This finding is similar to that of Tait (1999) who also found that unlike students, teachers of content courses do not believe that proficiency matters. Despite students' noticeable preoccupation with language correctness and expected formality, their most serious problems with academic writing are not merely of a linguistic kind but connected with the acquisition of new discourse practices and this awareness on the students' part is often missing. As Ballard (1996, as cit. in Sowden, 2003) put it: "a high level of language competence will not in itself generate sophisticated thought" (p. 162). The challenge for EAP writing instructors is to focus on the problematic language forms (i.e. local moves) without diverting students' attention from more global aspects of academic discourse (i.e., global moves). Thirdly, the issue of plagiarism does not emerge in the data collected from the students, either as a source of concern

nor a recommended topic to be covered during the course, possibly because, as Thompson (2009) found, undergraduate students do not consider failure to reference a very serious offence.

Reference to sources is made only in as much as it concerns their availability, accessibility, relevance or selection, but no their critical reading, interpretation, integration and referencing. This overlook suggests that this aspect may be seen as less important.

Despite its narrow focus (students' declarations rather than actual written products) and a limited number of teacher respondents, the study sheds some light on why it is increasingly more difficult for students to write an MA thesis in a period of two years. Generalizing from the student responses, the level of students' academic literacy and awareness of its constituents on the onset of MA studies tends to be lower than hoped for in the light of MA supervisors' entry expectations. The one-year EAP course in academic writing is supposed to repair this mismatch. For this reason, apart from the provision for language work as required, key components of an EAP writing course primarily needs to include:

- Studying multiple academic text models, highlighting their key attributes, including strategies for expressing stance, synthesizing viewpoints, integrating others' ideas, examples of effective linguistic expression, examples of disciplinary language use, nominalization, etc.) (cf. Wolsey et al., 2012);
- Encouraging a critical, questioning attitude towards text content by generating questions, identifying similarities and contradictions, points of interest, challenges to own thinking, etc.);
- Emphasizing the notion of idea ownership vs. general (disciplinary) knowledge;
- Writing source-/research-based texts that involve engaging with different perspectives, comparison, evaluation, synthesis of ideas of multiple authors as a basis for developing the writers' own ideas. (cf. Morton, Storch, & Thompson, 2015)

However, considering the variability observed among the current crop of language studies candidates, also attested by this study, the above-mentioned gap needs bridging to varying extents with individual students. Opting for "the middle ground" in the choice of class content hardly satisfies more advanced students and still places too heavy demands on the weaker ones, and therefore some individualization of instruction is inevitable.

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The potential of TED talks for developing prospective United Nations police monitors' listening performance[1]

ABSTRACT
This study investigated the potential effect of using Technology, Entertainment and Design (TED) talks in developing the listening performance of an available sample of 25 Jordanian enrollees in United Nations (UN) police monitors courses. The study follows a one group, pre-/post-test quasi-experimental design. Following a four-week treatment, the data analysis, both quantitative and qualitative, revealed a positive effect for the utilization of TED talks on the participants' listening performance. The participants were further self-reportedly satisfied with the content, method and timing of treatment as well as their motivation, interaction, and overall improvement.
Keywords: listening, TED talks, UN police monitors

1. Introduction and Background

Language is the primary medium of communication, and English is a lingua franca for exchanging ideas and thought all over the world. Even though English is spoken natively by an estimated 5.5% of the world population, it is the most widespread among world languages (Simons & Fennig, 2018) as "approximately one in four of the world's population are now capable of communicating to a useful level in English" (Crystal, 2003, p. 69).

[1] This manuscript is an extension of the second author's doctoral dissertation per the regulations in force at Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan.

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Police not only serve and protect people, fight crimes and handle emergency cases locally, but they also participate in United Nations missions to keep peace around the globe. Peacekeepers from more than one hundred countries are deployed annually to monitor and observe peace processes in post-conflict areas. The Jordanian police are among the earliest participants in preserving peace and security in various conflict areas around the world (Department of Peacekeeping Operations 2018; Petra 2014).

The UN English Language Proficiency Test, a major requirement for participation in UN missions, consists of four sections: reading, listening, report writing, and oral interview. A police officer must pass this test, with a minimum score of 70%, to be deployed on any UN peacekeeping mission.

Most prospective participants in UN missions disqualify for their poor performance in the listening section of the test in which the examinee listens once to an audio script concerning a mission-related topic followed by a related dialogue between two persons. Notes can be taken on both script and dialogue to either answer a set of ten questions or complete a written report.

Based on the first researcher's extensive experience as an instructor in the Jordanian Peacekeeping Institute and a former international UN examiner, these researchers claim that the reasons for poor listening performance are inexperience in listening and note-taking, tension, and poor time management during the test. This is further supported by research findings (e.g., Fang, 2011) that tension is a major deterrent of listening comprehension.

Listening comprehension is defined as the ability to understand native speech at normal speed in an unstructured situation (Chastain, 1971). It encompasses basic auditory recognition, aural grammar, eliciting the necessary information, remembering it, and relating it to the construction of meaning (Morley, 1972). Listening further comprises a process of taking what one hears and organizing it into verbal units to which one can apply meaning (Goss, 1982).

