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Editorial

W

Dr. Carlo Granados-Beltrán
Academic Vice Chancellor ÚNICA

elcome to this new issue of GiST Journal! While the pandemic caused by COVID-19 is modifying its features and the world is slowly moving into a new ‘normal’, many educators are still questioning themselves about the effects of this worldwide crisis and what we could learn so that we could enter a post-pandemic era. Some of the contributions for this edition reports results from studies about the impact COVID-19 has caused in different contexts.

Takkaç-Tulgar aimed to study the influence of transactional distance on the motivation of EFL students in the context of an imaginary city threatened by the destructive effects of COVID-19. Also, **Ypsilanti and Karras** developed a narrative study based on non-fictional creative stories written in English about the experiences during the first lockdown in Greece. Another contribution by **Ibrahim** explored students’ perceptions about distance learning and the applicability of the social constructivist approach in the midst of the pandemic caused by COVID-19.

Another interest present in this issue are related to EFL teachers. In this line, we find the article by **Megistu** about Ethiopian EFL teachers’ stress and its causes as well as the strategies teachers use to cope with that stress. **Kaya and Kurucuk**, on their part, analyzed the reasons why preservice teachers decided to pursue a degree in education. Pronunciation in English is also a topic explored in this edition. **Alimorab and Adib** studied pronunciation anxiety and the motivation in the will to communicate for Iranian students. Also **Silva**, from Colombia, did a linguistic analysis comparing the English and Spanish phonological systems, which has didactic implications in order to help students of these languages. Finally, **Khan**’s article studied the perceptions of teachers and their real practice about the quality of teaching in secondary schools in Pakistan.

We encourage ELT scholars in Colombia and abroad to continue strengthening this community of knowledge by sharing their research and reflections through publication. Happy Holidays!

EFL Teachers' Stress and Coping Strategies: The case of public primary schools in Jimma Zone, Ethiopia¹

Estrés de los docentes de EFL y estrategias de afrontamiento: el caso de las escuelas primarias públicas en Jimma Zone, Etiopía

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Abstract

EFL teachers usually experience stress as a result of environmental and personal factors. However, the problem and its triggering factors appear to be overlooked in the study context. Thus, the goal of this study is to look into EFL teachers' stress, the factors that contribute to it, and the coping strategies used in public primary schools in Jimma Zone, Ethiopia. Mixed methods design, cluster sampling, and judgmental sampling techniques were used in the investigation. A total of 100 EFL teachers took part in it. Data was collected using a questionnaire and an interview, and descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyze the data. The findings demonstrate that the majority of the teachers have experienced stress and that all of the posited factors have a substantial association with the problem. The major finding is that stress negatively affects EFL teachers' working behavior. In light of this finding, it is suggested that coping strategies training be provided. The study has pedagogical implications as it suggests that emotional intelligence and stress coping techniques be included in EFL teaching methodology courses. Finally, because the sample is too small to generalize to various situations, more research on a large scale is suggested to understand the magnitude of the problem's expansion in the region.

Keywords: EFL teachers, stress, factors, association, coping strategies, regression coefficient, and beta coefficient

Resumen

Los profesores de EFL suelen experimentar estrés como resultado de factores ambientales y personales. Sin embargo, el problema y sus factores desencadenantes parecen pasarse por alto en el contexto del estudio. Por lo tanto, el objetivo de este estudio es analizar el estrés de los profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera, los factores que contribuyen a él y las estrategias de afrontamiento utilizadas en las escuelas primarias públicas de Jimma Zone, Etiopía. En la investigación se utilizaron técnicas de diseño de métodos mixtos, muestreo por conglomerados y muestreo por juicio. Participaron un total de 100 profesores de EFL. Los datos se recopilaron mediante un cuestionario y una entrevista, y se emplearon estadísticas descriptivas e inferenciales para analizar los datos. Los hallazgos demuestran que la mayoría de los docentes han experimentado estrés y que todos los factores planteados tienen una asociación sustancial con el problema. El principal hallazgo es que el estrés afecta negativamente el comportamiento laboral de los profesores de EFL. A la luz de este hallazgo, se sugiere que se brinde capacitación en estrategias de afrontamiento. El estudio tiene implicaciones pedagógicas, ya que sugiere que la inteligencia emocional y las técnicas de afrontamiento del estrés se incluyan en los cursos de metodología de enseñanza de inglés como lengua extranjera. Finalmente, debido a que la muestra es demasiado pequeña para generalizar a varias situaciones, se sugiere realizar más investigaciones a gran escala para comprender la magnitud de la expansión del problema en la región.

Palabras clave: Profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera, estrés, factores, asociación, estrategias de afrontamiento, coeficiente de regresión y coeficiente beta.

Resumo:

Os professores de EFL costumam experimentar estresse como resultado de fatores ambientais e pessoais. Porém, o problema e seus fatores desencadeadores parecem passar-se por alto no contexto do estudo. Portanto, o objetivo deste estudo é analisar o estresse dos professores de inglês como língua estrangeira, os fatores que contribuem a ele e as estratégias de confrontação utilizadas nas escolas primárias públicas de Jimma Zone, Etiópia. Na pesquisa foram utilizadas técnicas de desenho de métodos mistos, amostragem por conglomerados e amostragem por julgamento. Participaram um total de 100 professores de EFL. Os dados foram recopilados por meio de um questionário e uma entrevista, e foram empregadas estatísticas descritivas e inferenciais para analisar os dados. As descobertas demonstram que a maioria dos docentes experimentaram estresse e que todos os fatores propostos têm uma associação substancial com o problema. A principal descoberta é que o estresse afeta negativamente o comportamento trabalhista dos professores de EFL. Considerando esta descoberta, sugere-se que se ofereça capacitação em estratégias de confrontação. O estudo tem implicações pedagógicas, posto que sugere que a inteligência emocional e as técnicas de confrontação do estresse são incluídas nos cursos de metodologia de ensino de inglês como língua estrangeira. Finalmente, devido a que a amostra é demasiado pequena para generalizar a várias situações, sugere-se realizar mais pesquisas a grande escala para compreender a magnitude da expansão do problema na região.

Palavras chave: Professores de inglês como língua estrangeira, estresse, fatores, associação, estratégias de confrontação, coeficiente de regressão e coeficiente beta.

Introduction

Background of the Study

Modern education began in Ethiopia in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. Emperor Menilik II was compelled to accept modern education in the country for three major reasons. First, the Italian invasion of 1895 taught the Emperor a valuable lesson about the importance of modern education. After the war, he stated, “We need to educate people to ensure our peace and to reconstruct our country” (MoE, 1998, as cited in Zewude, 2018, p. 9). Second, following the Battle of Adwa, numerous European countries wanted to establish diplomatic relations with the country. Third, the creation of multiple government services such as telecommunications, transportation, and banking has raised the demand for educated workers. As a result, the first school, Minilik II School, was established and began teaching foreign languages like English, Arabic, and Italian (Zewude, 2018).

Since then, English has been taught at various levels. The language is taught as one of the mandatory courses and serves as a medium of instruction in the country’s secondary and postsecondary education systems. This shows that the target language plays a pertinent role in the country’s educational system. According to research undertaken

by ት/ሚ¹ (2017), there are a variety of issues in the country’s EFL education system, notably at the primary school level. In the Grade 8 General Examination, the majority of the students scored below the passing mark on the subject. Many EFL teachers also expressed dissatisfaction with their students’ low performance, which brought to them unhappy feelings and stress. Teachers, according to Negash (2006), play a vital role in either improving or worsening the learning process since they are mediators between the subject matter and pupils. Teachers, based on Nyamubi (2017), are the nucleus of classroom instruction and play a crucial role in learners’ accomplishments because they are better at identifying and addressing learning problems than others. As a result, if the teachers do not perform properly, the students’ learning outcomes will suffer. Some research, such as Wossenie (2014) and Amanu (2013), has found teachers experienced various negative emotions such as low emotional intelligence and efficacy, lack of coping skills, etc., which potentially lead EFL teachers to persistent stress. However, empirical data that documented EFL teachers’ stress and their coping mechanisms are lacking in the study context, which necessitates the present study to be undertaken.

1. (ት/ሚ) is an Amharic (local language) abbreviation equivalent to the abbreviation MoE (Ministry of Education).

Statement of the Problem

Teaching is a complex process that is heavily influenced by the practitioner's feelings, perceptions, and judgment. EFL teachers are often subjected to negative emotions due to learners' poor background knowledge and weak language competence (Gizaw, 2005). In line with this Benesch (2017) also noted that EFL teachers' emotion needs to be examined through a range of lenses to imply that the issue is perplexing and demands careful investigation and meticulous observation. Gu et al. (2022) further pointed out that teaching is an emotional practice that is influenced by an abrupt alteration in the teaching approach and the teaching context. These premises suggest that EFL teachers possibly undergo a range of emotions dominated by negative feelings such as stress, anxiety, anger, sadness, loneliness, etc. Particularly, they may experience stress due to learners' culture and way of life, which differ from the target language's culture (Gizaw, 2005). This tendency, therefore, presents significant obstacles to EFL teachers, resulting in persistent stress. This, in turn, harms educational quality and student achievement. According to Agustiani (2016), the teaching and learning process is an important component of high-quality education. If education quality is debilitated, the first step is to review the teaching-learning process. The assessment needs to look at (i) students' levels of engagement in the learning process, (ii) teachers' roles in the teaching-learning process, and (iii) the learning environment. Above all, she emphasized, a teacher's responsibility is broad since he or she is the manager and/or leader of the whole learning process, which requires a lot of attention.

Various EFL teachers' problems have been researched nationwide and globally; however, the issue of stress and coping techniques seem neglected, and/or very limited attention has been given to it in the study area so far. This situation inspires the present study to be undertaken on the topic of EFL teachers' stress in their job, its triggering factors, and combating strategies in the study context. Teachers' stress is, thus, an emotional strain caused by various environmental and personal risk factors. These are variables that lead teachers to develop stress and become unproductive in their work. The problem persists if the teachers are failed to use effective coping techniques. These refer to various strategies (cognitive, emotional, and behavioral) that are applied constantly to manage the problem. The present study, therefore, raised some general questions: *Do EFL teachers in public primary schools in the study context suffer from stress? What are the factors that trigger the teachers' stress in the study context? Which factors predict the problem more? These queries urged the researcher to conduct a study on stress and coping strategies used in particular reference to EFL teachers working at a public primary school in Jimma Zone, Ethiopia.*

The given problem poses a serious threat to developing countries like Ethiopia because, in these countries, resources are scarce, a high workload, large class sizes, and a lack of incentives. Teachers may feel exploited and demotivated as a result of these circumstances, which might hinder their ability to focus on their work and tolerate

the challenges they have faced. These factors also produce negative feelings such as stress, which can easily influence EFL teachers with low emotional intelligence who are unable to deal with emotional problems that arise from their daily teaching activities (Dastgoshadeh & Javanmardi, 2021). Furthermore, studies on teachers' emotions such as Shishigu (2015), Gobena (2018), and Gonzales (2010) revealed that most Ethiopian teachers were subjected to a variety of stressors due to lack of resources, low social value, etc. The project area's reality was more or less similar to that of the study settings of the above researchers. This situation may cause stress in EFL teachers, which can have a detrimental impact on their job performance, dismantle their engagement, and even lead to job burnout. However, there has not yet been a study on EFL teachers' stress.

In addition, while working in the study area, the researcher noticed that some EFL teachers displayed undesirable characteristics (e.g., carelessness, lack of passion, lack of attention, appearing late to class, etc.). These behaviors suggest that the teachers in the study context may develop negative emotions in their job because every behavior is influenced by emotion (Pettinelli, 2016). The literature review also confirmed that no research studies on the stated topic have been undertaken in the project area. Therefore, this study sets a goal to look into the level of stress experienced by EFL teachers, the variables that contribute to it, and the teachers' use of the coping mechanisms. This would allow us to gain firsthand experience of EFL teachers' stress, identify triggering variables, and provide potential solutions to the problem.

As previously said, several studies (Brundage, 2007; Toropova et al., 2020) have revealed the presence of risk factors that cause EFL teachers to become stressed; nevertheless, in the context of this study, it is difficult to find a research study on the topic. As a result, the stress of EFL teachers, the factors that contribute to it, and their techniques of coping were explored in this study. This strain is not a one-time occurrence; rather, it develops over time as a result of ongoing influences resulting from a variety of environmental and personal factors (e.g., work overload, maladministration, lack of reward, lack of motivation). This study, therefore, examined the level of the problem, factors that were associated with it, and coping techniques employed by focusing on EFL teachers working at public primary schools in Jimma Zone. Teachers' stress is characterized by an unpleasant working experience or negative feelings such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration, and depression that arise as a result of some component of their job (Wole 2002). This stress is caused by a combination of environmental and personal variables as well as a failure to apply adequate coping strategies, which relate to a person's constantly changing cognitive, behavioral, and emotional efforts to manage external and/or internal pressures that result in stress. The study, thus, explored EFL teachers' stress and coping techniques by focusing on EFL teachers from a public primary school in Jimma Zone, Ethiopia. To achieve this, the following questions were formulated.

Research Questions

1. To what level do EFL teachers at primary school in Jimma Zone experience stress?
2. What are the factors associated with EFL teachers' stress?
3. Which factors predict EFL teachers' stress more?
4. How often do EFL teachers apply strategies to cope with stress on their job?

Literature Review

Perceived Stress

According to Brundage (2007), stress is defined as their reaction to undesirable emotions such as anger, worry, or depression. Rezik (2017) describes EFL teachers' stress as bad feelings or unhappy emotional states. EFL teachers' stress, according to him, is defined as the appearance of behavioral, emotional, mental, and physiological reactions as a result of ongoing tension in the class. Teachers' stress is divided into two categories: (1) stress sources and (2) stress responses. Sources of stress include aspects of the job content and working conditions that influence a teacher's cognition, emotions, and motivation (Toropova et al., 2020).

The situation is exacerbated by students' bad behavior, school mismanagement, and/or social attitudes towards teachers. Misconduct and a negative attitude toward studying are examples of student issues, whereas school administration challenges include a lack of facilities, workload, and a lack of concern for instructors, among others. Lack of support, scorn, and criticism are some of society's problems (Rihani & Sagar, 2015). Work overload, inadequate income, toxic work environment, job ambiguity, extracurricular activities, household duties, and other factors all lead to teacher stress (Atsbeha, 2015; Wole 2002). Brundage's (2007) perspective also backs up the preceding researchers' notions. According to him, teachers are stressed due to a lack of administrative support, inconsistent feedback, low compensation, overcrowded classrooms, and conflicts with students. As a result of these concerns, teachers' psychological well-being may be jeopardized. A teacher with diverse levels of stress will exhibit a variety of behaviors. For example, if a teacher's stress level is moderate, she or he will arrive late or miss class. The teacher's commitment is harmed when she/she is under a lot of stress for a long period. According to Brundage (2007), more than half of new teachers quit their job after seven years due to stress. This researcher added that more than two-thirds of new teachers quit their job within the first four years due to stress, which often leads to illness and drinking.

Various studies on EFL teachers' stress levels and other negative emotional states may be found all around the world. There have been studies done on the stress of Ethiopian teachers in general and EFL teachers in particular (Gobena, 2018; Atsbeha, 2015; Shishigu, 2015; Wossenie, 2014; Amanu, 2013; Haile, 1997). Amanu (2013) claims that several EFL teachers have expressed significant levels of stress as a result of unfavorable school circumstances such as poor working conditions, time constraints, inadequate pay, low social standing, and curricular demands. Atsbeha (2015) also added that negative community perceptions, excessive workloads, poor management, poor interactions, delayed pay, daily routines other than teaching, insults and occasional assaults from parents, political activity, student misconduct, and an inconvenient job are all factors that lead teachers to stress.

According to Antoniouet al. (2013), elementary school teachers are more stressed than secondary school teachers. High job demands, student misbehavior, poor working conditions, role conflict, lack of autonomy, and negative school culture are all sources of stress for EFL teachers. The three primary approaches to occupational stress in teaching are: first, educational expectations; second, physiological factors focusing on teachers' reactions to work pressure, such as frustration; and third, the interaction between job demands and teacher resources (Toropova et al., 2020). EFL teachers appear to be negatively influenced by stress and stress-related factors as a result of personal and environmental pressures. Based on Wossenie (2014), the stress in EFL teachers is caused by work overload, poor living conditions, unusual interactions with colleagues and administrative bodies, and inadequate involvement with students and parents. Amanu (2013) also indicated if the scenario that creates stress in EFL teachers persists, they are at risk of burnout and work-related health problems. Therefore, it's plausible to conclude that stress is a serious issue that most EFL teachers suffer from for personal and contextual reasons.

Coping Strategies

Amanu (2013) described EFL teacher coping techniques as attempts made by a teacher to overcome hard situations that she or he experiences in everyday activities, citing numerous researchers. Similarly, Akbari and Eghtesadi (2017) defined the notion as the employment of diverse approaches to deal with work-related difficult events or situations. As a result, coping strategies are defined as a teacher's purposeful and planned attempts or activities to deal with work-related challenges. They also identified three important EFL teachers' coping strategies: i) fleeing from the problem; ii) confronting the problem; and (iii) analyzing choices for overcoming the impediment. Furthermore, as referenced by Plana et al. (2003), Billings and Moos (1981) classified coping techniques into three: i) active-cognitive, ii) active-behavioral, and iii) avoidance. Active-cognitive strategies, according to them, refer to assessing and managing potentially stressful conditions to take preemptive action. Active-

behavioral techniques suggest that observable efforts to control stressful situations are made. Finally, avoidance tactics are denial techniques that can be adopted when confronted with a tough scenario (Plana et al., 2003).

Harvey (1999) delved into additional detail on coping mechanisms and grouped them into five categories: behavioral, emotional, professional, social, and institutional. Routine duties such as housework, participation in social events, relaxation, and consuming some alcohol are examples of behavioral techniques. Emotional tactics are employed to put people at ease when problems arise, mistakes are committed, and changes are made. Professional coping tactics include: collecting in-depth knowledge; creating self-management skills such as being well prepared; planning, organization, and self-reflection abilities; having enough sleep; and so on. Social coping skills are explored with friends and family, as well as self-socialization. Finally, human and system-related institutional coping methods are identified. Working in accordance with the institution's policies and ideals, cooperating with supervisors and school officials, and so on are examples of system-related coping mechanisms (Harvey, 1999).

Conceptual Framework

The present study offers a conceptual framework that served as its blueprint. The model demonstrates the likely relationship among the hypothesized components, stress, coping strategies and gainsay. It states that environmental factors like workload, inadequate income, low social value, and maladministration as initial risk factors that induce negative personal characteristics such as demotivation, dissatisfaction, and lack of suitable pedagogical knowledge. It also shows how all the environmental and personal factors, in one way or another, interact with each other and influence stress. The ongoing influence of these variables led to persistent stress experience that ultimately affects everyday activity and leads teachers to unfavorable results (negative gainsay). Thus, unless suitable coping strategies were established the situation resulted in frustration, carelessness, late coming, absenteeism, poor performance, etc. (Figure 1). Therefore, the possible relationship that is postulated to exist among the variables is depicted in the diagram below.

Conceptual Framework of Factors Associated with Stress and Coping Strategies

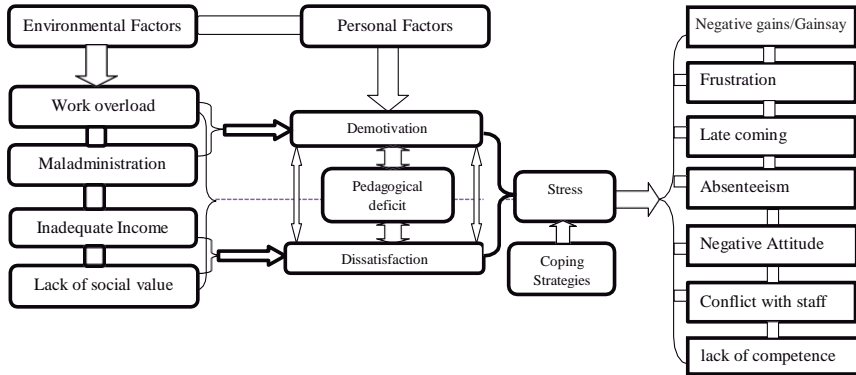


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Factors Causing EFL Teachers' Stress, Coping Strategies, and Gainsay (For this study)

Research design and methodology

Research design

The goal of this study, as indicated earlier, was to evaluate EFL teachers' stress and its associated factors. Hence, a survey design of the descriptive study with quantitative dominant over qualitative /QUAN→ qual/ mixed explanatory methods was utilized (Creswell, 2009). This design permitted to explain the problem, determine the relevant elements, and comprehend EFL teachers' stress, its triggering causes, and their coping techniques better. This, in turn, enables to offer a viable strategy that facilitates stress and burnout prevention. Thus, the general methodological steps followed from the sample selection stage to the analysis of the data are outlined subsequently.

Population, sample, and sampling techniques

Population description

In Jimma Zone, there were only 407 English majoring teachers and a large number of language majoring (English, Afan Oromo (local language), Civics and ethical education) teachers who teach English and the other two subjects in the study environment. The main reason to choose the study location was that the researcher had worked in the area and had prior experience with the respondents and expected them to provide meaningful data for the study. Furthermore, no investigation was carried out on the EFL teachers' stress in that context.

Sample description

To select the sample for this study, two sampling techniques were utilized: cluster random sampling and judgmental sampling. The first technique was utilized to choose samples for the quantitative study; whereas, the second one was employed to select samples for a semi-structured interview. However, in this study, only English majoring teachers were involved. This was done since it was discovered impossible to ascertain which topic area (English, local language, or Civics and ethical education) teaching induced stress to teachers' job if the language majoring teachers were made participants. Therefore, a total of 100 EFL teachers were randomly selected from the indicated number. On the other hand, for the qualitative aspect of the study, a judgmental sampling technique was employed. As a result, 13 teachers were taken for further probing from each of the districts, i.e. 3 teachers from the Goma district, 3 teachers from the Limu Kossa district, 3 teachers from the Omo Nada district, and 4 teachers from the Seka Chekorsa district respectively.

Instruments for data collection

As mentioned earlier, two instruments were used to collect data: a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guideline, which are discussed turn by turn as follows.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was utilized to collect quantitative data. The scale is a five-point Likert scale questionnaire that consists of 69 items in eight subscales, namely perceived stress scale (10) items; lack of motivation (9); work overload (8), maladministration (8), low salary, and other benefits (8); low social value (6), job dissatisfaction (10), lack of proper pedagogical content knowledge (10), coping strategies (15), which were adopted from various literature (Agegnehu, 2014; Cohen, 1994; Getachew, 2007; Gezimu, 2013; Jima, 2018).

The tool was piloted with 33 EFL teachers to test its feasibility in the study context. As a consequence, items' reliability testing, the correlation between items, and the overall correlation among items were determined through the measurement of the coefficient of alpha after the pilot test was done. The following coefficients of alpha were also obtained from the test: 0.3 and above for a single item and 0.80 for the entire items in the scale established to measure stress and its associated factors. These results suggested that the overall items on the scale were dependable to employ for the main study. In the process, the items with weak alpha coefficients of subscales to measure characteristics linked with stress were deleted and only the items with good alpha levels were retained for the main study. According to Cohen et al. (2007) and Hinton et al. (2004), coefficient alpha is assessed at 0.3 and above for a single item and 0.7 and above

for total items correlation. The coefficient alpha obtained met the required standards and made the subscales suitable to be used for the main investigation. Finally, the questionnaire was provided to 100 participants in one-to-one contact; however, only 93 of them filed and returned the copies, which made the response rate as high as 93 % with a 7% refusal rate.

Semi-structured interview guideline

This instrument was designed in line with the purpose of the study, basic questions raised in the statement of the problem, and a review of the literature. It was applied to collect qualitative data directly from the participants that helped to learn their real experience of the problem and to corroborate the quantitative finding. Thus, the participants were probed about their stress and its associated factors, whereupon their responses were audio-taped and transcribed manually.

Procedures of data collection

The data collection process was carried out using the aforementioned two instruments. Before collecting the data, participants' consent to be involved in the study was obtained orally. This was done because of participants' limited language proficiency, which is assumed to place a barrier to completing the written consent form and showing a willingness to fully participate in the study process. In the process, first, they were informed about the purpose of the study clearly, which is purely academic and it does not harm anyone before the survey questionnaires were administered. This was done to help them make an informed decision about their participation in the study process. During the interview, each of the selected participants was informed again that there is no right or wrong answer in his/her response (whatever responses the participant offered were equally relevant to the study) so that each interviewee was requested to reflect freely on his/her real experience and perception of the issue under investigation. Besides, each interviewee was told that his/her response was kept confidential, and in case he/she found the interview uncomfortable for him/her, he/she could withdraw from the process at any time. Also, each participant was informed that during report writing, only his/her idea was taken and a pseudo-name was assigned to the owner of the idea. Finally, a promise to share the findings of the study with the participants was given. Thus, these made them involved in the study process willingly.

Data analysis and interpretation techniques

Two types of data analysis techniques (quantitative and qualitative) were used. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (e.g., percentage, mean) and inferential statistics (e.g., Regression and Beta coefficients of multiple regression

analysis) with the help of SPSS software version 20. On the other hand, the qualitative data were analyzed and interpreted thematically. The analysis employed the steps of arranging, coding, organizing, and reading the data vigilantly to identify occurring themes and sub-themes. After that, interpretation was given of the meaning of the verbal descriptions, which were summarized and synthesized in relation to the themes that the participants conveyed. It was then presented in narrative form.

Results

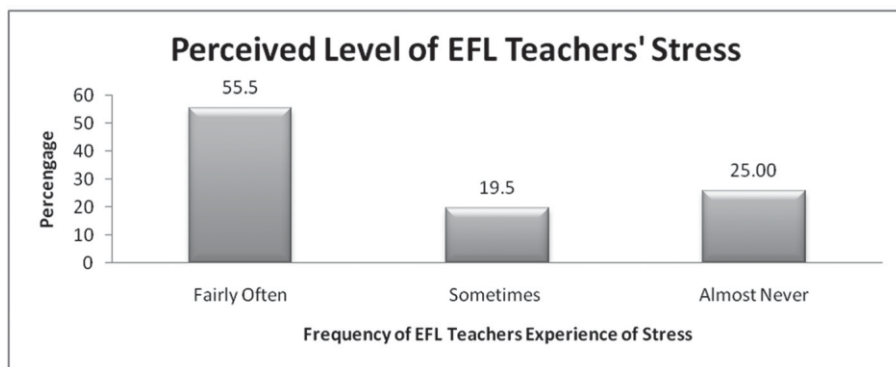


Figure 2. Teacher's Responses on their Level of Perceived Stress.

Quantitative result

Perceived stress

Persistent stress is viewed as a major problem that may lead teachers to psychological problems. A teacher's stress, as mentioned earlier, is considered as an unpleasant working experience or negative emotion such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration, or despair, stemming from some component of the work (workload, pupils' ill-behavior, maladministration, lack of motivation, etc.). It is an emotional, mental, and physical reaction to numerous stressors prevalent in the educational environment (Rezik 2017; Mahmoudi, & Özkanb, 2016). To examine this problem, the study posed a question:

- To what level do EFL teachers at primary schools in Jimma Zone experience stress?

For this purpose, a 10 items standard scale was adopted and applied. The data obtained were analyzed, interpreted, and demonstrated in Figure 2. The result obtained shows that the majority of the studied teachers 52 (55.5 %) experience stress fairly often. The other 23 (25.00 %) almost never experience the problem. The rest 18 (19.5%) of the participants occasionally feel stress.

Factors Associated with Stress

The posited factors (lack of motivation, work overload, maladministration, low salary and lack of other benefits, lack of social value; lack of satisfaction, and lack of appropriate pedagogical knowledge) were believed to form a causal relationship and predict stress in the study context. The findings of the study's quantitative component revealed that these factors were significantly linked to stress. It was also discovered that some of these variables are more effective at predicting the problem than others (see Table 1). The qualitative part of the study also backs up the results achieved from the quantitative aspect of the study. Accordingly, the findings of the quantitative analysis are used to answer the following questions:

- What are the factors associated with EFL teachers' stress?
- Which factors predict EFL teachers' stress more?

As shown in Figure 2, the results obtained from the descriptive statistics showed that the majority (52.72 %) of the participants experienced a lack of motivation; 56.62 % of them underwent a high workload; 52.64 % of the teachers experienced maladministration in their respective schools, etc. The results achieved on all the posited factors are displayed in the figure below.

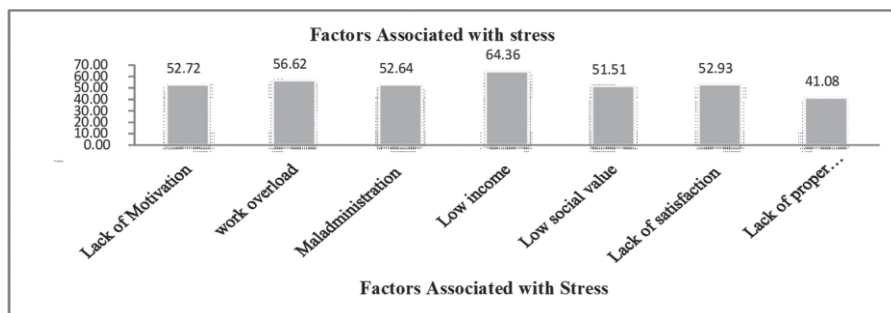


Figure 3. Factors Associated with EFL Teachers' Stress

The descriptive analysis results displayed above show the extent to which the studied EFL teachers were affected by the presumptive environmental and personal factors. However, inferential statistical analysis of the data is required to answer the questions posed above. This analysis provides significant coefficients that are used to determine the level of association and prediction brought by the independent variables in the regression model. Therefore, the results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis (MLRA), i.e. Regression (R) and Beta (β) coefficients are presented in Table 1. In which, the R coefficient determines the strength of the relationship that existed between the predictors and stress, whereas the Beta value determines the effect of each predictor on stress. Hence, the analysis depicts the level of association between the predictors and stress, as well as the influence each predictor has on the outcome variable.

Table 1: Factors Associated with EFL Teachers' Stress

Model Summary						
		R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
		.884 ^a	0.781	0.763	2.829	
ANOVA ^a						
Model1		Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
	Regression	7		345.849	43.228	.000 ^b
	Residual	85		8.001		
	Total	92				
Coefficients ^a						
Predictors	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.		
	Beta					
Std. Error						
(Constant)	8.524		-1.709	0.091		
Lack of motivation	0.094	.133	-2.277	0.025		
High workload	0.069	.668	8.963	0.000		
School maladministration	0.128	.231	4.069	0.000		
Low income	0.153	.107	1.685	0.026		
Low social Value	0.242	.058	0.884	0.039		
Job dissatisfaction	0.111	0	0.007	0.022		
Lack of appropriate pedagogical knowledge	0.138	.076	1.215	0.042		
Dependent Variable: Stress						

As can be seen in Table 1, the model of MLRA was employed to produce regression and beta coefficients. The result indicates Adj. R square = 0.0.781, $F(7, 85) = 43.228$, $P < 0.05$. This implies that all the predictors in the model explain 0.781 of the variability of EE. In other words, the combination of the seven predictors contributed 78.1 % to the development of stress. The remaining 21.9 % of the influence might have come from other factors that were not accounted for in this study. Besides, the relative contribution of each predictor can easily be compared and explained using

the beta value (β) indicated under the standardized coefficient, i.e., the highest beta (β) suggests the strongest level of prediction. Thus, in this study, work overload ($\beta = .668$), maladministration ($\beta = .231$), and lack of motivation ($\beta = .133$) were found to be strong and significant predictors of stress, respectively. In other words, a unit of change in the level of workload causes .688 change in stress, and a unit of change in maladministration contributed .231 variability on stress and so on. The other predictors such as low salary and lack of other benefits, lack of satisfaction, and lack of social value were found to have a significant influence on stress, but they were not as strong as the aforesaid two predictors.

The finding obtained from the qualitative aspect of the study also indicated that the presence of various environmental and personal factors caused stress among EFL teachers. It also revealed that the level of motivation of most participants was diminished due to work-related stressors such as poor performance of students, bad behavior, lack of interest in learning, high workload; poor salary, and low social value. In this regard, Teacher 6 pointed out that the poor learning interest of the students disappointed him. He went on to say that it happened because the area is a cash crop area, where the students could readily obtain the money that they used to meet their temporary needs. This implies that the social environment outside the school did not encourage learners to concentrate on their education and rather waste their precious school time to collect the cash crop, which enabled them to generate income to fulfill some of their needs. The condition further led them to be absent from school which hinders their knowledge acquisition and skill development and makes them self-reliant and competent individuals in the future. The given working situation and the learning behavior of the students always put the teacher in conflict with many students who were absent from classes and who did not complete the activities that he gave them. He repeatedly called and reported to their parents about their behavior, but he could not see any improvement. Such an experience was common and overwhelming to him, but he had no option except to work for a living.

Teacher-7 also stated that her weekly load was 25 periods (a period is a 40-minute lesson), and the class size was large (on average 70). She added that she was a mother and had children and that she was responsible to look after them. At home, she accomplished routines such as cooking, cleaning, etc. In addition, she took some work (e.g., lesson preparation, marking students' assignments, etc.) to her home. These activities consumed much of her time and took away her time for relaxation. The other respondent, Teacher-8 pointed out that her salary was low and she found her work and the wage that she earned was not balanced. Also, the attitude of the community towards the profession was discouraging. These experiences drove her to emotional strain such as stress. Moreover, the participants also explained the presence of maladministration that impedes their work engagement. In this regard, Teacher-5 said, "I believe problems observed in this school are beyond the school leaders' capacity, which requires the intervention of the regional state." [Teacher-5, interview, 9.03.2020]

The result obtained on work overload denoted that most respondents suffered from the problem, which was the most common challenge to EFL teachers in the zone. The respondents claimed that they felt overloaded due to the shortage of EFL teachers and the large class size. For example, Teacher-3 stated that the workload was high because there was a dearth of English teachers in that school. Other participants also stated that it was not only the weekly class hours and large class size that brought challenges to them but also extra duties such as serving as homeroom teachers, preparing teaching aids; taking care of one's family, etc. However, there was a slight variation from school to school with regard to workload distribution. In a few schools, teachers were relatively given manageable loads (they were assigned to teach 20 periods per week), but in most schools, they were given a high workload, i.e., 30 periods per week together with co-curricular activities.

The finding obtained on the issue of school maladministration revealed that various school leaders were unfair in their evaluation and treatment of teachers. They were not playing a meaningful managerial role to create a conducive work environment. For instance, they did not supply adequate sources for the teaching-learning process; they did not keep the school physical environment neat and conducive for the teaching-learning process; they could not mobilize resources to build a staff lounge; they could not furnish school libraries well; they did not share school activities with teachers; they did not discuss school issues openly with staff members. Also, they did not work with the community to correct students' character, improve students' performance, etc. In general, their working behaviors created an unfriendly work environment that discouraged the teachers, harmed their morale, and triggered stress in their job. In this regard, Teacher-10 stated that the school leaders were ineffective in their work because they did not listen to teachers.

Moreover, the finding obtained on teachers' monthly income indicated that most EFL teachers perceived that their salary was inadequate to live by and there were no other benefits given to them. They explained that the market inflation severely affected their living conditions, and no measure was taken to reduce their burden and to normalize the situation. In this regard, Teacher-11 reflected that the salary he was paid was insufficient to buy necessary goods. He said that inflation had increased at a faster rate, but that the salary remained small. Concerning teachers' social value, most of the interviewees raised that their social value deteriorated from time to time. For instance, Teacher-12 pointed out that the cause of teachers' low social value was the low income that they earned and the poor living condition to which they were subjected. He indicated that teachers were dressed poorly compared to the local community, even sometimes they were dressed poorer than their students. The rest of the teachers also believed that the bond of trust that existed between teachers and the community deteriorated, which affected their professional life. Furthermore, as a result of their overall working conditions, teachers' job satisfaction has declined due to a range of environmental challenges.

Finally, the finding obtained on teachers' pedagogical competence also suggested that most of them had knowledge gaps. Even, some of the participants indicated their weaknesses; for instance, they pointed out that they had a gap in teaching primary skills (listening and speaking) others also indicated that they had a gap in teaching all the skills of the target language and they sought on job-trainings to fill their gap.

Coping Strategies

Coping techniques are a collection of techniques for dealing with stress and other work-related pressures. The goal of this study was to see how often EFL teachers in the study context utilize coping mechanisms to regulate their stress because unchecked stress may lead the teachers to various health problems. To examine this issue, the present study sets a question:

- How often do EFL teachers apply strategies to cope with stress on their job?

To address this question, a fifteen (15) item standard scale was adopted and used. The data collected with the instrument was analyzed and interpreted, and the results were displayed in Figure 3. As shown in the Figure, the mean overall score indicates that 49 (53.12 %) of responders almost never use coping methods. In addition, 18 (19.26%) of the participants barely used coping strategies, according to the findings. Only 26 (27.62%) of the respondents used coping methods on a regular basis. Based on the results, it is possible to infer that the majority of the studied teachers failed to use coping mechanisms to reduce their stress levels, which may harm their psychological well-being and the teaching-learning process.

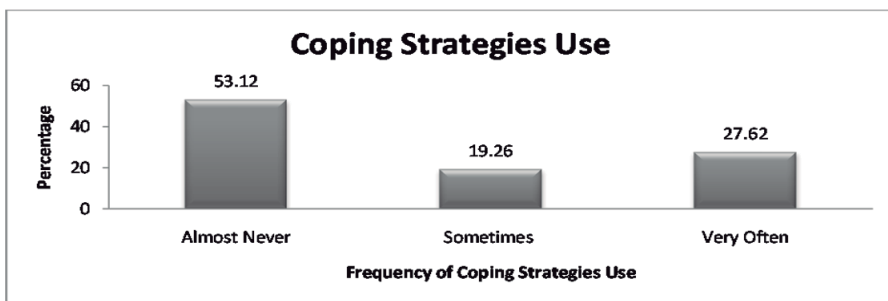


Table 3. EFL Teachers' Coping Strategies Use

Qualitative results

For the qualitative aspect of the study, 13 EFL teachers were purposely selected and interviewed. The responses obtained were analyzed thematically, and the results obtained are presented following the qualitative questions posed to the respondents, which were designed based on a review of the literature and study objectives. Therefore, the results obtained from this component of the study were presented in line with the given questions henceforth.

Perceived stress

Could you possibly tell me if you felt stressed due to your job teaching?

Teacher 1 said that he was stressed due to his work overload in response to the question posed. Additionally, he taught that students' mother tongue, which is different from the target language presented, challenged and added stress to him because the students wanted him to translate everything in the lesson into their mother tongue, which he found difficult. Furthermore, the class size was extremely large (more than 70 students), which impeded the teaching-learning process. He was also stressed by the absence of teaching resources (e.g., textbooks) because it hampered his frequent examinations and comments. He was generally stressed as a result of the obstacles posed by the school and students. Unfair treatment and a lack of resources were the school-related challenges. Resistance to participating in assigned activities, ill-discipline, and disrespect are all issues that students showed, and that brought stress to him. Teacher-2's viewpoint is more or less comparable to Teacher-1's viewpoint. He expressed exhaustion and stress as a result of a high workload, stating that he taught six periods per day and 30 periods per week. Furthermore, he was exhausted and fatigued due to the school's large class size. Teacher 4 agreed, stating that he was stressed owing to work overload, pupils' poor behavior, and a lack of resources. Teacher 5, on the other hand, stated that he was not stressed because he enjoyed his work as a teacher. He mentioned that he prefers to spend most of his time at work.

Teacher 6 expressed her exhaustion that stemmed in response to her daily work. She also stated that despite teaching 25 periods per week, marking students' activities was exhausting and difficult because the class size was large. She also spent her after-school hours planning lessons for the next day, marking pupils' homework, and so on. Furthermore, as a mother, she had responsibilities at home, such as cooking, cleaning, and caring for her family, all of which made her feel anxious.

Teacher 7 said that he was stressed because of work overload: he explained that he was busy all week doing activities like teaching, assessing, and completing professional development (CPD) activities, which caused him to be stressed. Teacher 8, on the other hand, stated that she felt tired but not stressed and that the explanation was

her workload. She had a lot of responsibilities at school and outside, which left her exhausted but not stressed. Nonetheless, Teacher 9 stated that he was occasionally stressed because of his students' lack of competence and that he did not perceive any development even when he provided extra help in make-up classes. He also expressed his dissatisfaction with the scarcity of resources (particularly textbooks).

Teacher-11, the other respondent, admitted to feeling stressed sometimes. She was running out of time at the time to complete activities like marking students' examinations and filling their scores on their mark sheets, preparing report cards, and so on. She was also stressed since the time allotted for the task that she was given was insufficient. She stated her feeling as:

I usually feel stressed at the end of a semester and year because I am supposed to complete an additional activity such as organizing mark sheets and preparing report cards. The time set by the school to complete and turn in the report card is often short, which does not take into account the class size. Despite being unresolved, this causes me stress.

[Teacher-11, interview, 12.03.2020].

Teacher 13, on the other hand, stated that she did not feel stressed because she followed her annual plan properly.

In summary, the findings indicated that most EFL teachers who took part in the survey experienced stress at various levels as a result of numerous environmental challenges. Their main source of stress was work overload, which put them under a lot of strain and took away a lot of their family and social time, as well as their time to rest. This issue has an impact on both the personal and professional lives of teachers.

Coping strategies

This study also investigated EFL teachers coping strategies use. The quantitative finding on this issue was presented in the previous subsection. This subsection provides the result obtained from the qualitative aspect of the study, which is used to substantiate the quantitative result. This qualitative component of the study posed the following question:

I wonder if you tell me the coping strategies you use to manage stress on your job?

For the given question, Teacher-1 stated that he tried to stay calm and patient. He described that when he encountered something strange in his life, he never rushed to take any action even in his workplace, rather he thought again and again about the incident. He explained his experience as follows:

Naturally, I am calm and patient and confront challenges that happened in my life. I passed a lot of ups and downs. Usually, I spend my time thinking about how to overcome them. I also think that there would be individuals whose challenges are worse than mine. Thus, I tell to myself to stay calm.

[Teacher-1, interview, 7.03.2020].

Teacher-2, on the other hand, indicated that patience was his method. He remarked that patience is the key to solving any problem. He went on to say that if he wasn't patient, he wouldn't have been in that position because the job was full of obstacles. He also indicated the way how he overcame the obstacles in the following way:

I feel that a teacher needs to be like the earth. He should develop the skills to accommodate different challenges, etc. You see, the earth is quiet and tolerant that never shakes when the Bull Dozer moves on it. It also permits to bury dead matters and never forbids excavation. Therefore, a teacher needs to be just like that and he has to stay calm and tolerant of everyday challenges that come from students, parents, leadership, etc.

[Teacher-2, interview, 12.03.2020].

Another respondent, Teacher-3, stated that anytime he had a major problem, he shared it with his family or close friends and sought assistance on how to solve the problem. Such a practice aided him in overcoming work-related difficulties. Teacher-4, on the other hand, viewed his job as challenging because it required him to engage with a variety of people. The students frequently failed to complete assignments, causing him to become irritated and stressed, and they frequently invited him to argue with them. He tried to get things in order so he could leave the area for a bit. He also expressed his experience as follows:

In this school, the class size is very large, and I teach and assess more than 70 students in each class. It is very tedious. Besides, several students show indifference to completing tasks given to them, which often triggers a conflict between us. The parents of the students and school leaders are not supportive of me. These conditions are the sources of my temper and/or stress.

[Teacher-4, interview, 12.03.2020].

Teacher 8 also stated that she used a variety of ways to deal with difficult situations. She took into account the age of the students when dealing with tensions that came from them. She stated that the majority of her students were of the fire age, which often made them emotional, which she found offensive but tolerated. Teacher-9's opinion also revealed that she had a habit of expressing her problems to others. She stated that anytime she experienced work-related challenges, she sought assistance from her

coworkers and school authorities, who assisted her in overcoming the obstacles. If the difficulty was very personal, she went to church to pray for God's help. Likewise, teacher Teacher-10 and Teacher-11 shared the opinion of Teacher-9. They indicated that sought God's intervention in order to overcome the challenges they faced. Finally, Teacher-12 and Teacher-13 pointed out that they preferred to discuss the problem they faced with the department head, coworkers, and friends to get their assistance and resolve it. Particularly, Teacher-13 stated the following:

When I encounter a work-related challenge, I often raise it in the department meeting. Then, the department discusses the matter and suggests a possible solution. Then, I apply the suggestion and see if a possible change occurs. Finally, I report what I encounter to the department.

[Teacher-13, interview, 15.03.2020]

Discussion

Quantitative finding

As mentioned earlier, two tools were utilized: a fill-in (closed-ended) questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The data collected was then analyzed, evaluated, and presented in the manner described above. This section will discuss the findings obtained in response to the questions provided in the introduction part of this paper:

- To what level do EFL teachers at primary school in Jimma Zone experience stress?
- What are the factors associated with EFL teachers' stress?
- Which factors predict EFL teachers' stress more?
- How often do EFL teachers apply strategies to cope with stress on their job?