Listening comprehension is more than a process of a unidirectional receipt of speech (Brown, 2001) but rather an essentially collaborative process in which one receives speech, constructs, represents, and negotiates meaning with the speaker, and creates meaning through involvement, imagination and empathy (Rost 2002). In other words, to listen effectively, one must be able to decode the message, and apply a set of meaning-making strategies and interactive processes which entail active involvement, effort, and practice (e.g., Buck, 2001; Dallinger, Jonkmann, Hollm, & Fiege 2016; Harmer, 2001; Shen, Guizhou, Wichura, & Kiattichai 2007).

Listening is a skill of critical significance in all aspects of one's life, especially as a means for language input and a precondition for speaking (Rost, 2005; Valeeva, Aitov, & Bulatbayeva, 2016). Of the four language skills, listening takes up 45% of one's time, more than any other communicative activity and almost

three times as much time as reading (Rankin, 1928) and 57.5% of daily classroom time (Wilt, 1950). Along the same lines, Rivers and Temperley (1978) claimed that adults spend 45% of their communication activities listening, 30% speaking, 16% reading, and 9% writing.

However, even though the teaching of listening has recently gained much interest (e.g., Field, 2002; Nunan, 2002; Schmidt, 2016; Smidt & Hegelheimer, 2004; Wallace, 2010), listening had been the most neglected of the four language skills (Oxford, 1993) so much so that it had been dubbed the „step-child of language learning" (Whiteson, 1974) and the "Cinderella skill" (Nunan, 2002, p. 238) often "overlooked by its elder sister-speaking". Listening comprehension, albeit one of the most difficult tasks for the language learners (Eastman, 1987; Paulston & Bruder, 1976), is the most neglected in the language classroom.

Often, listening instruction is limited to "playing audio and asking comprehension questions, or even playing audio and asking students to complete tasks" and done more for testing (Brown, 2001, p. 36), introducing grammar or vocabulary, discussion, checking comprehension, and introducing different accents than training students to listen more effectively (Thorn, 2009). This matter is further confounded with reports that textbooks generally present listening activities meant more for testing comprehension than teaching listening (Khuziakhmetov & Porchesku, 2016).

However, many argue that, like other language skills, listening may be best learned through listening itself (Renandya & Farrell, 2010), which helps learners acquire vocabulary, recognize accents, and improve pronunciation and speaking, not to mention fosters their motivation (Brown, 2002; Field, 2002; Reinders & Cho, 2010) and independent learning.

Technology has been reported to catalyze language instruction and improve learning (Al-Barakat & Bataineh 2008; Baniabdelrahman, Bataineh, & Bataineh, 2007; Bataineh, Al-Hamad, & Al-Jamal, 2018; Bataineh & Bani Hani, 2011; Bataineh & Baniabdelrahman, 2006; Bataineh & Mayyas, 2017; Hill & Slater, 1998; Ojaili, 2002), develop higher-order thinking, reduce learning time, and increase knowledge retention, through the provision of better access to authentic materials (Field, 2002; Flowerdew & Miller, 2005; Rogers & Medley, 1988).

Even though Technology, Entertainment and Design (TED) talks are a relatively young genre, they have evolved into highly-prepared, perfectly-delivered oral performances with new modes of distribution and new audiences (Ludewig, 2017). TED is a non-profit organization dedicated to spreading ideas, usually in 20-minute segments, known as TED talks.

Ted talks started in 1984 as lectures on technology, entertainment, and design from around the world, but they evolved to cover almost all topics in more than one hundred languages. TED talks have been available to the public since 2006 when TED launched its website and the videos were first published online. Most

talks are accompanied by free transcripts in native and nonnative English and subtitles in over 40 languages (TED, 2018).

TED talks, often compared to academic lectures (e.g., Romanelli, Cain, & McNamara, 2014), have been used in academia since 2006 as "perfectly designed „knowledge snacks" whose delivery is as important as their content" (Ludewig, 2017, p. 7). They have been a growing life-like resource to inspire new forms of language teaching and learning (Nicolle, Britton, Janakiram, & Robichaud, 2014; Romanelli, Cain, & McNamara, 2014). The academic orientation of TED talks has been further established as a growing number of university-based researchers speak about their scholarly expertise making use of academic authentication tools such as research evidence, infographics, and animation. In fact, one in every four TED presenters is an academic expert (Sugimoto & Thelwall, 2013).

Technological capabilities (e.g., subtitling, rate control) have been reported to have positive effects on language learning. For example, Woodall (2010) and Chang and Millett (2014) both reported positive effects on listening comprehension and vocabulary learning. Similarly, TED talks potentially enable learners to control speech rate and, thus, boost their chances for better comprehension (Griffiths, 1992; Wingfield, 2000).

This, coupled with a word-of-mouth accounts that listening is essential not only for enrollment in UN police monitors courses but also for subsequent success in the test and, eventually, participation in UN peace-keeping missions, has instigated this study. The researchers believe that TED talks may be a catalyst for improved listening performance, as learners are afforded opportunities to practice listening (and other skills) in an authentic, non-threatening, and readily accessible medium.

Thus, the research attempts to recognize the potential utility of TED talks for developing prospective UN police monitors' listening. More specifically, it seeks answers to the following questions:

1. What is the effect of TED talks, if any, in developing the listening performance of the participants in United Nations police monitors courses?
2. What are the participants' perceptions of the potential effectiveness of TED talks in developing their listening performance?

The findings of this research are expected to provide grounded insights into the potential utility of TED talks for developing UN police monitors courses' enrollees' listening performance. Since passing the listening section of the UN test is a prerequisite and potential catalyst of UN police monitors courses' enrollees' participation in sought-after peace-keeping missions, the current research is, to the best of these researchers' knowledge, the first to examine the potential utility of TED talks for improving prospective UN peace-keeping personnel's listening performance.

The use of TED talks in language instruction in general, and listening instruction in particular, is still a relatively young field, but evidence abounds

for their effect on improving language proficiency over traditional instruction. Obari and Lambacher (2014) reported a positive effect of TED-based blended learning on Japanese EFL students' overall English proficiency. Similarly, Hye and Kyung (2015) reported that shadowing with authentic materials, such as TED talks, brought about marked improvement in 70 Korean EFL students' listening comprehension.

Takaesu (2013) reported that TED talks improved Japanese college students' listening comprehension, enhanced their motivation to independently pursue their interests, and familiarized them with various English accents. Similarly, Schmidt (2016) found that not only did TED talks and listening journals positively affect the listening skill development, but students viewed them as an interesting and beneficial opportunity for authentic listening practice and a catalyst for real-world listening skills.

The researchers could not locate any previous research on developing UN police officers' listening performance for better execution of their duties on peace-keeping missions. Thus, even though the utility of TED talks themselves is examined most probably for the first time, this study responds to previous recommendations for improving law enforcement officers' language proficiency (e.g., Aldohon, 2014).

In the interest of time and convenience, the scope of this research is limited to the enrollees in the first UN Police Monitor Course for 2018. The research is also limited to a set fifteen TED talks which are relevant to police work, participants' proficiency, and potential interests.

2. Sample, Instrumentation, and Data Collection

The participants comprised an available sample of the 25 police officers enrolled in the international police monitors course held at the Jordanian Peacekeeping Institute in January 2018.

The research used a mixed quantitative and qualitative, one group quasi-experimental design. Three instruments, whose validity and reliability were properly established, were used: a test, a reflection form, and an interview schedule. The test, used as both the pre- and post-test, is adopted from previous UN courses. Additionally, the reflection form and semi-structured interview were designed to gauge the participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of TED talks in developing their listening performance.

In selecting the materials of the treatment, the researchers were keen on varying the difficulty levels of the talks (viz., Carvalho, 2014; Barlow, 2016; Fraser, 2012; Goodman, 2012; Healey, 2013; Boushnak, 2016; Dudani, 2016; Autesserre, 2014; Ebrahim, 2014; Klebold, 2016; Bautista, 2017; Mahmoud, 2016; Bales, 2010; Krishnan, 2009; Lewis, 2011), as the levels of the participants themselves varied considerably. The content of the treatment was graded, which eventually affected

how challenging each talk was to each participant, not to mention that subtitles in both English and Arabic and the option of speech control were available.

3. Findings and Discussion

To answer the first research question, which sought the potential effect of TED talks in developing the listening performance of the participants in United Nations police monitors courses, descriptive statistics were used. Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations of the pre-and post- test scores pertaining to the first research question, which addresses the potential effect of TED talks in developing listening performance.

Table 1. Means and standard deviations of the participants' pre-and post- test scores

Test	Mean	SD	Correlation	Sig	t
pre-	3.68	1.719	.798	.000	12.763
post-	6.44	1.679			

n= 25

Table 1 shows a statically significant difference (at $\alpha = 0.05$) between the participants' scores on the pre- and post-tests. The participants' listening comprehension have significantly improved, which may be attributed to the treatment.

The researchers argue that the use of TED talks has created a context through which the participants were exposed to UN- and police-related topics under the watchful eye of the instructor/ first researcher. In the first activity, the participants watched the talk (without subtitles) and took notes. Not only does this allow the participants to practice listening, but it also gives them a chance to practice note-taking, which replicates what test-takers do on the official UN test. In the second attempt, the participants watched the same talk with English subtitles, which not only affords them more linguistic support but also allows them to monitor their comprehension and focus on the information they missed in the same round. In the third attempt, the participants watched the talks with Arabic subtitles, which enabled them to both verify information and check their comprehension over the three attempts.

In one of the activities, which aims at developing decoding and careful listening, the participants were taught to create cloze passages using Cloze Test Creator, through which each participant removes words either at random or by choice, to practice and test his comprehension.