Perceived stress

Several studies such as Amanu (2013), Atsbeha (2015), Wale (2002), Sadeghi and Sa'adatpourvahid (2016), have found that teachers have faced a variety of problems because of work-related stress. Environmental factors such as work overload, low income, poor administration, and low social value contributed to teachers' reported stress. Teachers become demotivated, dissatisfied, and stressed because of these problems. The current study's findings also confirmed that EFL teachers in the study context were frequently stressed as a result of a variety of environmental and personal

factors. Teles et al. (2020) discovered a link between stress and emotional exhaustion and fatigue. As the level of perceived stress rises, so does the severity of these factors. Likewise, studies by Wossenie (2014) and Amanu (2013) showed that EFL teachers with low emotional intelligence and with ineffective use of coping strategies underwent persistent stress. The current study's findings, therefore, support the conclusions of the aforementioned studies, which demonstrated that the majority of the study participants (55.5%) suffered from stress regularly.

Moreover, according to Brundage (2007), teachers' stress was developed by a lack of administrative support, inconsistent feedback, low compensation, overcrowded classrooms, clashes with pupils, and a lack of resources. Many EFL teachers in the present research context also reported a shortage of resources, according to the findings. In this way, it agrees with the findings of the previous study. The current study is also consistent with Amanu (2013), who found that many EFL teachers in public primary schools were stressed due to adverse school conditions such as poor working conditions, work overload, maladministration, time pressure, insufficient remuneration, and low social status. Generally, the quantitative findings of the study confirmed that the majority of EFL teachers in the study setting experienced stress, which is supported by the qualitative data showing EFL teachers in the study context experienced various environmental and personal risk factors: work overload, lack of appropriate administration, lack motivation, low monthly income, low social value, and dissatisfaction. Therefore, EFL teachers in the research setting faced stress, which had a substantial impact on their everyday activities and teaching practices.

Coping strategies

Coping strategies are several techniques used to deal with stress and other work-related environmental and personal stressors. Several studies have found that chronic stress is a major factor affecting EFL teachers' mental health conditions and job effectiveness. Students, parents, and leadership may all contribute to teachers' stress and the problem may become a source of conflict in the work environment. The situation further alters teachers' moral and has an impact on their commitment. EFL teachers are expected to use suitable coping skills that enable them to handle stress in order to avoid this psychological strain. As a result, the purpose of this study is to look into how teachers use coping techniques.

The results of the study's quantitative component revealed that the majority of the participants (53.12 %) did not use appropriate coping mechanisms to control their stress. This disclosed that the majority of the participants were unable to use coping strategies when confronted with work-related emotional stress. In this regard, the current finding supports Akbari and Egtesadi (2017), who found that the majority of Iranian EFL teachers did not use appropriate coping methods to manage job-related

stressors. The current study's finding is also in agreement with that of Plana et al. (2003) finding, who discovered that failure to regulate stress is linked to job-related emotional strain. The current data on coping strategies, in general, suggests that most EFL teachers in the study context struggled to consistently utilize various coping techniques to control their stress. Next, the findings obtained from the qualitative aspect of the study are discussed.

Qualitative findings

Stress

Several EFL teachers, as mentioned earlier, undergo stressful situations as a result of their job teaching (such as a lack of resources, work overload, students' disobedience, maladministration, low pay, and low social value) as well as the problem posed by their living conditions (Rizqi, 2017). The qualitative finding of this study revealed that the majority of the EFL teachers underwent persistent stress as a result of various environmental and personal factors such as student misbehavior, a lack of teaching resources (textbooks and teachers' guides), work overload, school maladministration, a low income, lack of motivation, and lack of satisfaction. These factors had a negative impact on the teachers' psychological well-being, working behavior, and commitment, which further exposed them to recurrent stress.

According to various studies such as Amanu (2013), Haile (1997), Sadeghi & Sa'adatpourvahid (2016), stress may weaken engagement and lead to job burnout. The result of the qualitative part of the present study also revealed that the majority of the studied EFL teachers experienced stress because of numerous environmental conditions such as a heavy workload, a lack of resources, students' ill-discipline, poor income, etc. In this view, the finding of the current study is in harmony with that of Mahmoudi and Özkanb(2016), who found that a substantial number of teachers were stressed owing to the nature of their jobs. The present study's findings also revealed that the majority of the study participants believed that they were under a lot of stress as a result of numerous risk factors. This problem harmed their job performance because teachers with a higher level of stress demonstrate a lower level of commitment and performance. The problem also has a harmful psychological, professional, and social impact, which manifests itself in a variety of ways, the most prominent of which is poor achievement.

Teaching, including EFL teaching, is now considered one of the most stressful jobs in the world (Antoniou et al.,2013; Motallebzadeh et al., 2014; Nayernia& Babayan, 2019). The findings of both quantitative and qualitative aspects of the present study affirmed that this problem affects several teachers in the study area. In this sense, the current study finding is similar to that of Sadeghi and Sa'adatpourvahid (2016), who

found that chronic stress causes work-related psychological disorders. As a result of such chronic stress, teachers' performance was harmed and their dedication was hindered. Many other studies such as Getie (2020), Ptáek et al., (2019), Sadeghi and Sa'adatpourvahid (2016) have found that teachers are less satisfied with their job when they are stressed. This, in turn, has an impact on the teachers, teaching, and students' progress, which necessitates intervention in the form of appropriate stress coping strategies. Following this, the findings obtained on the use of coping techniques are discussed.

Coping strategies

The study also looked into how EFL teachers used coping strategies to deal with job-related stressors. In this regard, the finding from the interview analysis revealed that the examined EFL teachers used a variety of coping methods to deal with their work-related stressors. The strategies they used were divided into three categories: emotional, behavioral, and cognitive. Some of the participants said they were using emotional strategies such as (i) staying patient (Teacher-1); (ii) never getting offended easily and never reacting in any way to the offender (Teacher-2); (iii) sharing difficult experiences with family and/or close friends to get help (Teacher-3); (iv) interest and passion for the profession (Teacher-5), and (v) pray for help or seek God's intervention in order to overcome obstacles (Teacher-10, Teacher-11). These are the emotional coping mechanisms used by several EFL teachers studied to deal with their stressors.

Behavioral strategies were the other strategies employed by the participants in the study. These strategies include (i) self-encouragement to develop a sense of resistance and resilience (Teacher-2), (ii) building self-determination and staying optimistic (Teacher-3); (iii) trying to manage things by leaving a classroom for some time while students displayed offensive behavior (Teacher-4); (iv) managing pressure related to the teaching-learning process through consistent effort (Teacher-5); and (v) face reality, tolerate students' bad behavior, and handle them tactfully (Teacher-6); (vi) adjust oneself based on feedback from colleagues and change one's behavior (Teacher-7); (vii) manage students skillfully to gain their attention and trust, taking into account their age (fire age), and developing strength to overcome challenges (Teacher-8); (viii) discussing problems with the department head, coworkers, and friends to get their assistance (Teacher-7, Teacher-9; Teacher-12, and Teacher-13).

In addition, the participants of the study used cognitive coping strategies. For example, sticking to one's plan (the annual plan) in accomplishing one's task (Teacher-10), as well as cognitive restructuring or considering that a similar problem may occur to anyone (Teacher-3). Therefore, the qualitative finding obtained on the teachers' coping strategies showed that several EFL teachers in the study context utilized behavioral strategies, which were followed by emotional and cognitive strategies, respectively. The strategies used by the teachers in the study are similar to the strategies discovered and characterized by various researchers (e.g., Chang,

2009; Akbari & Eghtesadi, 2017; Plana et al., 2003; Harvey, 1999). Chang (2009), for example, divided coping mechanisms into three categories: emotional, behavioral, and cognitive. Coping mechanisms were characterized by Akbari and Eghtesadi (2017) as i) escaping from the problem, ii) confronting the problem, and iii) examining choices to overcome the problem. Billings and Moos (1981), as cited in Plana et al. (2003), in their part, categorized coping strategies as active-cognitive, active-behavioral, and avoidance techniques. Harvey (1999) also divided the strategies into behavioral, emotional, professional, social, and institutional categories. The stated techniques and their classifications have a lot of things in common, with minor differences and overlaps. The strategies indicated by Chang (2009), among the stated classifications, are consistent with the techniques employed by EFL teachers involved in this study. As a result, it's viable to deduce that the EFL teachers who were studied used emotional, behavioral, and cognitive strategies to cope with work-related stressors. However, the findings depicted that they did not use them persistently as a result they failed to manage stressors completely.

Moreover, as previously mentioned, the study's findings revealed that the examined EFL teachers used emotional, behavioral, and cognitive techniques to cope with risk factors; nonetheless, they were unable to entirely control them. This implies that teachers in the study context were dealing with stress and accomplishing their daily work to the bare minimum because they were found to be experiencing difficulties that could contribute to job burnout. In other words, the problem may have arisen as a result of a lack of adequate knowledge and skill in work-related problem-solving procedures or coping strategies. This gap also exposed the teachers to considerable job-related emotional stress, lowering their resilience in the face of potential stressors. Therefore, the current finding could mean that the researched EFL teachers were able to use various coping skills to control the risk factors, yet the strategies they used possibly appeared inadequate and inappropriate to combat the stressors.

Conclusions

Due to the presence of various risk factors in the work environment, stress has become a severe threat among EFL teachers in public primary schools in the study setting. As a result, this study looked into EFL teachers' stress and the factors that contribute to it (job overload, insufficient pay, low social worth, mismanagement, demotivation, discontent, LAPCK, and stress) and coping strategies. To attain these goals, the researchers used a descriptive survey design with quantitative dominant over qualitative sequential explanatory methods. The findings, thus, showed that the majority of the EFL teachers surveyed suffered from persistent stress, as well as the presence of various environmental and personal factors that contributed to the problem in the study area. The outcome of the study also revealed that the majority of

the studied teachers did not apply proper coping techniques frequently to manage their stress. Accordingly, the majority of the studied EFL teachers experienced a high level of stress as well as they did not apply proper coping strategies to manage the problem. These situations have the following implications for the teachers, the teaching-learning process, and the students.

Implications and Suggestions

Teachers with positive emotions teach successfully, whereas teachers with stress and other negative emotions do not (since emotion influences every behavior). Teachers who are stressed are unable to effectively prepare for daily lessons, and they may have poor relationships with students, colleagues, and school administrators. The students may not be properly supported to enable them to acquire the target language. Most importantly, the issue not only affects EFL teachers and their students' English achievement but also affects the students' overall educational attainment because English is the medium of instruction for these students who are preparing for secondary and tertiary levels of education. They may encounter problems in attaining the goal of education at the given levels. Therefore, serious attention needs to be given to EFL teachers since protecting them means protecting the overall educational process and quality of education.

To reduce the problem's impact, it is suggested that EFL teachers in the study context receive on-the-job training on effective coping methods such as emotional, cognitive, and behavioral strategies (Chang, 2009; Kamtsios, 2018; Maroofi & Ghaemi, 2016). On the one hand, emotional coping methods enable them to manage their emotions more effectively during times of stress. For example, a teacher who uses the strategies may attempt to make a good out of a terrible event. Teachers, on the other hand, can use cognitive coping skills to stay calm by employing logical thinking and taking time to express emotions. Finally, relaxing activities such as visiting natural places, exercising, walking, listening to music, and so on are included in behavioral coping strategies. These solutions assist them to cope with the problem and lessen their bodily stress.

Furthermore, the training may raise their understanding of the problem, its triggering factors, how to deal with it, and the need for a healthy work lifestyle. This may benefit not just the teachers' psychological well-being, but also their pupils' academic progress and future prospects. As a result, EFL teachers in the study context should receive short-term training on effective coping strategies and emotional intelligence. Furthermore, teacher training institutions should include coping techniques and emotional intelligence courses in their EFL methodology courses so that trainees and future teachers are aware of potential job-related challenges that lead them to stress and how to address them. Thus, this training assists trainees in becoming prepared in advance for the potential obstacles they would face in their actual work environment,

as well as preparing to confront and cope with comparable challenges in their future work lives. Finally, the study's findings revealed that the problem was driven by environmental variables such as work overload, maladministration, insufficient income, a lack of social value, etc. As a result, the regional and zonal education bureaus should collaborate closely to ensure that EFL teachers in the study area have a manageable workload, fair administration, adequate income, and social value. Such treatments help teachers to manage work-related stress, promote a good attitude toward their profession, demonstrate commitment to their daily work, and improve the teaching-learning process.

Limitations and suggestions

The study has certain limitations, even though it gives many helpful insights into EFL teachers' stress, other associated difficulties, and coping strategies. Because the study was conducted in a specific setting and with a small sample size, the results can never be generalized to a larger group of EFL teachers that work in public primary schools throughout the region and the country. As a result, more research on a large scale is needed to determine the degree and magnitude of the problem in the region and nationwide.

Declarations

Contribution Statement:

Teshale Ayalew: Came up with the concept, carried out the research, analyzed the findings, and wrote the paper.

Getachew Seyum: Served as the main advisor and helped by supplying the required resources.

Adege Alemu: Played the roles of co-advisorship and helped by providing the required resources.

Competing interest statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Additional information

No additional information is available for this paper.

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The Effects of Pronunciation Anxiety and Motivation on English Learners' Willingness to Communicate¹

Los efectos de la ansiedad de
pronunciación y la motivación en
la voluntad de comunicarse de los
estudiantes de inglés

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Abstract

The present quantitative study intended to investigate the effect of Iranian EFL learners' pronunciation anxiety (PA) and pronunciation motivation (PM) on their L2 willingness to communicate (L2 WTC) in English classes. Additionally, it aimed at identifying which of these two independent variables (PA or PM) could better predict their L2 WTC. To these aims, a convenience sample of 134 upper-intermediate EFL learners were recruited from two private language institutes in one of the large cities of Iran. Their proficiency level had already been determined by the institutes using written and oral placement tests. To gather the necessary data, three questionnaires, namely, Baran-Lucarz's (2017) PA, and PM, and Simić's (2014) WTC questionnaires were used. Descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized to answer the research question of the study. Findings indicated that both variables under study, PA and PM, had significant correlations with learners' L2 WTC. However, although results suggested that both independent variables predicted the learners' L2 WTC, PA was found to be a stronger predictor. Implications of the study findings and suggestions for further research are also offered.

Key Words: EFL learners, pronunciation anxiety, pronunciation motivation, willingness to communicate.

Resumen

El presente estudio cuantitativo pretende investigar el efecto de la ansiedad de pronunciación (PA) y la motivación de pronunciación (PM) de los estudiantes iraníes de EFL en su disposición a comunicarse en L2 (L2 WTC) en las clases de inglés. Además, tuvo como objetivo identificar cuál de estas dos variables independientes (PA o PM) podría predecir mejor su L2 WTC. Con estos objetivos, se reclutó una muestra de conveniencia de 134 estudiantes de EFL de nivel intermedio alto de dos institutos de idiomas privados en una de las grandes ciudades de Irán. Su nivel de competencia ya había sido determinado por los institutos utilizando pruebas de ubicación escritas y orales. Para recopilar los datos necesarios, se utilizaron tres cuestionarios, a saber, PA y PM de Baran-Lucarz (2017), y los cuestionarios WTC de Simić (2014). Se utilizó estadística descriptiva e inferencial para responder a la pregunta de investigación del estudio. Los hallazgos indicaron que ambas variables bajo estudio, PA y PM, tenían correlaciones significativas con el WTC L2 de los alumnos. Sin embargo, aunque los resultados sugirieron que ambas variables independientes predijeron el WTC L2 de los alumnos, se encontró que PA era un predictor más fuerte. También se ofrecen implicaciones de los hallazgos del estudio y sugerencias para futuras investigaciones.

Palabras clave: Estudiantes de EFL, ansiedad de pronunciación, motivación de pronunciación, voluntad de comunicarse.

Resumo:

O presente estudo quantitativo pretende pesquisar o efeito da ansiedade de pronúncia (PA) e a motivação de pronúncia (PM) dos estudantes iranianos de EFL na sua disposição a comunicar-se em L2 (L2 WTC) nas aulas de inglês. Além disso, teve como objetivo identificar qual destas duas variáveis independentes (PA ou PM) poderia prever melhor sua L2 WTC. Com estes objetivos, recrutou-se uma amostra de conveniência de 134 estudantes de EFL de nível intermediário alto de dois institutos de idiomas particulares em uma das grandes cidades do Irã. Seu nível de competência já tinha sido determinado pelos institutos utilizando provas de localização escritas e orais. Para recopilar os dados necessários, foram utilizados três questionários, a saber, PA e PM de Baran-Lucarz (2017), e os questionários WTC de Simić (2014). Utilizou-se estatística descritiva e inferencial para responder à pergunta de pesquisa do estudo. As descobertas indicaram que ambas variáveis sob estudo, PA e PM, tinham correlações significativas com o WTC L2 dos alunos. Porém, mesmo que os resultados sugeriram que ambas variáveis independentes predisssem o WTC L2 dos alunos, encontrou-se que PA era um prognosticador mais forte. Também se oferecem implicações das descobertas do estudo e sugestões para futuras pesquisas.

Palavras chave: Estudantes de EFL, ansiedade de pronúncia, motivação de pronúncia, vontade de comunicar-se.

W

Introduction

With the growing demand for the use of English for social interactions worldwide, influenced by globalization as well as the development of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), communication has become the ultimate goal of language learning for many L2 learners (Al-Murtadha, 2017). Yet, learners need to be not only able to interact with other people but also willing to communicate in the L2. According to Clément et al. (2003, p. 191), “the most immediate determinant of L2 use” is willingness to communicate (WTC). Given this perceived importance of WTC in L2 pedagogy, during the past decades, different scholars have attempted to define it; for instance, MacIntyre et al. (1998) viewed it as readiness to participate in a particular discourse at a proper time with other interlocutors using a second language. McCroskey and Richmond (1990), on the other hand, considered it as an individual’s propensity to twitch communication when free to do so.

Growing evidence demonstrates the effect of various communicative, linguistic and social variables on WTC. Some of these variables which have already been identified in previous research include “the state of communicative self-confidence, desire to communicate with a specific person; self-confidence, intergroup and interpersonal motivation; communicative competence, social attitudes, and intergroup attitudes; and personality and intergroup climate” (Ghonsooly et al., 2012, p. 198). As one of the variables influencing WTC, anxiety has garnered much serious attention in the field of second language acquisition since the 1970s. After the introduction of language anxiety (LA), a plethora of studies were conducted to determine miscellaneous effects of LA on L2 (foreign/second language) learning and language use (Horwitz, 2010). It has continuously been suggested that low anxiety levels lead to beneficial language learning (Elkhafaifi, 2005) whereas high LA might have detrimental influences on both language learning and language use in L2 contexts (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2008; Spielman & Radnofsky, 2001).

In this regard, a variety of language specific anxieties have been identified and examined so far; for instance, listening comprehension anxiety (Kim, 2005), speaking anxiety (Woodrow, 2006), reading anxiety (Argamon & Abu-Rabia, 2002), writing anxiety (Cheng et al., 1999), and grammar anxiety (VanPatten & Glass, 1999). More recently, Baran-Lucarz (2013) put forth a new concept describing another type of language learning anxiety; that is, pronunciation anxiety or PA. Later, she (2014, p. 453) elaborated on the following subcomponents for her model of PA,

1. Pronunciation self-image: beliefs one holds about personal appearance— about the way one looks and sounds when speaking an FL, and acceptance of one’s self-image.

2. Pronunciation self-efficacy and self-assessment: perception related to one's predisposition to acquire/learn an FL phonological system and to one's perceived level of pronunciation of the TL (usually formed by comparing oneself to classmates or other speakers).
3. Fear of negative evaluation: apprehension caused by anticipating that other speakers will have negative opinions about one based on one's pronunciation.
4. Beliefs about the importance of pronunciation for successful communication, about the ease of learning TL pronunciation for learners representing a particular L1, and about the sound of the TL.

Pronunciation of a language might trigger positive reactions in some learners who might consider it as pleasant, nice, delightful, prestigious, or sexy. On the contrary, however, the very same language might provoke negative attitudes making students perceive it as unpleasant, unnatural, or even annoying. Additionally, learners who have negative perceptions towards the sound of the target language will likely have difficulties with regard to accepting a new L2 identity (Baran-Lucarz, 2014). Prior research has offered converging evidence regarding speaking being perceived as the most anxiety-generating skill among the four language skills, particularly when learners have to take the floor in front of the class and their peers (e.g., Abal, 2012; Occhipinti, 2009; Woodrow, 2006). Further, qualitative data collected using interviews and diaries emphasized that one source of common anxiety is learners' worries about losing face in front of their peers due to their accents (Price, 1991). All these studies point out the importance of attending to pronunciation in L2 pedagogy.

Besides anxiety, motivation has also been at the heart of investigation in the L2 field for more than 50 years. More specifically, pronunciation motivation is defined as a great enthusiasm to reach the highest level of communication ability, or a native-like, or at least a semi-native-like accent (Dörnyei, 2005). In this vein, previous research has suggested that the desire to be a native-like speaker and have a pleasant accent is highly associated with the level of PA and its subcomponents, such as self-image, self-efficacy/self-assessment, and beliefs about the L2 sound and its importance for communication (Baran-Lucarz, 2013; Kafes, 2018; Kralova et al., 2017).

Results of many empirical studies have confirmed the mutual relationship between anxiety and motivation. In this regard, Yan and Horwitz asserted, "further attention should be directed to understanding the relationship between motivation and anxiety in language learning" (2008, p. 176). Low level of anxiety leads to high self-confidence which is a characteristic of a motivated student (Clement, 1980); especially when high confidence and motivation result in success, while, conversely, unsuccessful experience is likely to lead to stress, discouragement, and lower motivation to learn. Although it seems logical that high motivation results in systematic work and endeavor to achieve goals, it might lead to anxiety and stress in some individuals as well, chiefly

if the outcomes do not meet their expectations (Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998). Despite the importance of these two variables in the acquisition of L2 pronunciation, to the best of our knowledge, and after an intensive review of the existing literature, we found out that no previous inquiry has attempted to systematically examine the effects of PA and PM on L2 WTC in an EFL context. Therefore, to bridge this gap, this study was an attempt to investigate the effects of these two factors on learners' L2 WTC and to find which one of these two variables could be a better predictor of Iranian EFL learners' L2 WTC. Hence, the study sought answers to the following research question:

Which of the two variables, i.e., PA or PM, better predicts Iranian EFL learners' L2 WTC in English classes?

Background

Several researchers from different parts of the world have so far attempted to study L2 WTC and the factors which influence it; for instance, Cao and Philp (2006) administered questionnaires, observations, and interviews in a multi-national ESL class in New Zealand to find what variables contributed to L2 WTC in a classroom situation. Their findings confirmed that the number of people in the task group (pairs, small groups, whole class) played a key role in learners' L2 WTC. Furthermore, self-confidence, familiarity with the interlocutor, and interlocutor participation were considered to be influential in this study.

In another study, Pawlak and Mystkowska-Wiertelak (2015) argued that the integrated nature of L2 WTC has traditionally been investigated separately, but its dynamic character is still in its infancy. Analysis of the data they collected using self-ratings, questionnaires, and interviews from 8 Polish students showed that the participants' L2 WTC changed and was influenced by different factors. These factors included the topic, planning time, cooperation and familiarity with the interlocutor, the opportunity to express one's ideas, the mastery of the prerequisite lexis, the presence of the researcher, and a host of individual variables, thereby confirming the dynamic and flexible nature of L2 WTC.