Following each set of activities, the participants reflected on their experience, paying special attention to their strengths and areas which warrant further practice in both listening and note-taking. The participants reported not only improved comprehension and note-taking but also more confidence in their respective abilities.

The participants reportedly found that the talks, with the added features of subtitles, speed adjustment, relevant topics, and clarity of message delivery, relatively easy to understand and process and, eventually, developed their listening and note-taking. The researchers argue that the appropriate level and content of the teaching material served as a catalyst for improving the participants' listening and note-taking skills, which is consistent with previous research findings (e.g., Buck, 2001; Dallinger et al., 2016; Harmer, 2001) which assert that appropriate content is a catalyst for listening development.

Furthermore, the fact that the treatment was tailored to the participants' particular needs, gleaned by the instructor/first researcher over years of being an instructor and examiner, may have contributed to its effectiveness in developing listening and note-taking skills. The fact that the course was taught by an expert in UN testing may have also reflected on the participants' keenness to participate more actively and diligently in the program, which may have eventually affected their performance on the post-test.

The current findings are consistent with those of previous research (e.g., Hye & Kyung, 2015; Ludewig, 2017; Nicolle et al., 2014; Romanelli et al., 2014; Sugimoto & Thelwall, 2013; Takaesu, 2013) which add to the evidence on the positive effect of TED talks in developing EFL listening performance.

The second research question sought the participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of TED talks in developing their listening performance. The participants reported that the treatment had a significant effect on improving their listening performance. The findings revealed that the participants were highly satisfied with the content of the treatment. Not only were they exposed to short, concise, and highly contextualized segments, but they were also impressed with the novelty and visual appeal of the content. Fifteen (60%) of the participants *strongly agreed* and nine (36%) *agreed* that the content of TED talks is not only appropriate but also relevant to their needs. This almost unanimous satisfaction may be attributed to the researchers' choice of talks with relevant content to UN missions and police monitors' work.

Similarly, eleven **(**44%) of the participants *strongly agreed* and 12 (48%) *agreed* that each of the 15 TED talks used in the treatment has a clear and succinct message. The participants reported that the talks were a rich source of vocabulary (e.g., drugs, violence, cybercrime) and that the rich context provided by each talk facilitated learning police-related terms such as *lane, velocity, dead stop, slammed on brakes, the air bag deployed,* and *the car is totaled* (see Healey, 2013). The participants' reported that the treatment afforded them opportunities not only to watch relevant, yet very interesting, talks but also to enrich their police-related vocabulary and improve their listening performance.

Twelve (48%) of the participants *strongly agreed* and twelve (48%) *agreed* that the treatment catalyzed their self-study and independent learning beyond the

classroom. This, coupled with reports by most of the participants (88%) that the comprehensibility of the content of the treatment helped them not only enjoy learning but also build and foster their confidence in their ability and motivation to learn, which may have contributed to their much-improved listening performance. The researchers observed that the way the participants engaged in the listening activities and responded to the reflection questions on each talk, by merit of their notes rather than the transcript, has prompted them towards diligence and further learning.

The participants also reflected on the merit of bi-lingual subtitles in facilitating their listening comprehension. The English subtitles reportedly not only gave the participants more linguistic support but also allowed them to monitor their comprehension and focus on details whereas the Arabic subtitles enabled them to check their understanding and make connections between their first and target languages. These findings are consistent with research evidence (e.g., Hosogoshi, 2016) on the merit of subtitles as potential scaffolds for learning.

Similarly, the participants reported on the utility of the speed control option in developing their listening ability through practice customized to their own level and pace of learning. Most reported that, at the early stages of the treatment, they often repeated the talks at slower speed to better grasp the ideas and difficult vocabulary, increasing the speech rate as they made progress. This is consistent with substantial research evidence (e.g., Fushun, 2006; Robinson, Stefrling, Skinner, & Robinson, 1997) on the facilitative effect of speech rate on developing second language listening comprehension. Along the same lines, the multiple accents in the TED talks used in the treatment provided the participants with a slice of reality with both native and non-native accent, which would improve their chances of listening comprehension and, in turn, of passing the listening component of the UN test.

The participants also reflected on the merit of the hands-on note-taking practice on improving their ability to take notes, attend to details, and, eventually, better comprehend the talks. Note-taking is rudimentary for passing police monitors courses, as a good set of notes is crucial for preparing for the listening component of the UN test.

As note-taking and listening comprehension are interdependent skills, the more details covered, the more is understood of the script. Through practicing listening to TED talks, the participants' listening skill improved as they became more familiar not only with the format and structure of the talks but also with police-related terminology and phrases (delivered with correct pronunciation and various accents) which, in turn, facilitated listening comprehension. With frequent practice, the participants became more selective and had a better eye for key concepts, repetitions (signaling important detail), and verbal cues (e.g., changes in tone, pitch, and speed, signaling emphasis or important information), abbreviations, acronyms, and symbols.

Furthermore, repeated exposure to TED talks potentially reduced tension and created a relaxed, non-threatening atmosphere, as the participants practiced listening and note-taking and, simultaneously, practiced test-taking and time-management. 28% of the participants *strongly agreed,* and 64% *agreed* that they no longer experienced panic after practicing with TED talks.

Overall, the participants were in near-consensus that the TED-based treatment has significantly improved their listening performance, self-confidence, and motivation to learn. Their positive assessment may be attributed to a host of factors, most prominent amongst which is the novelty of the treatment, as most of the participants reported experiencing TED talks for the first time. The unlimited exposure to the talks and the self-regulated use (with variations in exposure, speed, and bi-lingual subtitles) may also have catalyzed the participants' engagement and time-on-task inside and outside the classroom, which is consistent with previous findings (e.g., Li, Chang, Chu, & Tsai, 2012; Schmidt, 2016) that individualized learning environments are catalysts for learner satisfaction, achievement, interest, and motivation.

4. Implications and Recommendations

This study reports a positive effect for TED talks on prospective UN police monitors' listening performance and overall participant satisfaction with the treatment. The researchers call upon EFL instructors in the Jordanian Peacekeeping Institute to focus more on teaching listening to improve learners' performance.

The extensive review of related literature pointed out the relative dearth of research on listening instruction. More research is needed not only on the difficulties encountered by EFL learners but also on effective remediation strategies.

Based on the findings of the research, it is crucial that teachers be made aware of the utility of TED talks for improving learners' listening performance in the foreign language classroom and beyond. The researchers recommend that Jordanian EFL teachers be trained to incorporate TED talks in their instructional practices.

Due to the limit of time and space, the current study only lasted for four weeks. Therefore, research, carried out for a longer interim, may generate more readily verifiable findings.

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Assessing L2 vocabulary through multiple-choice, matching, gap-fill, and word formation items

ABSTRACT
The current study aims to determine the effect of multiple-choice, matching, gap-fill and word formation items used in assessing L2 vocabulary on learners' performance and to obtain the learners' views regarding the use of these types of items in vocabulary assessment. The convenience sampling method was selected, and the participants of the study included 30 freshmen enrolled in the General English course offered in the Department of Public Administration at a state university in Turkey. The main findings revealed that the participants considered the multiple-choice and matching items were easy to understand and to answer and that gap-fill and word formation items were difficult due to several reasons.
Keywords: assessing vocabulary, multiple-choice, matching, gap-fill,, word formation

1. Introduction

Vocabulary assessment is an indispensable aspect of language teaching as Nation (2008) clearly indicates the aim of vocabulary assessment is "to work out what needs to be taught, to monitor and encourage learning, to place learners in the right class, to measure learners' achievement by giving a grade, and to measure learners' vocabulary size or proficiency" (p. 144). Teachers need to determine to what extent the words that they taught have been mastered by the students both receptively and productively. However, like assessing other language skills and components, L2 vocabulary assessment poses a challenging task for language teachers due to several reasons (Shen, 2003). One is that the assessment format, technique or task used in the assessment practices may have a beneficial or harmful effect on learners' performance. Another reason is that preparing appropriate items for different formats for vocabulary assessment requires knowledge and expertise since each might have several advantages and disadvantages.

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One of the major issues for learners regarding L2 vocabulary is producing the words in addition to recognizing it (McCarthy, O'Keeffe, & Walsh, 2010). While recognizing words includes differentiating words from others and recalling the meaning, producing the words might pose serious issues since it includes not only forming and writing words but also recalling the meaning. In order to overcome these issues, in teacher education programs and in-service language teachers are presented, taught and asked to practice several formats or techniques to assess vocabulary receptively and productively (Ur, 2012). Moreover, in-service training programs also include these formats or techniques to keep the in-service teachers up to date with vocabulary assessment. Of these, multiple-choice (MC), matching, gap-fill and word formation (WF) formats (Heaton, 1990; Hughes, 2003; Brown, 2005; Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010; Bailey & Curtis, 2015) are among the most commonly used items in the language classrooms, in the nation-wide and worldwide conducted exams such as Cambridge English: First (FCE).

2. Formats to Assess vocabulary

The formats to assess vocabulary can be divided into two kinds: recognition based items and productive based items (Heaton, 1990; Hughes, 2003; Brown, 2005; Riahi, 2018). Recognition based or oriented items include the most common items such as MC and matching, while productive ones include items such as gap-fill and cloze tests (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010; Bailey & Curtis, 2015; Brown & Trace, 2017). These types of formats are considered much more challenging and demanding for the learners as they have to consider the meaning of the word and to provide the correct form (Read, 2012). The formats used in the current study will be briefly discussed below, indicating the main features of them.