In Japan, Wood (2016) examined the relationship between L2 WTC and L2 fluency from a dynamic systems perspective. The researcher used an exploratory case study to investigate L2 WTC and fluency between Japanese English learners and non-Japanese interlocutors. Results indicated that fluency breakdowns led to lowered L2 WTC or vice versa.

In the context of Iran, Aliakbari et al. (2016) studied the synchronous impact of different variables affecting L2 WTC, including anxiety, self-confidence, communicative competence, and international posture on 194 EFL learners. Based on the results of this study, the relationship between enjoyment and L2 WTC was sturdier

than that between anxiety and L2 WTC. That is to say, whereas the environment of the classroom had a positive influence on both enjoyment and L2 WTC, it showed a negative effect on anxiety.

In another study in the same context, Khajavy et al. (2016) focused on L2 WTC in English among Iranian EFL learners in the classroom settings. Results indicated that the strongest factor that directly affected L2 WTC was classroom environment. Findings also showed that classroom environment directly affected attitudes, motivation, and communication confidence while communication confidence itself directly affected L2 WTC. However, motivation and English language proficiency indirectly influenced L2 WTC through communication confidence.

In a more recent study, Riasati and Rahimi (2018) examined the influence of situational and individual factors on L2 WTC. While the situational aspects were found to be task type, topic, interlocutor, teacher, classroom atmosphere, and seating arrangement, the individual elements were identified to be learners' personality, self-confidence, the degree of opportunity they have in language classes, fear of evaluation, and fear of correctness of their speech.

In the context of Japan, Freiermuth and Ito (2020) investigated the effect of personality and past experience on university students' L2 WTC. To this aim, using semi-structured interviews, they studied eight female Japanese students who were selected from a group of 69 students on the basis of their English proficiency test scores (high/low scorers) as well as their WTC (high/low WTC) scores. Their findings suggested that students with high L2 WTC perceived themselves as future L2 users who were stimulated through integrative motivation with their peers and teachers. Further, positive personality traits were found to facilitate WTC; therefore, they concluded that positive past experiences with language teachers and foreign peers could lead to a better understanding of second language learners' WTC.

More recently, Alimorad and Farahmand (2021) attempted to identify the factors leading to Iranian EFL tertiary students' L2 (un)willingness to communicate in English classes. Conducting a classroom-based case study, they recruited a purposive sample of 10 EFL learners and studied them for three weeks. To gather data, they utilized a variety of data collection tools, namely, semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and stimulated-recall interviews. Then, they thematically analyzed the data to identify and extract common themes from the participants' ideas. Results of their study indicated that there existed a complex, dynamic and non-linear interaction between individual, contextual, and linguistic factors that influence L2 WTC. These three broad factors in tandem exerted either contributing or impeding effects on each individual's WTC in the classroom context.

Attempting to determine significant PA correlates, Baran-Lucarz and Lee (2021) considered the role of learning experiences with teachers who were native speakers of

English, previous study abroad experiences, L2 learning enjoyment, and L2 WTC. To do that, they administered a questionnaire to two groups of EFL learners of different majors (English education/tourism English) and different self-perceived proficiency levels. Results of hierarchical multiple regression analyses for both groups suggested that L2 WTC was the strongest determinant of PA while foreign language enjoyment was the second most meaningful correlate only for the group whose self-perceived general English proficiency was lower.

Overall, although a host of empirical studies have investigated the effects of various factors on EFL learners' L2 WTC, they do not give us the full picture in that no previous study has examined the effect of PA and PM, as two recently introduced concepts, on EFL learners' L2 WTC. Further, even though Baran-Lucarz and Lee (2021) have recently explored the relationship between PA and L2 WTC, the focus of their study was on L2 WTC as a determinant of PA rather than the other way round. Additionally, in their study, they did not examine the role of PM as a predictor variable either. Hence, considering the paucity of research in this area, and to gain deeper insights into EFL learners' L2 WTC, the current study set out to delve into the relationship between these two variables and Iranian EFL learners' L2 WTC with the aim of identifying the one which could likely be a better predictor of L2 WTC in a foreign language learning situation.

Method

This study was a quantitative piece of research. In the sections that follow the method of the study is explained including the participants who partook in the study, instruments used to gather the necessary data, as well as data collection, and analysis procedures.

Participants

One hundred and thirty-four upper-intermediate EFL learners who had already been learning English for at least two years prior to this study were selected from two private language institutes in one of the large cities of Iran. They were recruited employing a convenience sampling procedure because the second researcher served as an English teacher at one of the language institutes under study. The proficiency level of the participating learners had already been determined by the institutes using their own oral and written placement tests. The participants were from both genders (female=100, male= 34) and their ages ranged from 20 to 40.

Instruments

In this study, three instruments were utilized to collect the data: the *Willingness-to-Communicate Questionnaire (WTCQ)* which was adopted from Simić (2014), the *Pronunciation Anxiety Questionnaire (PAQ)* which was a modified version of an earlier scale developed by Baran-Lucarz (2014, 2016) and included nine subcomponents, and the *Pronunciation Motivation Questionnaire (PMQ)* which was designed by Baran-Lucarz (2017) based on the L2 Motivational Self System already proposed by Dörnyei. These instruments are explained in more detail in the following sections.

Willingness-to-Communicate Questionnaire (WTCQ)

To gather the necessary information about students' L2 WTC, a 20-item 5-point Likert scale L2 WTC questionnaire (1 = almost never willing, 2 = sometimes willing, 3 = willing half of the times, 4 = usually willing, and 5 = almost always willing) whose items were in English was used in this study. This questionnaire contained a section asking about participants' age, gender, and years of studying English. The content validity of this scale was checked and confirmed by two applied linguistics experts. Further, its reliability index was calculated using Cronbach's alpha formula and turned out to be 0.79 which seemed satisfactory for the purposes of this study.

Pronunciation Anxiety Questionnaire (PAQ)

The pronunciation anxiety questionnaire (PAQ) developed by Baran-Lucarz (2017) consisting of 50 statements with a 6-point Likert scale (Strongly agree=6, to strongly disagree=1) was utilized to measure the participants' pronunciation anxiety. The reliability of the entire scale was reported to be 0.95 and its validity was established examining its construct validity by running factor analysis (Baran-Lucarz, 2017). While the respondents could achieve a minimum score of 50 and a maximum score of 300, the higher the individuals' scores were, the more anxious they were considered to be. For items which denoted lack of anxiety, a reversed scoring key was applied. This questionnaire also included a section asking about participants' age, gender, and years of studying English. Its reliability was checked by the current researchers using Cronbach's alpha procedure and the index was found to be 0.73.

Pronunciation Motivation Questionnaire (PMQ)

To collect the needed information about the learners' pronunciation motivation, a pronunciation motivation questionnaire (PMQ) consisting of 29 items with a 6-point

Likert scale (strongly agree=6, to strongly disagree= 1) was utilized (Baran-Lucarz, 2017). The highest the participants' score in this questionnaire was, the more motivated they would be considered. To calculate their scores, for some items, a reversed scoring procedure was applied. Baran-Lucarz (2017) reported the reliability of the entire scale to be 0.85 and she confirmed its validity. Its reliability index was found to be 0.72 in the present study using Cronbach's alpha procedure.

Data Collection Procedures

The three questionnaires were administered by the second author of this paper and he was present to answer any possible questions on the part of the learners or clarify any ambiguities and misunderstandings. Also, an attempt was made to administer the questionnaires one by one during different class sessions so that fatigue might not hinder the participants from giving precise answers. In addition, the order of the administration of the questionnaires was counterbalanced to avoid order affecting their performance. That is, the three questionnaires were administered in different orders in different classes. To ensure gathering accurately completed questionnaires, enough time was given to the participants so that they could answer all items. Also, they were politely asked to give honest responses to the items of the questionnaire. To this aim, the instructions given reassured them that the obtained information would be kept confidential and would only be used for research purposes.

Data Analysis Procedures

To analyze the data, multiple regression was run to uncover the possible effects of the independent variables (PM and PA) on the dependent (L2 WTC) variable of the study and to identify the independent variable which could likely be a better predictor of the participants' L2 WTC. Further, as follow-up analyses, the mean and standard deviations of the components of the predictor variable were also calculated and examined.

Results and discussion

Before conducting the multiple regression analysis, its assumptions were checked. To this end, the Pearson correlation table was scrutinized to check the relationships among the three variables of the study. Results of these analyses are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Correlation between PA, PM, and L2 WTC

Source: the authors

		L2 WTC	PA	PM
Pearson Correlation	L2 WTC	1.000	-.488*	.302*
	PA	-.488*	1.000	.265
	PM	.302*	.265	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	L2 WTC	.	.015	.024
	PA	.015	.	.226
	PM	.024	.226	.
N	L2 WTC	134	134	134
	PA	134	134	134
	PM	134	134	134

Based on these results, there is a significant moderate negative correlation between PA and L2 WTC ($r = -.488$ sig $= .015$). Put it simply, as expected, the more anxious the participants are, the less they tend to use English in their communicational exchanges. Moreover, PM and L2 WTC also showed a moderate positive correlation which is statistically significant ($r = .302$ sig $= .024$). Therefore, contrary to their PA, their PM shows a positive correlation with their L2 WTC, thereby indicating that the more motivated the participants are in terms of their pronunciation, the more willing they will be to use English while interacting with others.

Results of the correlation analyses between the variables showed that PA had a higher correlation with L2 WTC; hence, a multiple regression analysis was run to find out which of these independent variables could more significantly contribute to the L2 WTC. To this end, first, characteristics of the variables under study were examined in order to see if the required statistical assumptions were met (Pallant, 2011). As reported above, the two independent variables showed significant medium relationships with L2 WTC. Hence, the correlation values were neither too small nor too large, which indicated that the two independent variables could be retained. Next, the multicollinearity assumption was checked. In this regard, the obtained collinearity statistics, i.e., the variance inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance values, for PA (Tolerance=0.996; VIF=1.004), and PM (Tolerance=0.996; VIF=1.004) rejected the presence of multicollinearity. Then, the normal probability plot (P-P) of the regression standardized residual (Figure 1) and the scatter plot (Figure 2) were examined.

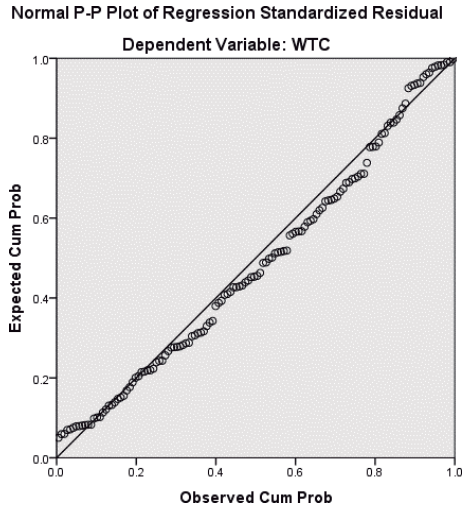


Figure 1. Normal P-P plot of regression standardized residual for L2 WTC
Source: the authors

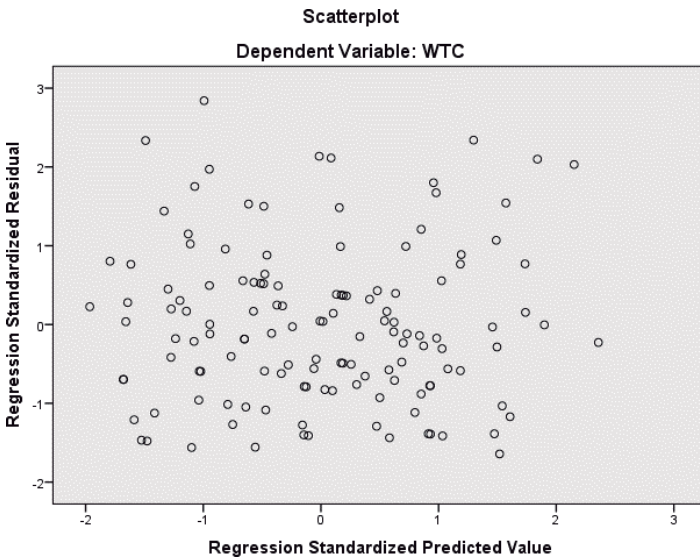


Figure 2. The scatter plot for L2 WTC
Source: the authors

As can be observed, both the normal probability plot (P-P) of the regression standardized residual and the scatter plot support the idea that the assumptions of normality and linearity were not violated. Moreover, the plots indicate that no serious outliers could be detected. In fact, none of the cases had a standardized residual greater than 3.3 or lower than -3.3. The next assumption to be checked was homoscedasticity. Table 2 shows the results of this analysis.

Table 2. Residuals Statistics^a

Source: the authors

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	38.1612	45.8518	41.6567	1.77907	134
Std. Predicted Value	-1.965	2.358	.000	1.000	134
Standard Error of Predicted Value	.712	2.255	1.172	.328	134
Adjusted Predicted Value	38.0854	45.9515	41.6507	1.78633	134
Residual	-13.35840	23.11088	.00000	8.07170	134
Std. Residual	-1.642	2.842	.000	.992	134
Stud. Residual	-1.663	2.881	.000	1.005	134
Deleted Residual	-13.69822	23.76052	.00598	8.27252	134
Stud. Deleted Residual	-1.675	2.966	.003	1.012	134
Mahal. Distance	.026	9.234	1.985	1.738	134
Cook's Distance	.000	.078	.008	.014	134
Centered Leverage Value	.000	.069	.015	.013	134

a. Dependent Variable: L2 WTC

Tellingly, given that there were two independent variables under investigation, we had to consider the critical chi-square value with the degree of freedom of two (=number of independent variables), which was 13.82 (Pallant, 2011, p. 159). As displayed in the table above, the maximum Mahalanobis distance value recorded for the cases in this sample (9.234) is smaller than the critical chi-square value (13.82), thereby showing that homoscedasticity has not been violated, or there were no serious outliers. After checking all these assumptions, multiple regression analysis was run. The results are reported in tables 3, 4 and 5.

Table 3. Model Summary^b

Source: the authors

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.215 ^a	.346	.320	8.13308

a. Predictors: (Constant), PM, PA

b. Dependent Variable: L2 WTC

Table 4. Coefficients^aDependent Variable: L2 WTC

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	45.958	6.230		7.377	.000	33.633	58.283					
1 PA	-.062	.027	-.395	-2.282	.004	-.115	-.008	-.188	-.195	-.395	.996	1.004
PM	.051	.042	.205	1.223	.023	-.031	.133	.092	.106	.204	.996	1.004

a. Dependent Variable: L2 WTC

Table 5. ANOVA^a

Source: the authors

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	420.957	2	210.479	3.182	.045 ^b
Residual	8665.252	131	66.147		
Total	9086.209	133			

a. Dependent Variable: L2 WTC

b. Predictors: (Constant), PM, PA

A close examination of the model summary and the ANOVA tables shows that the model, including PM and PA as the independent variables, predicts 34.6% (R Square=.346) of the variance in L2 WTC as the dependent variable, and the results are statistically significant (F= 3.182, sig=.045). To see which independent variable best contributed to the prediction of the dependent variable, the coefficients table

was examined. The table shows that although both PA and PM ($\beta = .205$, $\text{sig} = .023$) significantly predicted the participants' L2 WTC, PA with a larger beta value of $-.395$ ($\text{sig} = .004$) was a more powerful predictor. This finding partially corroborates Saito et al.'s results (2018) which suggested that students' L2 speech learning patterns were primarily determined by their emotional states (anxiety/enjoyment), and secondarily, by their motivational dispositions. As mentioned above, in the next step, follow-up analyses including mean and standard deviation of different components of the PA were calculated (Table 6) in an attempt to uncover their possible differential influences.

Table 6. Mean and standard deviation of PA components

Source: the authors

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Lack of anxiety	50.1696	6.90200
PA when talking to native and non-native speakers outside the FL classroom	30.7969	8.23222
Pronunciation self-image	27.2960	4.25976
Pronunciation self-efficacy and self-assessment	25.1250	3.72901
General FL oral performance apprehension	23.1061	8.02502
Fear of negative evaluation	21.4524	7.99260
Beliefs about the importance of pronunciation for communication	12.0862	2.47972
Beliefs about the nature/sound of the TL	10.4470	2.60743
Beliefs about difficulties with learning TL pronunciation by learners representing a particular L1	10.2941	2.28611

As Table 6 illustrates, the first component of PA, lack of anxiety, carries the highest mean amongst all the components. Considering the items of this component and the reversed scoring key applied, it could be argued that in this specific sample of the participants, most of the students suffered from high levels of anxiety because of the negative perceptions they held about themselves and their capabilities. This seemingly unexpected finding might imply that EFL learners, despite being proficient (i.e., upper-intermediate level in this study) in the target language tend to remain anxious while attempting to observe correct pronunciation of the target language during the long journey of learning English as a foreign language. This being so, given the prominent role of PA in contributing to EFL learners' L2 WTC, this finding seems to warrant further and much closer examination and investigation. In a similar vein, the role of students' self-perceived capabilities were highlighted by previous researchers such as MacIntyre and Charos (1996) who found self-perceived communication competence influenced L2 WTC. More recently, Baran-Lucarz and Lee (2021), who found self-perceived poor pronunciation as well as uncertainties about pronunciation contributed

to students' reluctance to speak English in the classroom.

In addition, the second component, authentic communication in real life situations, also aroused a high level of anxiety in this sample. Based on the items constituting this component, the participants seem to be too cognizant of the way they might be judged by native or non-native interlocutors due to their pronunciation. Being extremely conscious of others' (mis)judgment will even manifest itself in their physical functioning by showing different symptoms of being stressed. Similarly, Simić (2014) found communicating with native speakers provoked feelings of anxiety and embarrassment in EFL learners.

After these two components, pronunciation self-image holds the third rank, thereby indicating that how they look or sound while speaking English could play a decisive role in (not) being willing to communicate in English. As the fourth component, pronunciation self-efficacy and self-assessment indicates that besides others' judgment, their own judgment of their capabilities and potentials could also be influential in their decision to speak English or not. General FL oral performance apprehension and fear of negative evaluation, the fifth and sixth components, point out the reasons why some students feel anxious while speaking in English, in general and why the participants get worried about how they are judged in the classroom context by their teachers and classmates, in particular.

Likewise, Dewaele et al. (2017) also stated that some teachers may, consciously or unconsciously, cause heightened anxiety for language learners. They suggested that such teachers attempt to adapt their behavior so that they could reduce the negative effects of their anxiety-inducing behaviors.

Fear of negative evaluation because of making pronunciation mistakes has repeatedly been reported as one of the important factors which contributes to students' being reluctant to speak in the classroom. In this regard, Riasati and Rahimi (2018) found that among many other factors, fear of evaluation, and fear of correctness adversely affected learners' L2 WTC. Zarrinabadi (2014) also referred to error correction as a factor influencing L2 WTC. Results of the study conducted by Teimouri (2017) pointed out that explicit corrective feedback given by the teachers in the classroom context could induce feelings of anxiety and shame in students in front of their peers.

In a similar vein, Khajavy et al. (2016) found that the strongest factor that directly affected L2 WTC was classroom environment. Their findings also showed that classroom environment directly affected attitudes, motivation, and communication confidence. Moreover, communication confidence directly affected L2 WTC. Motivation and English language proficiency indirectly influenced L2 WTC through communication confidence. The findings of the current study lend support to their findings in that it was found that, compared to pronunciation anxiety, pronunciation

motivation was a less strong factor contributing to Iranian EFL learners' willingness to communicate in English. Additionally, similar to Khajavy et al.'s (2016) findings, it can be said that classroom environment, if it is not student friendly, can trigger pronunciation anxiety leading to less participation in classroom discussions, hence, less willingness to communicate, which was found in the current study, too.

What is worthy of notice in Table 6 is the components holding the lowest ranks, i.e., beliefs about the importance of pronunciation for communication, beliefs about the nature/sound of the TL, and beliefs about difficulties with learning TL pronunciation by learners representing a particular L1. Considering the perceived importance of these components compared to that of the previous ones from these students' perspective, it could be observed that, although these students do not regard native-like pronunciation as that critical in negotiating meaning, their weak pronunciation level could lead to anxiety and, in turn, unwillingness to communicate in English. Further, holding positive perceptions towards the sounds of English, the current participants seem not to attribute their tendency (or lack thereof) to speak English to the characteristics of the language itself. Additionally, they do not conceive that learning and mastering English pronunciation and stress is demanding for learners whose native language is Persian. Tellingly, what seems to be clear is that these findings need to be scrutinized more deeply by future researchers.

Conclusions and pedagogical implications

Results of this study could possibly contribute to theory and practice of English language teaching. Regarding the theory, as PA and PM are novel and almost under-researched, the findings of this study could enrich previously developed theories of L2 WTC by drawing-researchers' attention to the role these two constructs could play in students' L2 WTC, thereby leading to possible revision of those theories. As for the practice, given that this study showed both PA and PM significantly correlated with EFL learners' L2 WTC, it seems reasonable to introduce and highlight the importance of these two variables in language teaching contexts. It was found that the participating students in this study perceived intelligibility rather than native-like pronunciation to be sufficient for meaning negotiation in L2 communicational situations. Keeping this in mind, curriculum and syllabus designers could consider the possibility of incorporating materials which highlight the priority of intelligibility over native-like pronunciation in the syllabuses and textbooks they develop. Given the importance of improving language learners' self-image and self-efficacy as perceived by the participants, it could be suggested that relevant workshops be held for pre- and in-service teachers during which they will be taught how to improve their students' pronunciation self-image and self-efficacy in classroom environment and real-life situations. Also, some training sessions could be held for the students to empower

them to evaluate their own pronunciation based on the criteria of intelligibility rather than native-like pronunciation so that their anxiety could be reduced.

This study could not be void of some unavoidable limitations. First of all, the study just focused on English learners at institutes and did not consider other educational contexts like universities and public schools. Secondly, the study focused on upper-intermediate learners while other proficiency groups were not examined. Also, a convenience sampling procedure was utilized, which restricts the generalizability of the findings of the study. That being so, we suggest that in future research, random sampling procedures be implemented in an attempt to increase the possible generalizability of the findings. Moreover, quantitative studies can be complemented by qualitative ones using other data collection instruments such as interviews and observations to examine the extent to which the current findings might be corroborated by more in-depth longitudinal studies. Furthermore, the role of other possible influential factors such as gender, age, and personality factors was not considered in this study, which could be explored in future studies.