MC format

MC items were, and still are, one of the most common formats used in language tests, mainly used to assess grammar and grammar. MC items include a statement, called as the stem, which a question to be answered, a problem to be solved, or as in most situation, an incomplete statement to be completed, and the response options to be used in the blank in the stem (Bailey & Curtis, 2015). Of the options, the correct one is considered as the key (correct) answer, while the others are called distractors, which are the incorrect responses that are used to distract the responders that who do not know the correct answer. The total number of options including the correct answer ranges from four to five depending on the needs and the level of the students. In high-stakes exams, incorrect answers (generally four) provided may cancel out one correct answer in order to refrain the test-takers from benefiting from their guessing skills. There are several advantages of using MC items. One is that scoring the answers is relatively easier and practical compared to other formats that aim to assess vocabulary, and it is more objective in terms

of scoring (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). However, creating good MC items is not easy, as it requires expertise and experience in producing well-structured items (Read, 2000). Another disadvantage of MC items is that they cannot be used to assess productive skills. In other words, assessment will be based on recognition of the correct answer, rather than producing it.

Matching format

Matching items are as popular MC items, and they are generally used in assessing vocabulary. The basic format of matching items includes two columns of information. The left column includes the explanations, statements or the definitions of the words. The right column, on the other hand, includes the words or the options. Learners are then asked to match the words/options on the right with the words/statements on the left by generally writing the letters (A, B, C, D…) that correspond to the options on the right column. One of the main advantages of using this format it that more distractors can be provided (Miller, Linn, & Gronlund, 2013). While, for example, in MC items, 3 or 3 distractors are possible, in matching format, there might be 10 or even more. However, this format is still based on recognition, rather than the production of the correct answer.

Gap-fill format

Unlike MC and matching formats, gap-fill format allows creating items that encourage learners to produce vocabulary. In the gap-fill format, learners are provided with sentences that have gaps. Learners are expected to read each sentence and to provide the suitable word that may complete the sentence. In other words, learners have to produce the word rather than just recognize it. From this perspective, gap-fill format provides teachers the opportunity to construct questions that assess learners' production of vocabulary. Constructing gap-fill items is rather easier compared to other formats. However, several disadvantages can also be associated with this format. One of these disadvantages is that students' producing the answer in order to complete gap requires more time compared to MC and matching items produce the answer in order to complete the gap (Coombe, Folse, & Hubley, 2007). Another disadvantage is that learners might come up with possible answers although they might not be the one in the teacher's mind or key to the test.

WF items

WF items are mainly used for assessing lexical knowledge; however, structural knowledge might also be required. In high-stakes exam such as Cambridge English Proficiency, the focus of this format is "on vocabulary, in particular, the use of affixation, internal changes and compounding in WF" (Cambridge English Proficiency, 2016, p. 7). In this format, several words are taken from a text and

the stem words are provided at the end of the lines as separated from the text. The learners are then asked to complete each gap using the appropriate form of the word given as the stem word. Learners are expected to use affixes, internal changes, and compounds while forming the words based on the stem. However, it is also required to consider the context in which each gap is provided since learners are to provide the appropriate part of speech such as the noun, adjective, or adverb form of the stem provided.

3. Related research on vocabulary assessment

A plethora of research has been conducted on teaching L2 vocabulary, and the research conducted has yielded varying results. Moreover, the most common techniques and formats have started to be used with the new advances in technology, resulting in promising learning gains (Özer & Koçoğlu, 2017). However, there are few studies conducted on the use of different assessment forms in vocabulary assessment and the learners' views. It is not rare to observe that language teachers placing less importance on vocabulary assessment, if not totally ignoring it and assessing learners' vocabulary knowledge only asking students to provide meanings in their L1 (e.g., Tuyen, 2015).

The study conducted by Amini and Ibrahim-González (2012) investigated the effects of cloze and MC tests on the thirty freshmen students majoring in English language teaching at a university in Iran. The results indicated that teaching and testing vocabulary through cloze tests encouraged students to use the vocabulary productively rather than receptively since the participants tried to infer the meaning benefiting from the context provided. Another study by Kremmel and Schmitt (2016) investigated whether the results of assessments that included various item formats could provide information on the learners' ability to use words. In other words, the study tried to indicate whether the participants, having provided correct answers on the vocabulary test, could use those words in other situations that required other skills such as reading. The participants included eighteen English native speakers and twelve non-native English speakers at a School of English at a British university and responded to vocabulary questions in four different item formats (multiple matching, MC, and two types of cloze). The results indicated that these four item formats might not indicate whether the correctly answered items could be employed by the participants in reading. Therefore, it was put forward that the scores obtained through these formats could not be used to go beyond the form-meaning link.

The study conducted on the use of gap-fill (Kılıçkaya, 2011) compared the participants' performance on the same time items that were presented in different forms. The study included three groups. The participants in the control group were presented with a paragraph with blanks and asked to select the best option to fill the gaps. However, the participants in the first experimental group were asked to select the best option on the individual sentences taken from the same paragraph,

while the ones in the second experimental group were asked to fill in the blanks in the same paragraph with no options to select. The results indicated that the participants in the first experimental group outperformed the others. The results also showed that the participants in the second group obtained the lowest scores, as they were not able to provide the words although they guessed what would come to the gap considering the meaning.