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An Investigation of Prospective Teachers' Reasons for Preferring Teaching as a Profession: Turkish Context¹

Una Investigación de las Razones de
los Futuros Docentes para Preferir la
Enseñanza como una Profesión: Contexto
Turco

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Abstract

The survey model was used in this study, which aimed to reveal the level of differences of pedagogical formation students' reasons for choosing teaching according to various variables. The universe consisted of approximately 250 pedagogical formation education certificate program students studying at a University in Eastern Anatolia in Turkey in 2022. The sample consists of 158 randomly selected pedagogical formation education certificate program students. The "Reasons for Choosing Teaching as a Career Scale", which was developed by Lai, Chan, Ko, and So in 2005 and adapted into Turkish by Balyer and Özcan in 2014, was used as a data collection tool. As a result of the study, it was seen that the level of choosing to teach for internal reasons of pedagogical formation education certificate program students was higher than the level of choice for external reasons and the level of being affected by (others). In addition, it was concluded that the reasons for choosing the teaching profession of pedagogical formation education certificate program students differed according to gender, place of residence, income, order of preference, and education level of parents.

Keywords: Pedagogical Formation Education Certificate Program, Preferring Profession, Profession, Teacher Candidates, Teacher Training, Teaching Profession.

Resumen

En este estudio se utilizó el modelo de cribado, que tuvo como objetivo revelar el nivel de las diferencias de las razones de los estudiantes de formación pedagógica para elegir la enseñanza de acuerdo con diversas variables. El universo consistió en aproximadamente 250 estudiantes del programa de certificado de educación en formación pedagógica que estudiaban en una universidad en el este de Anatolia en Turquía en 2022. La muestra consta de 158 estudiantes del programa de certificado de educación en formación pedagógica seleccionados al azar. La "Razones para elegir la enseñanza como escala de carrera", que fue desarrollada por Lai, Chan, Ko y So en 2005 y adaptada al turco por Balyer y Özcan en 2014, se utilizó como herramienta de recopilación de datos. Como resultado del estudio, se vio que el nivel de elección de enseñar por razones internas de los estudiantes del programa de certificación de educación en formación pedagógica fue más alto que el nivel de elección por razones externas y el nivel de ser afectado por (otros). Además, se concluyó que las razones para elegir la profesión docente de los estudiantes del programa de certificado de educación de formación pedagógica diferían según el género, el lugar de residencia, los ingresos, el orden de preferencia y el nivel educativo de los padres.

Palabras clave: Programa de Certificado de Educación de Formación Pedagógica, Preferencia de Profesión, Profesión, Candidatos a Maestro, Capacitación de Maestros, Profesión de Enseñanza.

Resumo

Neste estudo foi utilizado o modelo de crivado, que teve como objetivo revelar o nível das diferenças das razões dos estudantes de formação pedagógica para escolher o ensino de acordo com diversas variáveis. O universo consistiu em aproximadamente 250 estudantes do programa de certificado de educação em formação pedagógica que estudavam em uma universidade no leste de Anatólia na Turquia, em 2022. A amostra consta de 158 estudantes do programa de certificado de educação em formação pedagógica selecionados aleatoriamente. A “Razões para escolher o ensino como escala de carreira”, que foi desenvolvida por Lai, Chan, Ko e So em 2005 e adaptada ao turco por Balyer e Özcan em 2014, foi utilizada como ferramenta de recopilação de dados. Como resultado do estudo, observou-se que o nível de escolha de ensinar por razões internas dos estudantes do programa de certificação de educação em formação pedagógica foi mais alto que o nível de escolha por razões externas e o nível de ser afetado por (outros). Além disso, concluiu-se que as razões para escolher a profissão docente dos estudantes do programa de certificado de educação de formação pedagógica diferiam de acordo com o gênero, o lugar de residência, os ingressos, a ordem de preferência e o nível educativo dos pais.

Palavras chave: Programa de Certificado de Educação de Formação Pedagógica, Preferência de Profissão, Profissão, Candidatos a Mestre, Capacitação de Mestres, Profissão de Ensino.

B

Introduction

efore starting a profession actively, starting the education of the profession can also be considered as a choice of profession. For example, to have professions such as engineering, medical doctor, military service, clergy, pharmacy, and teaching, it is needed to have the necessary vocational training. The wrong choice of vocational education may cause the individual to turn to the wrong profession. As a result of this situation, a business life with low motivation and thus failure may be caused (Çekten, Şanal & Yeni, 2005; Nalçaçı & Sökmen, 2016). It can be stated that it is extremely important to make the right vocational education preferences for individuals for preventing these situations.

The choice of a profession can be made for internal and external reasons and by being influenced by others (Balyer & Özcan, 2014, pp.104-105; Bastick, 2000). Personal factors are effective in choosing a profession made by internal reasons (Coulthard & Kyriacou, 2002). Internal reasons can be mentioned in choosing a profession with internal motivation in line with individual expectations and needs. On the other hand, external reasons are those that exist outside of the individual's expectations and that the individual chooses a profession despite not being able to associate himself/herself with the profession in question (Bursal & Burdur, 2016, p.352). Generally, economic reasons and working conditions can be effective here (Buldur, Keskin & Börekçi, 2021, p.168). Sometimes, other people around the individual can be quite influential in the career choices of individuals. Individuals can also choose a profession by being influenced by others (Butcher & Lewis, 2002). These people, whom individuals are affected by, can usually be parents, teachers, and close friends. Orienting an individual to a profession for internal reasons may cause him/her to do his/her job with higher motivation and thus increase his/her professional success (Balyer & Özcan, 2014, p.104; Bruinsma & Jansen, 2010; Coulthard & Kyriacou 2002).

As in other professions, choosing the teaching profession for the right reasons can support professional success. For this reason, it is important that teacher candidates who receive teacher education turn to teaching for internal reasons rather than the professional choices they make due to external reasons and being influenced by others (Watt & Richardson, 2008, p.408). The importance of teaching, which has a history of thousands of years, is better understood today and teaching has become a profession that can be earned after four, five, or six years of higher education, especially in developed countries. Considering its contribution to social progress, the teaching profession maintains its importance (Nalçaçı & Sökmen, 2016, p.718). For this reason, both the teacher training system and the reasons why teacher candidates, who are the subjects of this system, prefer teaching remain important (Şişman, 2012).

In the related research, it is seen that similar studies are carried out with the students and teachers who receive teacher education, and it has been observed that

the explanatory and current studies conducted with students who have received higher education in a field other than teaching and who receive pedagogical formation education, a certificate given by education faculties for those who want to be teachers in Turkey although they get education in non-teaching related fields of other faculties, are insufficient. It is because the program of pedagogical formation is highly discussed in the literature in that the pedagogical formation program created a confusion in teacher training since Turkey give training both the students of education faculties and the students who are enrolled in the pedagogical formation program. Although the Council of Higher Education has agreed on the idea that these programs are lacking in some aspects such as the practicum opportunities, and content and time allocated for teaching (Eraslan & Çakıcı, 2011), universities in Turkey continued to educate these students to become teachers through pedagogical formation programs. For this reason, this research aims to reveal the reasons for pedagogical formation education certificate program students to choose teaching and to examine the differences in the reasons for choosing teaching according to gender, place of residence, high school, monthly income of the family, and parental education level and preference order variables. As a result of this study, the reasons for pedagogical formation education certificate program students prefer teaching are revealed, and various suggestions are presented to improve teaching and increase the preferability of the profession. Therefore, it was deemed necessary to examine the reasons for choosing the teaching profession of the students who received pedagogical formation certificate training. Research questions sought to be answered in the study:

1. What are the reasons for preferring teaching (internal, external, being influenced by others?)
2. Do the reasons for choosing to teach differ according to gender, place of residence, high school, monthly income of the family, education level of the parents, and the order of preference?

Methodology

Research Model

In this study, it was aimed to obtain data from students who received pedagogical formation education certificate program. Since data can be obtained from large populations with data collection tools that have passed the validity-reliability analyses with the survey model (Büyüköztürk, 2014, p.2), the survey model was used in this quantitative study.

Population and Sample

The population of the study consisted of approximately 250 students who continue their activities in Eastern Anatolia in Turkey in 2022 and get pedagogical formation education in addition to their undergraduate education (to gain the right to be a teacher). The sample size to be reached in the study formula was calculated as 152 and 182 students were reached using the simple random sampling method, 24 responses to the scale were not taken into consideration because they were filled in incorrectly, and analyzes were carried out with 158 scales at the final stage. The distribution of the sample according to the variables that are the subject of the research is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of the Sample

Variables		n	%
Gender	Female	118	74.7
	Male	40	25.3
Place of residence	City centre	88	55.7
	District centre	36	22.8
	Town-Village	34	21.5
High school	General high school	39	24.7
	Anatolian high school	85	53.8
	Other high schools	34	21.5
Family monthly income	0-5.000TRY	53	33.5
	5.001-10.000 TRY	64	40.5
	10.001+ TRY	41	25.9
Mother education level	Illiterate	39	24.7
	Primary school	50	31.6
	Secondary school	37	23.4
	High school+	32	20.3
Father education level	Illiterate	33	20.9
	Primary school	43	27.2
	Secondary school	36	22.8
	High school+	46	29.1
Order of choice	First	98	62.0
	Second+	60	38.0

Data collection tool

The “Reasons for Choosing Teaching as a Career Scale-RCTCS”, which was developed by Lai, Chan, Ko, and So in 2005 and adapted into Turkish by Balyer and Özcan in 2014, was used as a data collection tool. It consists of 22 items and 3 sub-dimensions (Internal Causes used as a data collection tool. It consists of 22 items and 3 sub-dimensions (Internal Causes Sub-Dimension: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9; External Causes Sub-Dimension: 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 ; Sub-Dimensions of Affecting Others: 18, 19, 20, 21, 22), and the items are in the 5-point Likert type of RCTCS. The average score ranges obtained in RCTCS; 1.00/1.80=Very Low, 1.81/2.60=Low, 2.61/3.40=Medium, 3.41/4.20=High, and 4.21/5.00=Very High. The fit indices obtained from the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) results in the adaptation study conducted by Bayer and Özcan (2014) 1410 pre-service teachers in 8 universities RMR=.10, RMSEA=.08, GFI=.90, AGFI=.80, NFI=.95, CFI=.92, X2/sd=2.3. The internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach’s alpha) values for the reliability analysis were found to be between .76 and .89 in the sub-dimensions. In this study, CFA was applied to test the construct validity of RCTCS. The obtained DFA results are presented in the figure.

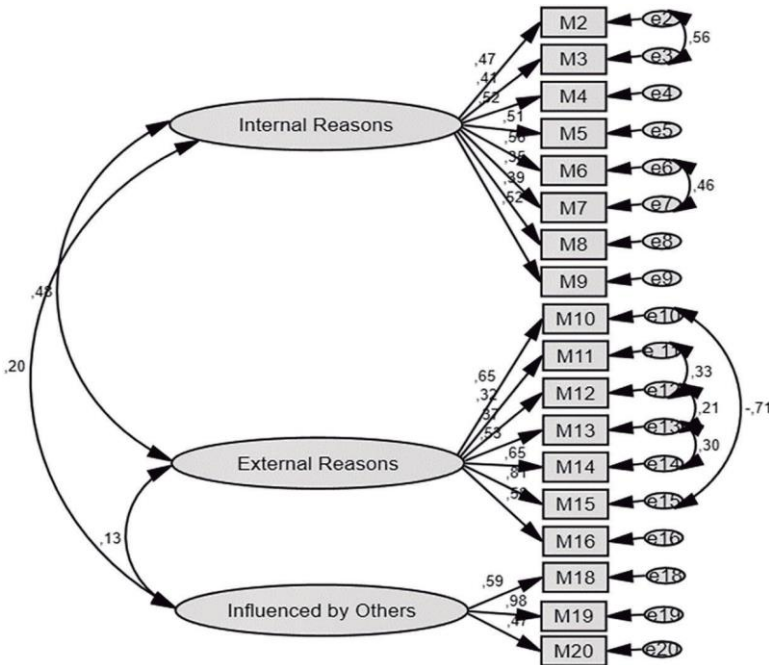


Figure 1. RCTCS CFA Results

As a result of CFA, item factor loads should not be below .30 (Harrington, 2009). For this reason, in line with the CFA results of RCTCS, items 1, 17, 21, and 22 were removed from the scale, since their item factor loads were below .30, and the analysis process was started. To adapt the fit indices of the RCTCS to the reference ranges, the items 2-3, 6-7, 10-15, 11-12, 12-13, and 13-14 were combined as shown in the figure. The fit index data obtained as a result of DFA is; $\chi^2/sd=1.830$, TLI=.90; GFI=.92; NFI=.90; CFI=.91, RMSEA=.07; RMR=.10; shaped was found. These data are within reference ranges according to Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger, and Müller (2003) and Stevens (2001). In other words, the construct validity of the three-dimensional structure of the RCTCS was accepted. The internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) calculated for the reliability of the RCTCS was found to be .72 for the Internal Causes Sub-Dimension; .77 for the External Causes Sub-Dimension; .71 for the Affected by Others Sub-Dimension and .79 for the whole of the RCTCS. According to Kılıç (2016), these data show that RCTCS is reliable.

Data analysis

To decide which techniques to use in the tests to be applied in the data analysis process, the normality of the data was checked first. For this reason, first of all, the mode, median, mean values, and graphs (Q-Q Plot, Box Plot, etc.) of the distribution were examined. Then, skewness/kurtosis data and normality test results were evaluated. The normality data for all sub-dimensions of RCTCS and all are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Normality Data of RCTCS

RCTCS	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk			Skewness	Kurtosis
	Statistics	Sd	p	Statistics	Sd	p		
Internal reasons	.104	158	.043	.969	158	.041	-.105	-.407
External reasons	.087	158	.066	.985	158	.084	-.185	-.427
Influenced by others	.100	158	.021	.975	158	.045	.229	-.328
General	.087	158	.085	.990	158	.348	.269	-.070

When the data in Table 2 and the mode, median, mean, and graphs (Q-Q Plot, Box Plot, etc.) of the distribution were evaluated as a whole, it was assumed that the data were normally distributed and for this reason, parametric techniques (one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and independent sample t-test) were used in data analysis. The level of significance in data analysis was .05.

Findings

The first question of the research was “1. *What are the reasons for choosing to teach (internal, external, being influenced by others)?*” In order to analyze the scale, the mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (sd) values of the scale sub-dimensions and all are given in Table 3.

Table 3. (\bar{x}) and (sd) Values of RCTCS

RCTCS	n	\bar{x}	ss	Level
Internal reasons	158	4.25	.48	Very high
External reasons	158	3.32	.78	Medium
Influenced by others	158	2.63	1.06	Medium
General	158	3.62	.50	High

As shown in Table 3, pedagogical formation education certificate program students' mean and standard deviation values of the RCTCS sub-dimension are ((\bar{x} =4.25, sd=.48: Very High) in the Internal Reasons sub-dimension, (\bar{x} =3.32, sd=.78: Moderate) in the External Reasons sub-dimension, Influence by Others sub-dimension (\bar{x} =2.63, sd=.50: Moderate) and overall scale (\bar{x} =3.62, sd=.50: High). These data reveal that the level of pedagogical formation education certificate program students who choose to teach for internal reasons is higher than the level of external and being influenced by others.

The second research question was “2. *Do the reasons for choosing to teach differ according to gender, place of residence, high school, monthly income of the family, education level of the parents, and the order of preference?*” The results of the independent sample t-test and ANOVA performed in the solution of the problem are given in Tables 4, 5, and 6.

Table 4. Independent Sample T-Test Results Based on Gender and Order of Preference

	RCTCS	Variable	n	\bar{X}	ss.	sd.	t	p
Gender	Internal reasons	Female	118	4.30	.43	156	2.262	.025*
		Male	40	4.10	.56			
	External reasons	Female	118	3.36	.78	156	.872	.385
		Male	40	3.23	.77			
	Influenced by others	Female	118	2.62	1.08	156	-.089	.929
		Male	40	2.64	1.01			
General	Female	118	3.65	.50	156	1.454	.148	
	Male	40	3.52	.48				
Order of choice	Internal reasons	First	98	4.28	.48	156	1.043	.298
		Second+	60	4.20	.47			
	External reasons	First	98	3.34	.83	156	.311	.756
		Second+	60	3.30	.69			
	Influenced by others	First	98	2.76	1.02	156	2.038	.043*
		Second+	60	2.40	1.09			
General	First	98	3.66	.51	156	1.355	.177	
	Second+	60	3.55	.47				

* $p < 0,05$ level of significance.

In Table 4, it was seen that there was a statistical difference between the reasons why pedagogical formation education certificate program students preferred teaching and their gender and order of preference for their departments. This difference was in the sub-dimension of internal reasons in the gender variable, and it was observed that there was a difference in favor of female students between male students ($\bar{X} = 4.10$, $sd = .56$) and female students ($\bar{X} = 4.30$, $sd = .43$). In the order of preference variable, this difference was found in the sub-dimension of being affected by others and between the students whose departments were in the first preference order ($\bar{X} = 2.76$, $sd = 1.02$) and the students who were in the second or higher order of preference ($\bar{X} = 2.40$, $sd = 1.09$) in favor of the students whose departments were in the first preference order.

Table 5. ANOVA Results Based on Place of Residence, High School, and Monthly Income

RCTCS	variable	n	\bar{X}	ss.	sd.		Sq. mean	F	p	Difference
Internal reasons	City centre (1)	88	4.18	.49	G. İçi	155	.22	2.395	.095	---
	District centre (2)	36	4.32	.47						
	Town-Village (3)	34	4.36	.41	G. Ar.	2	.53			
External reasons	City centre (1)	88	3.15	.75	G. İçi	155	.57	5.069	.007*	2>1. 3>1
	District centre (2)	36	3.56	.84						
	Town-Village (3)	34	3.52	.68	G. Ar.	2	2.89			
Influenced by others	City centre (1)	88	2.52	1.06	G. İçi	155	1.12	1.006	.368	---
	District centre (2)	36	2.74	.99						
	Town-Village (3)	34	2.78	1.13	G. Ar.	2	1.13			
General	City centre (1)	88	3.50	.48	G. İçi	155	.23	5.749	.004*	2>1. 3>1
	District centre (2)	36	3.76	.46						
	Town-Village (3)	34	3.77	.50	G. Ar.	2	1.33			
Internal reasons	General high school (1)	39	4.36	.49	G. İçi	155	.22	2.304	.103	---
	Anatolian high school (2)	85	4.17	.48						
	Other high schools (3)	34	4.29	.39	G. Ar.	2	.51			
External reasons	General high school (1)	39	3.30	.82	G. İçi	155	.60	.085	.918	---
	Anatolian high school (2)	85	3.34	.74						
	Other high schools (3)	34	3.28	.80	G. Ar.	2	.05			

Influenced by others	General high school (1)	39	2.68	1.02	G. İçi	155	1.13	.425	.654	---
	Anatolian high school (2)	85	2.66	1.02						
	Other high schools (3)	34	2.48	1.18	G. Ar.	2	.48			
General	General high school (1)	39	3.67	.51	G. İçi	155	.24	.278	.757	---
	Anatolian high school (2)	85	3.60	.48						
	Other high schools (3)	34	3.60	.50	G. Ar.	2	.06			
Internal reasons	0-5.000TRY (1)	53	4.09	.48	G. İçi	155	.22	2.754	.047*	2>1, 2>3
	5.001-10.000 TRY (2)	64	4.35	.48						
	10.001+ TRY (3)	41	4.05	.41	G. Ar.	2	.61			
External reasons	0-5.000 TRY (1)	53	3.15	.72	G İçi	155	.58	3.254	.041*	2>1, 2>3
	5.001-10.000 TRY (2)	64	3.50	.75						
	10.001+ TRY (3)	41	3.20	.82	G. Ar.	2	1.90			
Influenced by others	0-5.000 TRY (1)	53	2.73	1.12	G. İçi	155	1.13	.492	.612	---
	5.001-10.000 TRY (2)	64	2.60	1.02						
	10.001+ TRY (3)	41	2.52	1.04	G. Ar.	2	.55			
General	0-5.000 TRY (1)	53	3.44	.48	G. İçi	155	.24	2.926	.037*	2>1, 2>3
	5.001-10.000 TRY (2)	64	3.73	.48						
	10.001+ TRY (3)	41	3.43	.50	G. Ar.	2	.70			

* $p < 0,05$ level of significance.

Table 5 shows that there are statistically significant differences between the reasons why pedagogical formation education certificate program students prefer teaching and their place of residence and income. Tukey test was applied to determine the orientation of the differences within the group. As a result of the Tukey test; the first of these differences was in the dimension of external causes in the settlement variable,

and students living in the city centre ($\bar{X}=3.15$, $sd=.75$) and the students living in the district centre ($\bar{X}=3.56$, $sd=.84$) and town-village ($\bar{X}=3.52$, $sd=.68$) in favor of students living in the district centre and town-village. Another difference in the settlement variable belonged to the whole of the RCTCS, and similar to the external causes sub-dimension, students living in the city centre ($\bar{X}=3.50$, $sd=.48$) compared to the district centre ($\bar{X}=3.76$, $sd=.46$) and town-village ($\bar{X}=3.77$, $sd=.50$) were in favor of students living in the district centre and town-village.

In the sub-dimension of internal causes in the income variable, students with an average income of 5.001-10.000 TRY ($\bar{X}=4.35$, $sd=.48$) and 0-5.000 TRY ($\bar{X}=4.09$, $sd=.48$) and 10.001+ TRY ($\bar{X}=4.05$, $sd=.41$), it was in favor of students with an income of 5.001-10.000 TRY among students with income. In the sub-dimension of external causes in the income variable, students with an average income of 5.001-10.000 TRY ($\bar{X}=3.50$, $sd=.75$) and 0-5.000 TRY ($\bar{X}=3.15$, $sd=.72$) and 10.001+ TRY ($\bar{X}=3.20$, $sd=.82$), it was in favor of students with an income of 5.001-10.000 TRY among students with income. Similar to the sub-dimensions of internal and external causes, the difference reached in the income variable in the whole of RCTCS was 5.001-10.000 TRY ($\bar{X}=3.73$, $sd=.48$), and students with an average income of 0-5.000 TRY ($\bar{X}=3.44$, $sd=.48$) and 10.001+ TRY ($\bar{X}=3.43$, $sd=.50$) in favor of students with an income of 5.001-10.000 TRY. There was no significant difference between the reasons why pedagogical formation education certificate program students preferred teaching and the high schools they graduated from. [($F_{\text{Internal reasons}(2-155)}=2.304$, $p>.05$); ($F_{\text{External reasons}(2-155)}=.085$, $p>.05$); ($F_{\text{Influenced by others}(2-155)}=.425$, $p>.05$); ($F_{\text{General}(2-155)}=.278$, $p>.05$)].

Table 6. Results of ANOVA-Tukey Test Based on Parent Education Level

RCTCS	variable	n	\bar{X}	ss.	sd.	Sq.	F	p	
Internal reasons	Illiterate (1)	39	4.36	.46	Within groups	154	2.757	.044*	1>3. 4>3
	Primary school (2)	50	4.20	.45					
	Secondary school (3)	37	4.09	.52	Between groups	3			
	High school+ (4)	32	4.35	.42					
External reasons	Illiterate (1)	39	3.26	.79	Within groups	154	.812	.489	---
	Primary school (2)	50	3.22	.87					
	Secondary school (3)	37	3.39	.66	Between groups	3			
	High school+ (4)	32	3.47	.71					
Influenced by others	Illiterate (1)	39	2.50	.90	Within groups	154	.512	.675	---
	Primary school (2)	50	2.76	1.29					
	Secondary school (3)	37	2.54	.83	Between groups	3			
	High school+ (4)	32	2.66	1.08					
General	Illiterate (1)	39	3.62	.48	Within groups	154	.774	.510	---
	Primary school (2)	50	3.58	.57					
	Secondary school (3)	37	3.56	.44	Between groups	3			
	High school+ (4)	32	3.73	.43					
Internal reasons	Illiterate (1)	33	4.24	.56	Within groups	154	.188	.904	---
	Primary school (2)	43	4.22	.41					
	Secondary school (3)	36	4.29	.42	Between groups	3			
	High school+ (4)	46	4.23	.50					

External reasons	Illiterate (1)	33	3.11	.69	Within groups	154	.58	2.892	.037*	4>1
	Primary school (2)	43	3.28	.76						
	Secondary school (3)	36	3.23	.83	Between groups	3	1.67			
	High school+ (4)	46	3.58	.73						
Influenced by others	Illiterate (1)	33	2.45	.82	Within groups	154	1.11	1.622	.186	---
	Primary school (2)	43	2.87	1.19						
	Secondary school (3)	36	2.41	1.01	Between groups	3	1.80			
	High school+ (4)	46	2.68	1.08						
General	Illiterate (1)	33	3.50	.48	Within groups	154	.24	1.413	.241	---
	Primary school (2)	43	3.63	.49						
	Secondary school (3)	36	3.56	.48	Between groups	3	.34			
	High school+ (4)	46	3.72	.51						

Table 6 shows that there are statistical differences between the reasons why pedagogical formation education certificate program students prefer teaching and their parents' education levels. Tukey test was applied to determine the orientation of the differences within the group. As a result of the Tukey test; the first of these differences was in the sub-dimension of internal causes in the mother education level variable. Among the students whose mothers were illiterate ($\bar{X}=4.36$, $sd=.46$) and those with a high school or higher graduation ($\bar{X}=4.35$, $sd=.42$), and those whose mothers were secondary school graduates ($\bar{X}=4.09$, $sd=.52$), there were students whose mothers were illiterate and it was observed that there was a difference in favor of students who graduated from high school and above.

There was a difference in the sub-dimension of extrinsic causes in the father's education level variable. It was determined that there was a difference between the students whose mothers graduated from high school or above ($\bar{X}=3.58$, $sd=.73$) and illiterate students ($\bar{X}=3.11$, $sd=.69$) in favor of students whose mothers graduated from high school or above.

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

The first research question of this study, when the mean and standard deviation values of RCTCS are examined in the analyzes made to answer the question “*1. What are the reasons for preferring teaching (internal, external, being influenced by others)?*”; The Internal Causes sub-dimension is too high; The sub-dimension of External Causes and Influence by Others was moderate; It was concluded that all of the RCTCS were high level. This result revealed that the level of pedagogical formation education certificate program students choosing to teach for internal reasons was higher than the level of choice for external reasons and being influenced by others. Based on this finding, it can be stated that the pedagogical formation education certificate program students turn to teach with their own will and intrinsic motivation.

The second research question of the study was: “*2. Do the reasons for choosing to teach differ according to gender, place of residence, high school, monthly income of the family, education level of parents, and order of preference?*” It was concluded that there was a significant difference between the reasons why pedagogical formation education certificate program students preferred teaching and **their gender**, and this difference was in favor of female students in the sub-dimension of internal reasons. This result may reveal that female students tend to become teachers for internal reasons more than male students. It was found that there was a significant difference between the reasons why pedagogical formation education certificate program students prefer teaching and **the order of preference** in the transition to higher education exams. In the preference order variable, a difference was found in favor of pedagogical formation education certificate program students with the first preference order in the sub-dimension of being affected by others. This result reveals that the level of pedagogical formation education certificate program students who prefer teaching in the first place, being influenced by others, is higher than the students with other preference order. Based on this result, it can be stated that the pedagogical formation education certificate program students who prefer teaching in higher education in the first place, being influenced by others, have a higher level of preference for teaching than the students with other preference order.

It was concluded that there was a significant difference between the reasons why pedagogical formation education certificate program students preferred teaching and the **variable of residence**, and this difference was in favor of the students living in the district centre and town-village between the students living in the city centre and the students living in the town centre and town-village in the whole of RCTCS with the sub-dimension of external reasons. Based on this result, it can be stated that pedagogical formation education certificate program students living in districts, villages, and towns prefer teaching for internal reasons and in general, are higher than students living in city centres. The findings revealed that there was a significant difference between the reasons why pedagogical formation education certificate program students preferred

teaching and **their income**. In the income variable, it was concluded that there was a difference in favor of the students with an income of 5.001-10.000 TRY between the students with an average income of 5.001-10.000TRY and those with an income of 0-5.000 TRY and 10.001+ TRY in all of the internal causes, external reasons and RCTCS. This result can reveal that pedagogical formation education certificate program students who have an income of 5.001-10.000 TRY, which can be expressed as middle-income level with current figures, are higher than students with low income (0-5.000 TRY) and high income (10.001+ TRY).

There was a significant difference between the reasons why pedagogical formation education certificate program students preferred teaching and **their mother's education levels**. It was found that there was a difference in favor of the students. In other words, it was concluded that the pedagogical formation students whose mothers are illiterate and the pedagogical formation students who graduated from high school or higher were more likely to choose teaching due to internal reasons than the students whose mothers were secondary school graduates. There was also a significant difference between the reasons why pedagogical formation education certificate program students preferred teaching and **their father's education levels**. In the sub-dimension of external causes, it was concluded that there was a difference between the students whose mothers graduated from high school and above and those who were illiterate, in favor of the students whose mothers graduated from high school or above. This result shows that the pedagogical formation education certificate program students whose fathers were high school graduates or above were more likely to choose to teach for external reasons than those whose fathers were illiterate. In addition to these results, it can be stated that there is no significant difference between the reasons why pedagogical formation education certificate program students prefer teaching and **the high schools they graduated from**.

When the results obtained in this study were evaluated in general, it was seen that the level of pedagogical formation education certificate program students choosing to teach for internal reasons was higher than the level of choice for external reasons and being influenced by others. In other words, it can be stated that the pedagogical formation education certificate program students turn to teach with their own will and intrinsic motivation. In addition, it was found that female pedagogical formation education certificate program students chose to be a teacher for internal reasons higher than males; pedagogical formation students, who were the first choice of teaching, had a higher level of choosing teaching due to external reasons than the students who have second+ preference; pedagogical formation education certificate program students living in districts, villages and towns preferred teaching for internal reasons and generally were higher than students living in provincial centres; It was found that the pedagogical formation education certificate program students with an income of 5.001-10.000 TRY preferred to be a teacher, higher than the students with an income of 0-5.000 TRY and 10.001+TRY; pedagogical formation education certificate

program students whose mothers were illiterate and graduated from high school or above had higher levels of choosing teaching due to internal reasons than students whose mothers were secondary school graduates; pedagogical formation education certificate program students whose fathers graduated from high school or above were higher than students whose fathers were illiterate. It was concluded that there was no significant difference between the reasons why pedagogical formation education certificate program students prefer teaching and the high schools they graduated from.

In the examinations and evaluations made in the domestic and foreign literature, it has been understood that there are results consistent with those obtained in this study. The study conducted by Özbek, Kahyaoğlu, and Özgen in 2007, the study conducted by Zounhia, Chatoupisi, Amoutzas, and Hatziharistos in 2006, and the study conducted by Buldur, Keskin, and Börekçi in 2021, it was determined that the participants turned to the teaching profession for internal reasons. In the study conducted by Yiğit in 2018, it was determined that the professional preferences of teacher candidates were realized for internal reasons, influenced by others, and external reasons, respectively. In the study by Bursal and Buldur in 2016, the study by Bruinsma and Jansen in 2010, the study by Özsoy, Özsoy, Özkara and Memiş in 2010, the study by Özbek, Kahyaoğlu and Özgen in 2007 and Hellsten and Pyrtula in 2011, it was seen that the reasons for choosing the teaching profession of female and male teacher candidates differed in favor of women. In the study carried out by Türkdöğän in 2014, significant differences were found between the reasons for the professional preferences of the teacher candidates and the gender and education levels of the parents.

There are also studies in the literature that have different results from the results obtained in this study. In the study conducted by Saban in 2003 and the study conducted by Özsoy, Özsoy, Özkara, and Memiş in 2010, it was observed that the participants preferred the teaching profession for external reasons and being influenced by others. In the study conducted by Bursal and Buldur in 2016, it was determined that the reasons for the professional preferences of the teacher candidates were respectively (in order of importance) being influenced by others, internal and external reasons. In the study conducted by Çetin in 2012 it was understood that the participants preferred the teaching profession for external reasons. In the study conducted by the same writers in 2010, no significant difference was found between the reasons for choosing the teaching profession of the participants and their gender, income, and place of residence. In the study conducted by MacKenzie in 2013 and the study conducted by Övet in 2006, it was found that the career preferences of teacher candidates did not change according to gender; In the study conducted by Aydın in 2011, it was seen that the professional preferences of teacher candidates did not differ according to gender, income, and place of residence.

Based on the studies conducted in Turkey and other countries in the literature, it has been seen that the results obtained in this study can be supported by similar studies of national and international nature. However, it can be seen that different

results are obtained from the results obtained in some studies carried out especially in the foreign literature. One of the reasons for achieving different results from the literature in the study can be cited as not collecting data directly from students or teachers receiving teacher education and obtaining data from teacher candidates who get teacher education through pedagogical formation courses (certificate programs) in addition to undergraduate education. Suggestions developed in line with the results of the study can be listed as follows:

- Considering that the professional success achieved due to internal reasons is higher than the professional success achieved due to external reasons and being influenced by others (Watt & Richardson, 2008, p.424), it can be suggested to switch to teacher selection models in which students who turn to teach due to internal reasons can be chosen in teacher selection.
- Since it is determined in the study that female pedagogical formation education certificate program students' level of choosing to teach for internal reasons is higher than that of males, it can be suggested that males' internal orientation towards teaching should also be supported.
- It can be stated that it is thought-provoking that the pedagogical formation education certificate program students, who are the first choice of teaching in the study, have higher levels of choosing teaching due to external reasons than the students who have the second + preference. For this reason, it can be suggested to carry out studies that will enable the students, who are the first choice of teaching, to make these choices due to external reasons, and to make their choices due to internal reasons.
- In the study, it was seen that the pedagogical formation education certificate program students with a medium income level of preference for teaching were higher than those of the students with low and high-income level students. For this reason, it can be suggested to investigate the reasons why the lower and upper-income groups have lower levels of choosing teaching as a teacher.
- In the study, it was seen that the level of pedagogical formation education certificate program students who live in districts, villages, and towns was higher than the students living in city centres. For this reason, it can be suggested to carry out activities such as seminars and career days to inform the students who will take the University entrance exams in the city centres about the teaching profession.
- Since the education levels of the parents can affect the level of choosing to be a teacher it can be suggested that students with disadvantaged parents in terms of their parents' education level should be able to access a deeper guidance service in their career choice.

- It may be recommended to conduct studies examining other demographic variables and differentiation levels that are not covered in this study and to conduct studies examining the relationship or predictiveness between the reasons for choosing teaching and other variables.
- This study was conducted with pedagogical formation education certificate program students. It can be suggested to carry out similar studies with students studying at different levels.
- In this study, the survey model, one of the quantitative patterns, was used. To reveal more detailed results, it may be recommended to conduct qualitative or mixed-design studies.

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A Creative Nonfiction Narrative Inquiry into an EFL online learning community during the COVID-19 Pandemic¹

Una investigación narrativa creativa
de no ficción en una comunidad de
aprendizaje en línea de EFL durante la
pandemia de COVID-19

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Abstract

University libraries globally launch coronavirus memory archival projects inviting the documentation of personal experience. Elicitations such as journal entries and oral history interviews fall under the category of life-writing. This Narrative Inquiry focuses on creative nonfiction stories produced by an online high school community and edited by the EFL teacher during the first full lockdown in Greece. The shift to distance education caused students to use ELF as a means of contrasting their local archival endeavors with global ones. The EFL teacher as researcher used mentor texts, collected the coronavirus stories on e-me online platform, engaged the online members in a peer-reviewing process and reauthored a collective narrative. Narrative writing analysis was employed to reflect the teacher's initiative to commemorate a student community's physical disconnectedness from onsite learning. The use of e-me for this collaborative venture offers practical implications for EFL practitioners such as going beyond the bounds of the traditional curriculum whilst identifying self-regulation as indication of resilience among students experiencing unprecedented circumstances.

Keywords: Creative Nonfiction, Narrative Inquiry, Memory Archive, Coronavirus, EFL, E-me

Resumen

Las bibliotecas universitarias lanzan a nivel mundial proyectos de archivo de memoria de coronavirus que invitan a la documentación de la experiencia personal. Las elicitaciones como las entradas de diarios y las entrevistas de historia oral caen dentro de la categoría de escritura de vida. Esta investigación narrativa se centra en historias creativas de no ficción producidas por una comunidad de secundaria en línea y editadas por el profesor de EFL durante el primer cierre total en Grecia. El cambio a la educación a distancia hizo que los estudiantes usaran ELF como un medio para contrastar sus esfuerzos de archivo locales con los globales. El profesor de EFL como investigador utilizó textos de mentores, recopiló las historias de coronavirus en la plataforma en línea e-me, involucró a los miembros en línea en un proceso de revisión por pares y reescribió una narrativa colectiva. Se empleó el análisis de escritura narrativa para reflejar la iniciativa del profesor de conmemorar la desconexión física de una comunidad estudiantil del aprendizaje en el sitio. El uso de e-me para esta empresa colaborativa ofrece implicaciones prácticas para los profesionales de EFL, como ir más allá de los límites del plan de estudios tradicional e identificar la autorregulación como una indicación de resiliencia entre los estudiantes que experimentan circunstancias sin precedentes.

Palabras clave: No ficción creativa, Investigación narrativa, Archivo de memoria, Coronavirus, EFL, E-yo

Resumo:

As bibliotecas universitárias lançam ao nível mundial projetos de arquivo de memória de coronavírus que convidam à documentação da experiência pessoal. As eliciações como as entradas de jornais e as entrevistas de história oral caem dentro da categoria de escritura de vida. Esta pesquisa narrativa centra-se em histórias criativas de não ficção produzidas por uma comunidade de secundária em linha e editadas pelo mestre de EFL durante o primeiro encerre total na Grécia. A mudança à educação a distância fez que os estudantes usassem ELF como um meio para contrastar seus esforços de arquivo locais com os globais. O professor de EFL como pesquisador utilizou textos de mentores, recopilou as histórias de coronavírus na plataforma em linha e-me, envolveu os membros em linha em um processo de revisão por pares e reescreveu uma narrativa coletiva. Empregou-se a análise de escritura narrativa para refletir a iniciativa do mestre de comemorar a desconexão física de uma comunidade estudantil da aprendizagem no lugar. O uso de e-me para esta empresa colaborativa e implicações práticas para os profissionais de EFL, como ir mais além dos limites do plano de estudos tradicional e identificar a auto regulação como uma indicação de resiliência entre os estudantes que experimentam circunstancias sem precedentes.

Palavras chave: Não ficção criativa, Pesquisa narrativa, Arquivo de memória, Coronavírus, EFL, E-eu

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Introduction

University libraries in England and the USA have launched COVID-19 archival projects for public submissions of personal experiences. Most of them tend to address either the student or the wider local communities. A different in scope COVID-19 archival project targeting a global audience is that of the Oxford Center for Life-Writing (OCLW) which runs a project with writing prompts related to people's experiences of the coronavirus outbreak. Oxford University's OCLW as well as the Penn State University with its Viral Imaginations: COVID-19 project favor creative nonfiction (CNF) submissions, thus giving emphasis to the creativity factor in the documentation of living history in the making.

During the Covid-19 pandemic crisis, students of a Greek Lyceum tried to improve their intercultural skills by making their local stories globally known. Buchanan (2020, p. 4) explains that during the lockdown period students were "in need of community" and that they relied on writing "to communicate, create community, and remain connected" as well as "find their voices and share their experiences." Under the guidance of their English teacher, Greek students had analogous recourse to writing through the hive blog on the e-me platform where they shared their coronavirus experiences in response to writing prompts aimed at facilitating "reflections on identity" as "inevitably fluctuating in response to changing contexts" (Bennett, 2015, p. 577).

Taking into consideration that individuals in times of crisis tend to coalesce around issues of common concern, documenting and archiving ongoing experience in English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) can play a leading role in the intercultural training of a specific online student community. The students' recourse to creative nonfiction (CNF) writing constitutes both a guided practice and a creative impulse that is further reinforced by the prospect of exchanging feedback through the e-blogging service of the e-me platform.

For the benefit of a bigger "emplotted narrative" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 7), the research question that guided the present study is as follows:

How can creative nonfiction be used as both a narrative research method and an object of narrative research in an EFL online context?

Literature Review

Background to Creative Nonfiction

Lott (2000) views the investment in “the self as the creative element of creative nonfiction” (p. 195). In other words, the self in CNF reshapes the factual reality from a participatory point of view thus becoming the bridge of communication between the writer and the reader. Gerard (2010, p. 22) explains that “every story is about the reader, so it must matter to the reader” which entails that the story must heighten the levels of emotional appeal and provide a confluence of mediating stimuli. To achieve this, it all depends on the writers’ perception and support of the emotion-specific content of their story.

Regarding issues of authorship and readership, CNF acquires a different dimension within a pedagogical context. As regards authorship, Silverberg (2019) explains how he integrated CNF into his creative writing courses imbuing ESL students with a sense of purpose through the practice of “automatic writing” (p. 256). Students engaged in writing personal experience essays that were pooled for feedback exchange in the “peer workshop” (Silverberg, 2019, p. 255). As regards readership, Gutkind (2012) points out that “the driving force behind creative nonfiction has everything to do with attracting and keeping the reader interested” (p. 74). According to him, if writers choose to tackle a “public subject with a personal and intimate spin,” they stand a good chance of “establishing a universal chord” with a wider reading audience (Gutkind, 2012, p. 74).

The Tele-educational Framework for ELT in Greece

The learners’ home space has been inadvertently transformed into a public one while attending the Webex online classes as replacement for face-to-face instruction. More specifically, the Greek Ministry of Education has put at the disposal of the educational community two platforms: the Webex synchronous platform which connects students to their teachers in real time and the Open eClass which is its asynchronous counterpart functioning as an open-source Learning Management System (LMS) that supports resources and assignment management. An alternative suggestion is that of the e-me platform which is an advanced example of a Personal Learning Environment (PLE) “driven by the learner needs and based on sharing rather than controlling” (Megalou et al., 2015, p. 2). The availability of such a virtual space is important, especially during the Covid-19 crisis, because it can “support both formal and informal learning experiences” (Megalou et al., 2015, p. 3).

When envisioning distance education on a macro-level, it might be useful to contemplate integrating its communicative aspects into an associated framework of informed action. Megalou et al. (2015) point towards the “social networking services”

as well as the “file sharing, blogs, wikis, messaging, and conferencing” tools provided by e-me “to ensure collaboration and communication” (p. 3). Nikiforos et al. (2020) argue that “virtual learning during the pandemic can significantly reshape and innovate teaching, as well as allow the continuation of fostering a sense of community” (p. 2). By encouraging localized attempts at writing about the coronavirus pandemic through any online education platform provided, students are not only encouraged in hosting their memories but also facilitated in using the co-occurring archives as open channels of communication with the outside world.

Models for Narrative Inquiry within an EFL Context

On the uniqueness of the CNF genre, Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) provides author guidelines on how incorporating reflection in one’s personal account of events can prevent the end result from being an intentless “collection of scenes open to reader interpretation.” For the teaching of the writing skill within an EFL context, certain narrative models for communicating personal experience co-serve the purposes of Narrative Inquiry. For example, Doman (2015) explores Language Learning Histories (LLHs) as student-generated accounts of their individual history of language learning, while Barkhuizen and Wette (2008) propose the collection of students’ reflections on their learning experience via “narrative frames” because they “provide guidance and support in terms of both the structure and content of what is to be written” via “starters, connectives and sentence modifiers” (pp. 375-376). Although both models are employable for data collection in the field of Narrative Inquiry, none of them use writing prompts on life events to trigger memory and reflection. CNF story writing could co-serve as an alternative collection model, but it has not attracted much research attention because it is considered less associated with the personal reflection essay in the context of ELT and more relevant to autoethnography in the context of anthropological methodology (Kim, 2016).

Narrative Smoothing in Qualitative Research

Kim (2016) espouses the idea that “narrative inquiry is a way of understanding human experience through stories that, in turn, help us understand better the human phenomena and human existence” (p. 190). He then goes on to assert Polkinghorne’s (1988) “equation of narrative inquiry with the study of narrative meaning” (in Kim, 2016, p. 190). According to Polkinghorne, the extraction of meaning from narrative data analysis is essential to drawing conclusions on their value. The proposed means of drawing meaningful conclusions is “narrative smoothing” which according to Spence (1986) “masks subjective interpretation as explanation” and “presents a good story that is not necessarily a faithful account” with a view to providing not only short-

term gratification but also long-term thoughtfulness (as cited in Kim, 2016, p. 192). The method of narrative smoothing is used in the context of Polkinghorne's "narrative mode of analysis" which "helps the reader understand how and why things happened the way they did and why and how participants acted the way they did" (as cited in Kim, 2016, p. 197).

From an educational standpoint, Creswell (2015) points out that narrative research is mainly aligned with "teacher reflection" (p. 505), hence the derived need for rearranging the collected types of narrative research forms (i.e., student personal narratives) in a meaningful and impactful way. Naturally, the question that arises here is "who provides the story" since teachers' and students' voices are often intertwined depending on what is at stake (Creswell, 2015, p. 506). If the teacher is both narrative researcher and co-participant in a story involving school life, then it becomes obvious that the resulting narrative will be a dynamic synthesis highly convergent in terms of theme and scope.