4. The current study

The current study aimed to determine the effect of several vocabulary assessment formats (MC, matching, gap-fill, and WF) in assessing L2 vocabulary on learners' performance. The study also aimed to obtain the participants'' views regarding the use of these formats in vocabulary assessment in the classroom. In line with these purposes, the following research questions were put forward:

1. What is the effect of using different formats in assessing L2 vocabulary in learners' performance in the exercises?
2. What are the participants' views on these formats?

5. Methodology

Research design

The study adopted a mixed-method approach by utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data included the participants' scores on different formats using in vocabulary assessment. The qualitative data included the participants' responses obtained during the semi-structured interviews.

Participants

The participants of the study were 30 freshmen enrolled in the General English course offered in the Department of Public Administration at a state university in Turkey. Of the participants, 14 were female, while 16 were male. The participants' age ranged from 18 to 22, with an average of 19.2. Most of the participants were graduates of high schools, while only 4 of them were a graduate of vocational schools with 2-year education. The participants were enrolled in the General English course, which aims to have learners learn the basic grammatical structures and to produce sentences that will achieve communicative functions in both written and spoken English. The course was offered three hours each week for fourteen weeks, with 42 hours in total.

Data collection instruments

The data collection instruments included twenty-vocabulary assessment activities that included MC, matching, gap-fill and WF items and the semi-structured interviews. After each unit, the participants were provided four exercises, each of which included different assessment items. There were 5 items in each exercise,

and these items were the frequently used words in the student book, the workbook, and the supplementary materials provided by the lecturer in the classroom. The example items used in the study are presented in the Appendix. These items are based on the content of the book Face2face: Elementary student's book, written by Redston and Cunningham (2012). Semi-structured interviews were conducted at the end of the seventh week with randomly selected ten students regarding their performance in the exercises as well as their views towards the use of different assessment items in the vocabulary exercises. The interviews took place in the researcher's office in the participants' native language (Turkish) and took 7.5 minutes on average.

Data collection procedure

During the first week, the participants were introduced to the course and then asked if they would like to participate in the study in which different assessment formats would be used to assess vocabulary. No further details were provided regarding the study. After obtaining their consent, they were informed that at the end of each unit (the first five units), there would be assessment exercises in different formats. They were also informed that these would not affect their final grades in the course and the results would be just used for the analysis of the effects of using different formats in exercises. Then, after each unit, the participants were asked to do the exercises in four different exercises, each of which included five items. The total number of items in each session was 20 and these items included the most frequently used words in the book as well as the supplementary materials. At the end of the sixth week, the participants completed the last exercises, which were followed by the semi-structured interviews. These interviews were conducted with randomly selected ten participants at the end of the seventh week just before the midterms.

Data analysis

The quantitative data obtained from the participants' exam results in different formats were subject to statistical analysis using IBM SPSS 24. One-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to determine any statistically significant differences between the means of these four formats, namely, MC, matching, gap-fill and WF. Moreover, the qualitative data obtained through the semi-structured interviews on the participants' views regarding these formats were transcribed verbatim. Later, the transcriptions were subject to content analysis to determine the emerging themes and codes. Several responses were selected as the quotations and were translated into English.

6. Findings and Discussion

The quantitative and qualitative findings will be presented together in this section since the results are related to each other. A repeated measures ANOVA with a Greenhouse-Geisser correction determined the average scores obtained differed statistically significantly among the item formats ($F(2.720, 78.893) = 34.062$, $p < 0.05$). A statistically significant difference existed among the four sets of scores. The effect size calculated as multivariate partial eta squared was determined to be = .99, which suggests a very large effect size. The participants obtained the highest average on the questions in the MC format ($\bar{X}$ =15.73) and the lowest on the questions in the WF format ($\bar{X}$=10.30).

The pairwise comparisons were also conducted to determine which set of scores obtained on different types of cloze procedure differed from one another. Post hoc tests using the Bonferroni correction were also conducted. The summary of the results is provided in Table 1. These tests revealed that the participants' scores obtained on the MC and matching tests differed significantly from the gap-fill and WF ones, with the difference found to be significant at the 0.05 level. However, no statistically significant difference was found between the two item formats: MC and matching. This finding clearly indicates that the item formats, such as MC and matching, remain popular among learners due to their apparent aptness for testing vocabulary. The great majority of the participants (n=9) indicated during the interviews that compared to other item formats, MC and matching items were relatively easier as they did not have to provide the form or the meaning but 'recognize' the best word that would complete the blank.

One of the participants expressed this clearly as follows:

> *Providing the suitable words for the gaps was difficult. I was required to remember the form, I mean, the spelling of the word. Similarly, WF was also challenging. However, when it comes to MC or matching questions, I was rather relaxed, as I did not have to produce but select the best word* (Male, ID 8).

This finding is consistent with that of the study conducted by Kılıçkaya (2011), indicating that MC and matching item formats led the participants to better use of receptive knowledge rather than the productive one and with that of the discussion on the challenges imposed by productive formats (Read, 2012). Task or item familiarity is known to affect the results and the performance of the candidates in addition to the reliability of the exams conducted (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). This might be attributed to the fact that the participants' receptive vocabulary can be much larger than the productive one (Coxhead, 2018), and therefore, it might lead them to perform better in the MC and gap-fill than the WF. This might also be because these participants were much more familiar with these activities both in the classroom and outside the classroom, which requires caution while considering the effects.