Similar Studies

While Downey and Clandinin (2010) explore the intersections between narrative and reflective inquiry to assess the dynamics of "unexpectedness" in retrospect, other narrative studies identify the coronavirus pandemic as the key variable in the way narrative inquiry handles the ongoing memory of events. While- and post-COVID-19 narrative studies tend to evaluate the pandemic's effects with a view to predicting its future impactability on collective memory either centering on concepts such as "narrative coherence" or on theories such as the "transition theory". More specifically, narrative coherence was used by Vanaken et al. (2021) in the form of an autobiographical writing task on coronavirus to predetermine the activation of positive or negative memories during students' exposure to stressful events. Likewise, the transition theory, as applied by Brown (2021), viewed the COVID pandemic as a dominant event that over time is anticipated to become an adjustable unit in autobiographical recollection. In both indicative cases, narrative inquiry into the memory of the coronavirus pandemic assumes the characteristics of an evaluative report that disregards the documentation of the individual voice as participatory at all levels of the inquiry process.

On the flip side, Kim (2016) cites representative examples of narrative inquiry as "phenomenon and method," "oral history," "life story," "creative nonfiction," and "fiction" (pp. 269-297). While in most of Kim's (2016) narrative inquiry cases the data collection methods involve field observation and tape-recorded interviews of a (semi-) structured nature, the example of "life story" stands out in that several participants have formed a writing group that contributes personal writing samples around a specific topic for intergroup discussion (Kim, 2016, p. 279). Although one might have expected

of the “creative nonfiction” example to constitute a similar case of narrative inquiry based on firsthand written accounts of a specific topic, the suggested documentation of “multiple voices” based on the “Bakhtinian novelness of polyphony” has been subjected to Polkinghorne’s (1995) mode of analysis to improve the readability impact (Kim, 2016, p. 287).

A polyphonic perspective on life narratives, where creative nonfiction as reflection takes the lead, has been conducted by Peters et al. (2020) who offer a compilation of 15 autoethnographical pieces detailing student experiences as active participants of China’s current IHE under the Covid-19 pandemic. More specifically, as autoethnographic accounts written from the point of view of each student-contributor, they are “honest, reflexive, and often emotional discussions of personal human experience” (Peters et al., 2020, p. 985). For this reason, they are considered empowered narrative pieces to be used for qualitative research purposes.

CODA in CNF Narrative Inquiry

The above-mentioned narrative inquiry example of CNF has a strong storytelling element that makes all the difference to the reader who according to Caulley (2008) has had enough of reading “boring qualitative research reports” (p. 424). Apart from the creative writing techniques that can be employed to achieve a less boring effect on the reader, Caulley borrows Burroway’s (2003) words to explain that the main thing is to invest in the truth even if its verbal recasting may end up “revealing new insights” into the lived experience of a specific event (as cited in Caulley, 2008, p. 447). It is this transfigured truth that Kim (2016) baptizes as “coda” highlighting that it “can bring the research a notch up, as the researcher evaluates what the researched stories might mean, after finding ways to transfigure the story’s commonplace to illuminate the larger society and bringing the readers together with the now of the research phenomenon” (p. 229).

Research Design

The present study relied on the characteristics of narrative research insofar as the core concept of story was sustained throughout to act as a point of liaison for the provision of a chronological framework. From the outset, the research problem rested upon the elicitation of the learners’ personal experience stories, which has been occasioned by the Covid-19 outbreak, inaugurating a mosaic collection of field texts written by students. The intent was to engage learners in writing down their memories under the auspices of an approved online platform, namely e-me, for the storage and longitudinal diffusion of a specific meaning-making process. Engagement

was premised upon the stance that there must be mutual consent on the shapeshifted alliance between the teacher and the student when it comes to recovering the sense of learning community in an online environment. My endeavor was to transform the virtual capacity of e-me into a critical and imaginative storage space by using the written responses submitted through e-me assignments as archival material in need of spatiotemporal specificity before recasting it “in a flexible storytelling mode” (Creswell, 2015, p. 508).

Steps in Conducting the Narrative Research

The collection and interpretation of the qualitative data of this study were derived following Creswell’s (2015, pp. 515-518) steps in the conducting of narrative research with the linearity factor adjusting to a multivariate explanatory framework.

“Step 1. Identify a Phenomenon to Explore that Addresses an Educational Problem”

The Covid-19 pandemic outbreak enforced a new set of operational realities to which everyone was required to conform. Further exploration of the vicissitudes of the educational reality, both inside and outside of school, led to the definition of the implications of the educational impact of online teaching and learning with the aid of the platforms provided by the Greek Ministry of Education. The issue of the new coronavirus as a debunker of social norms became the general subject of a reflection essay to count as a term assignment submittable via e-me assignments on e-me platform. Reflection was construed as a combination of recounting a personal experience and forging an unforgettable memory of it, the result of which was a compilation of individualized stories.

“Step 2. Purposefully Select Individuals From Whom you Can Learn About the Phenomenon”

This narrative study made a purposeful selection of 17 participants from the third grade of a Greek Lyceum on a North Aegean island. Students were assigned to contribute a personal experience essay for the school’s memory archive. Submission to the e-me digital platform received teacher and peer feedback through blogging during the second school closure in Greece (from November 9 to February 15, 2021).

“Step 3. Collect the Stories From Those Individuals”

The stories collected through e-me platform as assignments were handled as field texts that contained the students’ memories of what constituted their individual experience of a globally impactful event. Although students were allowed reasonable freedom to respond appropriately to a wide range of relevant prompts, it was agreed

that they keep within the bounds of the creative non-fiction writing genre. As a result, they came up with different forms of creative non-fiction writing such as letters, diary entries and personal essays.

“Step 4. Restory or Retell the Individuals’ Stories”

After the collection of the students’ field texts followed the processing and organization of the stories into a narrative structure. To prevent the possibility of methodically trying to arrange disparate reflections, connected by no discernible motif, retelling the individuals’ stories became the tactic choice to achieve chronological and causal sequence. Consequently, the students’ storied memories of coronavirus were logically sequenced, contextualized and assembled for the purposes of a *metastory* that was selectively reconstructed from extracts of the field texts by the narrative researcher-teacher.

“Step 5. Collaborate With the Participants-Storytellers”

The collaboration with the participating students-storytellers was carried out through the blogging facilities provided by the e-me platform. Students were invited to join the e-me blogs as active members in the role of peer-reviewers. As estimators of each other’s intended content, they came to the realization that their common concerns had to be broached by providing an evaluative commentary. It should be noted that students were advised against indulging in proofreading or reediting each other’s texts because the original stories constituted indispensable resources to the re-teller. Only at a later stage were the 17 stories redrafted by the teacher for the purposes of long-term storage of their final version.

“Step 6. Write a Story About the Participants’ Experiences”

Step 6 was more of a combination of Steps 4 and 5 since the “metastory” or metanarrative which was an essential component in the collaborative design process became an integral part of the final narrative report. The outcome did not only reflect the outgrowth of the participants’ coronavirus experiences but also the synthesis “procedures involved in” the strengthening of the intermediate spatiotemporal links (Creswell, 2015, p. 518). The hallmark of this step was the use of the first pronoun in the narration of the end story as a regulatory practice for preventing the development of a reader-unfriendly narrative.

“Step 7. Validate the Accuracy of the Report”

As regards the validation of the accuracy of the narrative report, provisions had already been made for coping with any discrepancies between real-life accounts and made-up stories by directing students towards CNF for emotional release. Furthermore, the choice of an officially approved online platform to operate as a long-life repository of knowledge, information-provider and social forum warranted the

objectivity of the report. The internal peer-review process reflected the development of student-directed collaborative work through content-sharing in a way that the idea of researcher involvement matured naturally over time.

“Narrative Analysis” of Data

The analysis of the collected data followed Polkinghorne’s (1995, as cited in Barkhuizen et al., 2014, p. 73) “narrative analysis” of “non-narrative data,” that is data that were not yet “in story form” but were carefully crafted by the narrative researcher who undertook the task of reconstructing a piece of “narrative writing” to tell the inbuilt evolutionary story. The end narrative was an example of “how storytelling can be used as a data analysis strategy” while the findings coincided with their “well-crafted, subjective interpretation by the researcher” (Barkhuizen et al., 2014, p. 89).

Findings

Narrative Thinking

I first came up with the idea of urging my students to record their coronavirus experiences when, during the school closure over the course of the first COVID-19 lockdown (from March 11 to May 11, 2020), I stumbled upon New York Times’ Learning Network whose Picture Prompts feature invited students to “strengthen their literacy skills” based on image-driven prompts, while the Student Opinion Questions feature gave students the opportunity to “practice writing for an authentic audience.” The picture prompt “Social Distancing” (Gamlen, 2020) and the question prompt “How Is the Coronavirus Outbreak Affecting Your Life?” (Engle, 2020) were ideal opportunities for an EFL teacher who was on the lookout for homework ideas to implement her asynchronous online teaching carried out by email. In fact, the question prompt was developed into a digital writing practice idea using Google Docs where students were required to enter their personal experience with a view to contributing to the creation of a digital archive.

During the second school closure from November 9, 2020 to February 15, 2021, my school gave teachers the asynchronous option to use either the e-class or the e-me online platform to support their teaching. I opted for e-me because of its additional use as a social networking platform. Even more appealing was presenting my own counter proposal to the capacity planning of an educational platform. This time, my inspiration was traceable to another project to which I became a regular contributor as from May 2020 responding to creative prompts about my own coronavirus experiences. “A Change in Morning Habits” was one of my contributions (Author, 2020). A further Writing Corona-assignment that became a bond between my personal continued process of self-reflection and my professional acknowledgement of the potential

for guided self-reflection came from Malmö University where I was registered as a Creative Writing student during the Autumn term of 2020. An optional assignment to reflect on the effects of the coronavirus led me to my submission which was published at Malmö University's website as part of a related project (Land, 2021).

The idea of a British and a Swedish University storing coronavirus memories using writing prompts led me to the realization that this was the best time for an EFL teacher to activate the hidden curriculum. To this end, after carefully sifting through a wide range of archival projects about coronavirus experiences run by University Libraries in USA and Great Britain, I settled on my own plan of action to give a meaningful purpose to online classes by engaging students in building their own memory archive using ELF.

For the purposes of the coronavirus memory archive construction, the 17 third graders of the Lyceum were asked to complete a term assignment based on a questionnaire which was meant to operate as a prompting guide to unlock their thoughts and feelings. The result was a personal narrative essay which was composed after receiving preliminary training in narrative writing through a selection of mentor texts from the above-mentioned projects. Having had the previous experience with a similar question prompt task, it was not difficult for them to respond, only that this time they had a longer word limit as well as the extra requirement to register on e-me platform. Other than that, they were allowed reasonable writing freedom to leave their mark on the world bearing the prior knowledge of what was expected of them and keeping in mind that they would have to create connection with other people in the world.

The process of organizing different life stories but also synchronizing parallel reflections depicted the philosophy behind this endeavor to weave past, present and future into the taut telling of a globally familiar story that cohered through everyone's contribution. In other words, my "prior knowledge and experience" generated the "narrative schema" that ordered students' writing activity which was supplemented by the activation of further sub-schemas about content development. In this respect, although I cued the students with authentic texts and an open questionnaire that incentivized them to establish their own narrative form, I was pleasantly surprised to find out that they developed their own cognitive strategies. My only aid to them was the presentation of the NYT Learning Network's narrative writing criteria (e.g., telling a story about a small but memorable event or moment in your life; using details to show, not tell; writing in your real voice; dropping the reader into a scene; reflecting on the experience and giving the reader a take-away, etc.) from which they selected almost in complete unison the one that pointed towards "reflecting on the experience and giving the reader a take-away" judging it to be the end point that came close to the global minimum of the target function of the coronavirus memory archive (Schulten, 2019).

I present Stratos' (one of the student-participants) "take-away" for the global reader which encapsulates yielding meaning from human experience and life.

I believe that the Coronavirus came to change the whole world and our society. It made us think about our future. It came to teach us that money has no value when it comes to health. It is here to show us that we need to love one another and to stop the lies and hypocrisy. We need to stop injustice, war, and conflict. We should see our future differently without hating others or chasing wealth. We ought to love nature and protect it, value friendship and family. We need to become better people!

Meaning-Making

From the students' point of view, coronavirus was identified as the memorable event that lent life new meaning constitution. Given that shared perception of reality prompts feelings of solidarity, students developed the need to participate in the compositional process of an enduring legacy because sharing memories gave them a sense of agency, a sense of personal power to make a statement. During the coronavirus lockdowns, students underwent adjustments of considerable proportions which compelled them to develop emotion regulation strategies. Writing down their personal experience of life during the coronavirus lockdowns precipitated catharsis which sprang from the sense of oneness with the impact of the crisis event and the larger historical picture within which the crisis event became inscribed.

Polkinghorne (1988) explains that the extraction of meaning from narrative writing constitutes a way of recognizing the implications of human experience in a specific time and place (as cited in Kim, 2016). This kind of meaning is the inquirer's distilment of different stories around the same theme with a view to giving orientation to the reader's impressions. The question that Polkinghorne (1988) raised was whether the inquiry subjects were left "at the mercy of the storyteller's recollection or introspection" (as cited in Kim, 2016, p. 190). My question is whether my students could have been involuntarily downgraded to a subaltern position by me given that I became their spokesperson to the rest of the reading world through authoritative selection of opportune pieces. The answer, complicated as it might be, is dependent on the extent to which empowerment constitutes a prime motivating force behind the writers' disposition.

The role of the creative self in the perception of an accepted truth, viz. the impact of coronavirus on a person's life, remains to be clarified. On the one hand, Lott talks about the self as a large container of "smaller selves" which enclose the truth of the whole of humanity in his attempt to prioritize the importance of subjective interpretation of factual truth (Lott, 2000, p. 198). On the other hand, Patwell (2021, p. 4) refers to

one's "Use-of-Self" as a defense mechanism in dealing with the turbulence of change brought on by the coronavirus pandemic.

Because the students' reflection essays have an inherent cognitive schema, I treat them as both field and interim research texts in my attempt to critically acclaim Kim's "Example of Narrative Inquiry as Creative Nonfiction" whereby multiple voices are documented in order "to create a virtual reality where stories seem real to the reader" (Kim, 2016, p. 286). Based on Bakhtin's "theory of novelness," Kim explains how a "dialogic truth can be derived from unmerged voices" "creating the open-endedness of a story that connects a participant or a reader to another and one story to another" (Kim, 2016, p. 73).

By allowing my storytellers to speak for themselves and resisting the temptation to link the disparate strands of the narration into a unified whole, I have succeeded in laying the foundations for a constructive dialogue among us.

Narrative Smoothing

Sacrilegious as it might have been regarded as in the first place to succumb to Bakhtin's (1981) "official monologism" (in Kim, 2016, p. 75) as opposed to the dialogic exchange that promotes the co-construction of the narrative, it felt like I would not have been doing justice to the students' narratives were I not to specify the spatiotemporal context within which the self would enter into dialogue with the others. To achieve this, I stepped into the role of the narrative smoother who either selected parts of the participants' stories or deliberated the confluent content to make up for the asymmetries for the sake of a *better* narrative account that made sense and appealed to the global reader.

"Chronotope"

Kim explains that Bakhtin's (1981) "chronotope" refers to the way time is interlinked with space and that "time is always historical and biographical," while "space is always social" (in Kim, 2016, p. 75) In the seventeen narratives of my students, time and space were either directly addressed to in background support of their account or were hinted at through their social sphere activity.

Apostolis' (one of the student-participants) account of how coronavirus entered his life is indicative of how an unexpected event intersected with his routinized use of time and place.

...three times a week I would train with the basketball team, playing basketball games every Saturday. We would also gather with my friends in the cafeteria every Saturday night. I learned about the pandemic in early December 2019, from the news on the internet. More specifically, I read that a deadly virus broke out in Yuhan, a city in central China.

If the first news of the coronavirus in early December 2019 provoked uneasiness and uncertainty about the imminent transfer of one “chronotope” to the other, it was not until early March 2020 that students became aware of the pandemic’s direct effects on their own lives as well.

Stratos resumed the development of the story by focusing on the first COVID-19 case that invaded his public sphere.

...it never occurred to me that it would affect Europe and especially Greece. Then, one day, a young woman in my town became sick from the coronavirus. She had just returned from a trip to the Holy Land with a group of people who brought this virus to our country. From that moment on everything changed! Our schools closed and within a few hours the whole country locked down as this virus transmitted uncontrollably.

After the historical and biographical reality followed the social realities of the coronavirus pandemic which included new social norms nesting within our familiar space with social distancing becoming the prevalent rule.

Myrto (one of the student-participants) pointed out how protected she felt thanks to the government’s measures.

Prior to the school closing, the pandemic was discussed in classes. Most of the teachers tried to give us tips for our safety and to keep us calm. I felt protected after the school’s decision making, because in that way we could follow better the government’s instructions for social distancing.

As from the beginning of November 2020 schools closed again which made Taxiarchis (one of the student-participants) write about the recurrent measures to which we were expected to conform.

And then by the beginning of November we went back to quarantine because of Covid-19 and we started again to wash our hands frequently and for first time we started online courses.

After almost two months of online classes, Christos (one of the student-participants) expressed his pessimism about going back to normal referring to the vaccines which were yet to arrive to our country.

Right now, I am definitely more cautious compared to the time before the virus hit us, I think that is the case for a lot of people. Unfortunately, it will be a while before things get back to normal again, as there are hundreds of new COVID cases every day in my country, and we are still far from a vaccine.

“The significance of the chronotope is that it allows the lived experiences of our research participants to be illuminated from historical, biographical, spatial, and social perspectives while providing a vicarious experience for the reader” (Kim, 2016, p. 2016).

The Self and the Others

Although I argued in favor of Bakhtin’s “polyphony” to show that individual voices should be kept uncut and heard on an equal basis, I explained how Bakhtin’s definition of space and time stands in need of a structured dialogue among the emergent voices. The fact that I have applied the narrative smoothing strategy to the presentation of a multi-authored story seems not to detract from the retainment of personal autonomy. In fact, my aim was to reduce the emotional distance between the different authorial voices by integrating them into a semblance of temporally and causally structured reality.

My decision to include the uncorrected assignments of students construed as field texts (data) for the purposes of the current narrative research was consistent with my intention to preserve each student’s employability of self, as this was depicted in each one’s emergent cognitive schema, intact. However, the positionality of the documented self in a fluid and mutable time and place is depicted as liable to transformation depending on social conditions.

Kostas (one of the student-participants) recounted his lived experience of the new social norms which changed not only his general social behavior but also his view of himself in relation to others. His self-criticism demonstrated his non-resistance to adopting a new stance towards life. His own self became the vehicle for recruiting likewise believers.

Honestly, I am happy that I’ve gotten more time to spend with my family. I’m connecting with them more than I had ever before since it was rare for all of us to spend time together. I’ve also learned some things about myself. There are some things I’m not proud of, but I’m happy I got to know what they were. Now, I can improve myself and my character to be a better person.

The concept of investing in the self as a rationale for showing the antithesis between the structured and the fluid self is analogous to the construction and the re- or co-construction of a usable narrative that renders its individual and collective services to authors and readers.

Good-Faith Interpretation

What has been left unsaid is how students were expected to read each other's submitted assignment and feel part of an online learning community with a dual communication purpose: to monitor each other's narrative of coronavirus experiences and provide peer feedback. The virtual space used for this purpose was e-me blogs where I created a blog addressed to the third grade of the Lyceum. There, I compiled all student submissions and asked students to peer review each other by leaving a comment.

The preparatory stage involved initiating students into positive feedback practices which was analogous to that of aiding them through mentor texts. Only that this time the texts on which they were supposed to model their own feedback was my own tutor's feedback. Kennette and Chapman (2021, p. 2) argue that "given the social isolation related to online learning, exacerbated by a global pandemic, positive feedback provides an excellent opportunity to create connection and community." In line with the above view, I proceeded with caution with my well-motivated reviewers by nurturing the right kind of critical attitude **and** customs for the preservation of an orderly freedom of speech. To this end, I found recourse to the following guidelines about feedback coming from Malmö University's *Creative Writing I - HT20-EN212A-02303 Course*:

Ground rules for feedback (Malmö University, 2020):

Respect. We are not here to show off, but to be helpful. In each moment we exist for the writers around us.

Patience. Writing is a communal and individual journey where everyone will be at different stages.

Open mind. There are no rights or wrongs, just process. The personal expression is important.

Consequently, my feedback based upon the above rules had both an evaluative and an instructive role which made students feel that by engaging themselves in peer feedback they would not only have a chance to communicate their own ideas to their fellow classmates but also operate as co-evaluators of a shared content. As far as the present narrative study goes, I adopted Josselson's (2004) "hermeneutics of restoration (faith)" approach according to which a mutual understanding was developed between the researcher and the participants that they be reciprocally committed to the implementation of the archival project (as cited in Kim, 2016, p. 193).

Discussion

Considering that both the researcher and the participants were assigned the role of the meaning carriers, it becomes self-evident that the field text represents the heterogeneous raw material on which narrative meaning extraction rests depending on the varying respondent perceptions.

In essence, the students' assignments have been used for different interpretation purposes, either from an external point of view in which case that would be the researcher's looking for the overall emphasis or in terms of internal coherence in which case that would be the content development emphasized by each contributor. During the negotiation stage between the researcher and the participants as to the best technique of handling the core narrative, each field text is initially decided upon as archivable in its primary form because of its historical significance. Therefore, the seventeen submitted assignments are deemed of storable validity because they are guided autobiographical pieces of legacy value. By acknowledging and showcasing each contribution on its own merits, the researcher has opted out of superimposed views on the participants' ones.

As regards the researcher, the qualitative features of a narrative inquiry based on the polyphonic nature of the field texts constitute what counts as "Creative Nonfiction Inquiry" because the participants have been acknowledged as equal research partners (Kim, 2016, p. 286). As regards the participants, their texts represent voices expressing their own truth based on real events and as such they are valuable if they are preserved unalterable. What is at issue here is to what extent prompting can function both ways for reciprocal fairness and awareness reasons. The mere act of entrusting one's truth to the other's venture of faith through the creative venue reinforces the cognitive engagement in creating a new model of dialoguing consciousness while it makes justice to the use of CNF by both sides involved.

The findings reflect the researcher's need to smooth non-uniformity in the participants' personal narratives or put differently, to re-narrate the immanent story. Connelly and Clandinin (2006) identify this need of filling the spatiotemporal gaps by contextualizing the narrated within a social framework as the Narrative Inquirer's problem-solving mission to make sense of the personal, practical and social implications of the bigger story for the sake of the "participants, the imagined reading audiences and the researcher" (as cited in Kim, 2016, p. 232). Kim (2016, p. 229) joins forces with the latter by pointing out that it is not just a matter of bringing the immanent story to the surface but also a matter of "transfiguring the commonplace in a broader context" as a way of inviting the reader's response and involvement in the final composition. More specifically, the researcher's responsibility to bring all pieces together so that readers can have access to a space where genuine dialogue is plausible is Kim's definition of "coda."

“Coda” is also what Barone and Eisner (1997, as cited in Kim, 2016, p. 230) refer to as the “researcher’s signature” on the final denouement because according to them the researcher is responsible for activating reader response. Whichever the motives behind extracting and synthesizing a “coda” at the end of the narrative research, the fact remains that contextualization provides empowering qualities to personal stories. In other words, the researcher’s narrative coda offers both individual and collective self-empowerment which should be proof enough that the advancement from field to final research text becomes a moral imperative that raises the standards of the final research report.