The statistical analysis also indicated that the participants obtained the lowest

Table 1. *The Pairwise Comparisons among the average scores obtained from item formats*

(I) Item format	(J) Item format	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
MC	Matching	-.533	.819	1.000
	Gap-fill	4.733*	.612	.000
	WF	5.433*	.733	.000
Matching	MC	.533	.819	1.000
	Gap-fill	5.267*	.776	.000
	WF	5.967*	.873	.000
Gap-fill	MC	-4.733*	.612	.000
	Matching	-5.267*	.776	.000
	WF	.700	.678	1.000
WF	MC	-5.433*	.733	.000
	Matching	-5.967*	.873	.000
	Gap-fill	-.700	.678	1.000
*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.				

scores in the questions created in gap-fill and WF item formats. The participants' average score was 11.00 for the gap-fill questions and 10.3 for the WF items. Although there was no statistically significant difference between the scores in gap-fill and WF items, the participants stated that WF items were rather difficult and provided several reasons for this. The common reasons stated were determined to be related to the characteristics of the item and the knowledge required to provide the correct answer (n=7). One of the participants explained this as follows:

> *These types of activities [gap-fill and WF] required writing the answers instead of selecting the correct answer. Compared to other item formats, especially WF was, I think, difficult. The reason is that it was testing also the word structure [part of speech] and some structures [syntactical knowledge]* (Female, ID 4).

This type of activity aimed to require the participants to demonstrate their understanding of the meaning considering the context, as the participants agreed, it was shown to be testing syntactical knowledge (Stopar, 2014). That is, without knowing much about the meaning of the word to be inserted into the blank, the participants tried to determine whether it would be an adjective, a verb, or a noun. The results suggest that the majority of the participants complained that WF items required the knowledge of syntax and morphology since through this knowledge it was possible to determine the correct part of speech. Moreover, since the participants were not used to be assessed through productive knowledge (Toksöz & Kılıçkaya, 2017), it was possible that they found gap-fill and WF more

challenging compared to other item formats.

As indicated by Schmitt and McCarthy (1997) and McCarthy (2003), linguistic contexts especially aid the learners' ability of utilizing morhphonological as well as lexical rules, which facilitates understanding of the meaning and the form of the word. Therefore, some participants also valued the use of contexts. In other words, rather than just asking the meaning of a word given in isolated forms without using it in a sentence was highly valued by the participants.

Considering the findings obtained, it can be stated from the pedagogical perspective that Failing to encourage learners to produce the word (pronunciation) and write it (spelling) would be tantamount to dereliction of the basic duty in teaching and learning any foreign language, not just English (Milton & Hopkins, 2006). Therefore, it is suggested that teachers should introduce productive tasks and items into the classroom such as WF in addition to the common exercises. One suggested activity can be that learners might be asked to use the common words written on paper through using (speaking) them in context.

7. Conclusion and suggestions for further research

The current study aimed to determine the effects of using various items in assessing L2 (English) vocabulary on the university students' performance in these items and the students' views on the use of different items. The study used both quantitative and qualitative data to achieve this aim. The results mainly indicated that gap-fill and WF items were found to be rather difficult by the participants due to several reasons. These items required the participants to produce the words based on several factors such as the context, meaning, and the part of speech. Therefore, most participants found them more demanding compared to other times. These findings were also confirmed by the quantitative findings regarding the participants' performance on the tests. The findings also point towards the need for more use of productive assessment, instead of recognition assessment in testing learners' lexical knowledge. The need for this is also reflected in the participants' responses during the interviews.

The quantitative data collection instrument in this study focused on the written form of the words. Therefore, further research can also use other item formats to test learners' phonological as well as orthographic vocabulary knowledge and determine the effects of the assessment of these types of knowledge on the participants' performance.

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APPENDIX - Example Items

MC items

(1) My -----‘s name is Ahmet and we’ve got two children.
A) husband B) wife
C) sister D) father

(2) I ----- work at 7.00 a.m. every morning.
A) have B) go
C) sleep D) start

Matching items

1. My sister is a/an -----. She tries to prevent crime. 2. Nejat İşler is a/an -----. You can see him in the movies. 3. His brother is a/an -----. He helps ill people. 4. My father is a/an -----. He repairs cars.	A) doctor B) lawyer C) actor D) engineer E) mechanic F) police officer

Gap-fill items

(1) This jacket is cheap. It ----- only 5 TL.
(2) How ----- are these t-shirts?
(3) How ----- months are there in a year?
(4) ----- mobile phone is this? It is Mary’s.
(5) I ----- breakfast at about 7.30 in the morning.

WF items

(1) I go ----- every week to keep healthy. (SWIM)
(2) Ayşe is ----- because she can’t come to the party. (HAPPY)
(3) We like the new English Teacher because she is very -----. (FRIEND)
(4) His new car is ----- beautiful. It looks great. (REAL)