The results of this study supported the hypothesis that narrative research can fulfil its primary goal if guides and participants alternate roles along the way. More specifically, students were guided into engaging with prompt-based CNF writing as part of their asynchronous term-work responsibilities. Their registration on e-me marked their acceptance of the oral agreement between them and the teacher that alongside their reflective essay on their coronavirus memories they would also be compiling a memory archive paralleled to its global counterparts. The raising of a global consciousness through mentor texts as a precondition for contributing a local version of a memory archive has aided students in responding to a task-based personal narrative that ripened into an overarching story with beginning and middle leaving the end to be sorted out by the audience. In between the contemplable “take-aways” for the reader and the imparted need for closure on the coronavirus narrative, the still occurring memories passed down from the authorship to the readership have expanded the roles of the researcher and the participants into collaborators accountable not only for making sense of the shared globalizing practice in ELF but also for setting up a model blogging community.

Conclusions

Practical Implications

From a practical point of view, the students’ personal narratives can be used as quarries for information concerning the hands-on experiences of a learning community. The concomitant development of a sense of local history is underscored by the teacher’s narrative account which serves as a temporal repository for future readers to consult. In essence, the derived story is the product of a constructive partnership between teacher and students from design to development. Of course, it should be noted that each party had a personal stake in this joint enterprise. More specifically, the teacher-researcher seized the golden opportunity to activate aspects of the official curriculum that may have lain dormant in government circulars for long periods of time. Sameshima (2007) explains how the curriculum can be re-narrated

by remolding the student and teacher identities as additional input. According to her “the use of writing inquiry enables teachers to ford connections between students and curriculum, students and teacher, and teacher with curriculum” (Sameshima, 2007, p. 9). As for the students-participants, they not only co-authored their learning plight via e-me, but they also offered comparable insight into the dynamics of self-representation across countries.

Methodological Concerns

In the case of Narrative studies, the difficulty of producing reliable data is a potential stumbling block for narrative researchers whose findings are frequently regarded as “the product of their subjectivity” (Barkhuizen et al., 2014, p. 88). Further criticisms might be that while “there is a detailed description of the data collection, there is no description of the analysis that leads to the published findings” (Barkhuizen et al., 2014, p. 86). Bearing in mind alike reliability lapses in the monitoring of the narrative writing’s reasoning, the present study draws on “Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) view of narrative both as a “social phenomenon (storied experience)” and as a “method of data analysis (restorying)” (as cited in Barkhuizen et al., 2014, p. 87) which is practically an outgrowth of Polkinghorne’s (1995) narrative analysis where “the narrative itself becomes an analytical tool that is brought to bear through narrative writing” (as cited in Barkhuizen et al., 2014, p. 84). For the purposes of the present study, storied experience and restorying are interpreted as constituting a dual-capacity analysis framework for the use of the CNF genre by both the participant and the researcher.

Directions for Further Research

The scope of Narrative Inquiry can be widened to include the experiences of the narrative researcher so that the result is a joint memory archive instead of simply a joint collaborative effort. To this end, the contribution of creative writing to the written form of the archival outcome could be further explored by organizing writing workshops for students to delve into the mechanics of specific sub-genres of CNF. From an ethics perspective, the co-narrator becomes as much susceptible to the prospective academic critique as the conductor of the study which automatically leads to the question of administering official capacity to students as authority voices to be accorded referential caliber in a narrative report. These criteria could be pre-specified as consultable guidelines to disallow the possibility of deviation from the expected norm. Given the fact that a memory archive is an official term for recording history the student-generated archive could be treated accordingly by specifying the receiving official body.

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Student Motivation in CORONAPOLIS: Effects of Transactional Distance Perceptions on EFL Undergraduate Students' Motivation¹

Motivación estudiantil en CORONAPOLIS:
Efectos de las percepciones de distancia
transaccional en la motivación de los
estudiantes universitarios de inglés como
lengua extranjera

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Abstract

The concept of Transactional Distance (TD) experienced in distance education has been recorded as a focal point in many studies examining its effects on various dimensions in different courses. However, there is scarcity of research on TD in relation to learner motivation in language learning. This exploratory case study investigated TD perceptions of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) undergraduates participating in distance education courses held at a Turkish university within the boundaries of CORONAPOLIS, an imaginary city which is under the threat and destructive effects of Covid-19 pandemic. Specifically, this study examined the effects of TD perceptions on the motivation of 87 EFL students. The data were collected through the participants' informal self-reports and open-ended questions. The results of the content analysis showed that the participants had varying perceptions of the dimensions of TD; dialogue, structure and autonomy. The results also showed that they had different motivational experiences in relation to their perceptions. In the light of the results, theoretical and practical training of the faculty and integration of distance education courses in under/graduate programs are suggested.

Keywords: motivation, transactional distance, distance education, Covid-19, EFL, tertiary education

Resumen

El concepto de Distancia Transaccional (TD) experimentado en la educación a distancia se ha registrado como un punto focal en muchos estudios que examinan sus efectos en varias dimensiones en diferentes cursos. Sin embargo, hay escasez de investigación sobre TD en relación con la motivación del alumno en el aprendizaje de idiomas. Este estudio de caso exploratorio investigó las percepciones de TD de estudiantes universitarios de EFL (inglés como lengua extranjera) que participan en cursos de educación a distancia realizados en una universidad turca dentro de los límites de CORONAPOLIS, una ciudad imaginaria que se encuentra bajo la amenaza y los efectos destructivos de la pandemia de Covid-19. Específicamente, este estudio examinó los efectos de las percepciones de TD en la motivación de 87 estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera. Los datos se recopilaron a través de autoinformes informales de los participantes y preguntas abiertas. Los resultados del análisis de contenido mostraron que los participantes tenían diferentes percepciones de las dimensiones de TD; diálogo, estructura y autonomía. Los resultados también mostraron que tenían diferentes experiencias motivacionales en relación con sus percepciones. A la luz de los resultados, se sugiere la formación teórico-práctica del cuerpo docente y la integración de cursos de educación a distancia en los programas de grado/grado.

Palabras clave: Motivación, distancia transaccional, educación a distancia, Covid-19, EFL, educación terciaria

Resumo:

O conceito de Distância Transacional (TD) experimentado na educação a distância foi registrado como um ponto focal em muitos estudos que examinam seus efeitos em várias dimensões em diferentes cursos. Porém, existe escassez de pesquisa sobre TD em relação com a motivação do aluno na aprendizagem de idiomas. Este estudo de caso exploratório pesquisou as percepções de TD de estudantes universitários de EFL (inglês como língua estrangeira) que participam em cursos de educação a distância realizados em uma universidade turca dentro dos limites de CORONÁPOLIS, uma cidade imaginária que se encontra sob a ameaça e os efeitos destrutivos da pandemia de Covid-19. Especificamente, este estudo examinou os efeitos das percepções de TD na motivação de 87 estudantes de inglês como língua estrangeira. Os dados se recopilaram através de auto relatórios informais dos participantes e perguntas abertas. Os resultados da análise de conteúdo mostraram que participantes tinham diferentes percepções das dimensões de TD; diálogo, estrutura e autonomia. Os resultados também mostraram que tinham diferentes experiências motivacionais em relação a suas percepções. Considerando os resultados, sugere-se a formação teórico-prática do corpo docente e a integração de cursos de educação a distância nos programas de grau/grau.

Palavras chave: Motivação, distância transacional, educação a distância, Covid-19, EFL, educação terciária

A

Introduction

As an alternative to face-to-face education, distance education has taken its unique place with growing popularity around the world with the invention and widespread use of tools available for this type of education. Though it has received some criticism because of the separation of students and instructors (Moore, 1997, Robertson, Grant, & Jackson, 2005) and because of the physical distance which is to block face-to-face communication (Keegan, 1990), an increasing number of universities have adopted distance education in conducting their under/graduate programs. However, what has been usual so far is the consideration of distance education as an alternative form of education instead of being a compulsory system through which educational processes are followed.

The exceptional case of the pandemic caused by COVID-19 has taken hold of all regularly-working systems almost over the world, the education system is not an exception. Therefore, in order to compensate for the cessation of face-to-face education, most universities in the world have switched to distance education platforms. Turkey has also been one of the countries in which education at all levels has been conducted through distance education during the Corona pandemic. Experiencing a dramatic shift in their daily lives, students in Turkey have also gone through a sudden change from attending familiar face-to-face education to participating in distance education in which they had almost no previous practice. Therefore, students who had the first-time experience in distance education formed various understandings and perceptions affecting their participation and practices in distance education.

When learners participate in distance education, they are inevitably to go through different experiences of Transactional Distance and, therefore form various considerations of their experiences affecting their motivation in the educational process. Literature on Transactional Distance experiences and perceptions of learners shows that almost all the studies have been conducted in periods when distance education is adopted as an alternative form of education instead of being a compulsory way to go on with educational processes. This mandatory case created by the pandemic can be assumed to have affected learner perceptions and motivation in relation to their pandemic-directed educational experiences. In addition, particular consideration of the dialogue, program structure and learner autonomy components of TD revealing additional challenges for learners in their adaptation process to distance education underlines the need to investigate learners' motivational experiences in relation to their TD perceptions. Therefore, examination of learner motivation shaped under mandatory TD experiences is to hold great significance both to understand the challenges decreasing learner motivation and to find practical solutions for similar cases to be experienced in the future.

Setting out from the consideration of these distance education experiences, this intrinsic case study investigated the effects of perceived transactional distance on the motivation of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) undergraduate students studying at a state university in Turkey. This study is believed to contribute to the field as it provides a novel perspective of the examination of learner motivation in relation to perceived transactional distance experienced during mandatory distance education in CORONAPOLIS, which can be assumed to be any hypothetical place not only in Turkey but also in any country in the global sense (For the purposes of this study, CORONAPOLIS refers to any hypothetically-existing educational setting under the serious effects of the pandemic which compelled the adoption of mandatory distance education processes at all educational levels). For this purpose, this study is grounded on the below research questions:

- What are the overall TD perceptions and motivational experiences of EFL students in distance education?
- How did the components of TD affect EFL students' motivation in distance education?

Theoretical Framework

This study was grounded on transactional distance and motivation frameworks. Transactional distance was selected as a related concept in distance education practices. Motivation was the second framework since the participants were expected to maintain adequate levels of motivation to continue their courses through distance education during the depressive survival period in which students had to meet the requirements of the continuing educational programs while putting effort to survive in the outside environment trapped by the pandemic.

Transactional Distance (TD)

Proposed by Moore (1993), transactional distance refers to the distance between teachers and students and is defined as “the universe of teacher-learner relationships that exist[s] when learners and instructors are separated by space and/or by time” (p. 22). From this definition, it can be inferred that TD encompasses both time-related and context-related separation. The specific case of distance education practices followed in CORONAPOLIS in this study can stress the physical separation caused by the cessation of face-to-face education. This was unavoidably followed by the psychological separation probably resulting in feelings of isolation. The separation caused by the transaction can be deeply evaluated in the light of the comment Moore and Kearsley (2005, p. 234) suggested:

The transaction that we call distance education is the interplay between people who are teachers and learners, in environments that have the special characteristic of being separate from one another. It is the physical distance that leads to a communication gap, a psychological space of potential misunderstandings between the instructors and the learners that has to be bridged by special teaching techniques; this is the 'Transactional Distance'.

It can be assumed that the physical and psychological separation experienced by the students and faculty during mandatory distance education in higher education had certain influences on the perceptions, understandings, behaviors and actions of the students.

Within this theory, Moore (1993) also pointed at the impact of three factors on the degree of TD; dialogue between students and teachers, program structure and learner autonomy. Dialogue refers to instructor-student and student-student interactions. Structure covers course flexibility, organization, content and instruction. Dialogue is considered to have a negative correlation while high program structure has a positive correlation with TD. Learner autonomy was regarded as the mitigating factor covering self-control and regulation in the learning process. Evaluating the case experienced by the EFL students, the limitation in faculty-student interaction can be considered as a consequence of the nature of distance education. As regards structure, the effort to compensate for the content to be conducted in face-to-face education may have resulted in a condensed program structure to be covered in distance education, affecting the EFL students' TD perceptions. In addition, the realization that they were expected to shoulder further responsibility during distance education may have increased the students' autonomy.

Expanding on Moore's (1993) theory, Chen (2001) pointed at the multifaceted structure of the theory and proposed TD four dimensions; instructor-learner, learner-learner, learner-content and learner-interface TD. In line with Moore, Chen supported the view that TD is not just a matter of geographical distance; it also covers psychological distance. The evaluation of the distance education EFL students took part in may indicate that the four dimensions proposed by Chen (2001) influenced the TD perceptions of the students as they had the first-time distance education experience.

Motivation

Regarded as one of the essential affective factors in education, motivation is defined as "the primary impetus to initiate learning the L2 and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process" (Dörnyei, 1998, p.117). Expanding the definition, Gardner (1985) proposed that motivation is "the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language" (p.10).

Motivation is suggested to be supported through two main sources; intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Dörnyei (1994) described intrinsic motivation as the internal desire to learn while external motivation covers the outward motives beyond inner control leading to learning. Considering the peculiar case of distance education in CORONAPOLIS, one can state that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation played a critical role as the students found themselves in a novel educational environment in which they were expected to take responsibility as autonomous learners while showing persistence and carrying out the required actions. It was the motivation that kept the students on track during the new experience.

Research on Transactional Distance

The perusal of the relevant literature shows that research on Transactional Distance has mainly focused on such research topics as students' TD experiences and perceptions, the effects of TD experiences on learner autonomy, motivation and success, and scale development.

One of the early studies on perceived TD was conducted by Lowell (2004) who, in a dissertation study, examined the factors affecting TD in an online setting. Working with 147 undergraduate and graduate students at a university in the USA, the researcher concluded that social presence, dialogue and fluency were found to be factors affecting perceived TD. Regarding the TD experiences of novice online learners as the focal point, Stein, Wanstreet and Calvin (2009) conducted a naturalistic inquiry and collected data via online chat sessions and interviews. The results showed that new learners were engaged in creating a voice, a space and a time for learning while dealing with TD. Conducting interviews with two students registered for a distance learning program at a Malaysian university, Ustati and Hassan (2013) evaluated the experiences of the participants from TD perspective. The analysis of the interviews indicated that while the content was appropriate, the interaction was not much satisfactory. Examining the TD perceptions of 667 students enrolled in online courses at three private universities in the USA, Bolliger and Halupa (2018) reported that the participants had high levels of engagement and moderate levels of TD and these variables were moderately correlated. Studying the effects of TD on 168 undergraduate students in the Arts Program at a university in Kenya, Mbwesa (2014) concluded, as a result of the survey questionnaire, that student-student, student-teacher and student-content components predicted the perceived TD of the participants.

The effects of TD experiences were also examined in relation to learner autonomy. Studies centering on learner autonomy basically examined this variable in relation with the dialogue component of TD. Conducting a survey with 237 undergraduate students enrolled in 18 online courses, Burgess (2006) underlined the direct relationship between learner autonomy and instructor-learner dialogue. In a similar vein, Falloon

(2011), following TD as a theoretical basis, conducted an online class with 30 graduate students in New Zealand to examine the efficiency of virtual classrooms in promoting dialogue and learner autonomy. The results of the data obtained through interviews indicated that while dialogue among students developed, learner autonomy decreased.

Learner motivation is another variable studied in TD research. A dissertation study in the USA on the relationship between TD and student motivation was conducted by Jung (2006), who studied with 79 graduate students of Business Administration. The analysis of the scale data indicated that there was not a statistically significant relationship between learner motivation and the perceived psychological distance. Zilka, Rahimi and Cohen (2019) were also interested in the feelings of challenge, self-efficacy, motivation and TD of 484 students from education, social sciences, business and counseling departments enrolled in virtual and blended courses. The results obtained from the questionnaires indicated that the TD perceptions affected the participants' feelings in virtual and blended courses.

Learner success is examined in relation to the effects of TD in the learning process, too. Investigating the relationship between learner-content interaction and success, Zimmermann (2012) collected data from 139 students enrolled in an online course. The results showed that there was a statistically significant relationship between the time spent on content and learner success. Ekwunife-Orakwue and Teng (2014) investigated how interactions of 342 under/graduate students registered for online and blended courses affected their satisfaction and grades. The courses were for business, nursing, math and professional education programs at an American university. The interactions were assessed regarding the participants' interactions with their classmates, instructors, adopted technologies and course content. The results showed that the most influential effect on learning outcomes was the student-content interaction.

Relevant literature also presents some research on scale development in relation to learners' TD perceptions. Wengrowicz, Dori and Dori (2014) developed and validated an online questionnaire to assess the quality of teamwork during distance education and to evaluate TD perceptions of undergraduate students participating in a visualization-based environment. TD was assumed to be an alternative assessment tool to evaluate the quality of collaboration. Huang, Chandra, DePaolo, Cribbs and Simmons (2015) developed a scale to measure TD involving the constructs of dialogue, structure and learner autonomy. Highlighting the existence of TD in distance education, Weidlich and Bastiaens (2018) developed a scale to measure TD between students and learning technology. The analysis of the scale showed that TD was the most important predictor of student satisfaction.

The above-presented studies have been conducted in different educational fields. Relevant literature also involves some research on learners' TD experiences in relation to their perceptions, autonomy development and learning outcomes in the field of language education. Kostina (2011) examined the relationship between learner

autonomy, instructor-student dialogue and student satisfaction in a distance course for the Russian language. The results of the survey obtained from 46 students in the USA pointed to a strong correlation among the three factors at the beginning of the course, but this correlation decreased towards the end of the course. In a dissertation study in the USA, Lawyer (2018) examined the effects of course modality, i.e. face-to-face, online or hybrid courses, on learner success in English composition courses and their perceived TD. The data were collected from 420 undergraduate students through course completion rates. The results showed that course modality did not significantly affect learner success and TD perceptions. In a mixed-methods research, Kara (2020) studied 190 EFL students' TD perceptions in relation to their learning outcomes. The results indicated that the components of TD predicted perceived learning and satisfaction. Specifically, TD between interface and learner affected perceived learning while TD between learner and teacher affected satisfaction.

Besides research on the international scale, TD experiences and perceptions have also been investigated in the Turkish context. Using different scales to measure social presence, perception, and satisfaction, Horzum (2015) worked with 205 students registered to online Theology courses at a Turkish university. The results pointed at a negative correlation between course interaction and transactional distance. Examining TD and social presence in knowledge sharing in virtual communities, Karaoglan Yilmaz (2017) studied with 217 undergraduate students taking Computing I course at a Turkish university. The analysis of the three scales showed that the TD and social presence perceptions were predictors of the participants' knowledge sharing. Karaoglan Yilmaz and Yilmaz (2020) studied the effects of feedback on transactional distance and critical thinking skills in online discussions. Based on the results of the quasi-experimental study, the researchers concluded that different feedback forms influenced transactional distance perceptions while having little impact on critical thinking.

The overall evaluation of the literature on TD signals several considerations. The first consideration is that since its introduction TD has become a topic receiving growing attention. An increasing number of studies have examined TD from different perspectives at an international level (Ekwunife-Orakwue & Teng, 2014; Wengrowicz, et al., 2014; Zilka, et al., 2019). However, there is scarcity of research on TD conducted in a Turkish context. The second consideration is that TD perceptions and their effects have been examined in distance education courses designed for different courses ranging from business and science to arts and theology (Horzum, 2015; Lowell, 2004; Mbwesa, 2014). Yet, there are few examples of TD research in distance language courses (Kostina, 2011; Lawyer, 2018), especially courses designed for EFL. The third conclusion is that though there was reliance on quantitative methodology in the existing research, there are a limited number of studies employing qualitative methodology (Falloon, 2011; Stain, et al., 2009; Ustati & Hassan, 2013), pointing to the need for further research examining TD perceptions and experiences

through in-depth analysis. The fourth conclusion is that although the effects of TD on such different aspects as success (Lawyer, 2018; Zimmarmann, 2012), interaction (Horzum, 2015) and social presence (Huang, et al., 2015) have been studied, its effects on motivation have not received adequate attention (Zilka, et al., 2019). The last conclusion is that all the TD studies were conducted in periods when distance education was an alternative platform for face-to-face education. However, no study was conducted when distance education became a compulsory medium of education due to the outbreak of the pandemic resulting in the cessation of face-to-face education at a global level. In the light of these considerations, this intrinsic case study aimed to investigate the effects of TD perceptions and experiences of ELT students on their motivational levels while participating in departmental courses held through distance education during the Corona pandemic experienced in CORONAPOLIS. This study is expected to contribute to motivation studies by providing a detailed picture of the lived experiences of motivation in distance language courses from the TD perspective.

Methodology

This study was based on an exploratory case study design (Yin, 2014) as it aimed to reach an in-depth analysis regarding the effects of perceived transactional distance on EFL undergraduates' motivation. The rationale for selecting this design was the opportunity to reach a detailed analysis of particular cases (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) enabling researchers to approach the issue through its details from the participants' lived experiences.

Research Context and Participants

This study examined a particular case of distance education in CORONAPOLIS, which is any setting in Turkey and around the world under the unpleasant effects of the Covid-19 pandemic experienced since the beginning of 2020. During this period, people had to go on dealing with life requirements under the threat of the pandemic. Therefore, the educational lives of higher education students had to progress along with their common survival and life-related experiences.

Setting out from the reality that most of the higher education institutions in Turkey had to follow their under/graduate courses through distance education, this study investigated the motivational experiences of ELT undergraduates during distance education held at a state university in this country. What made this distance education practice a unique case was that it was carried out during the Corona pandemic which penetrated the regular face-to-face education and almost forced all higher education

institutions to continue their under/graduate education through distance education. Before this peculiar case of the pandemic, distance education was, of course, a popular practice over the world with the development of information technologies and the Internet. Yet, this pandemic process has been the first of its kind resulting in the cessation of face-to-face educational practices and leading the way to mandatory distance education, as also followed in the city of CORONAPOLIS, purposefully termed to denote the fate of higher education which had to be away from university campuses.

Following the decision to cease all face-to-face educational practices in all higher education institutions in Turkey, faculty members at all the departments, including the ELT Department, were required to conduct their courses both asynchronously through CMS (Course Management System) provided by the university and synchronously through online sessions via different programs and applications. Within this context, ELT students had to adjust themselves to a new system of distance education in which they did not have previous practice. They were informed to participate in a/ synchronous sessions to be held for each departmental course and follow the course requirements through the CMS system.

The participants were 87 students studying at the ELT Department. There were 362 students registered in total at the Department but 72 of them showed voluntary participation in the study (18 freshmen, 23 sophomores, 26 juniors and 20 seniors). They were taking between five and eight courses each term. Because of the outbreak of the pandemic during the spring term of the 2019-2020 academic year, the courses in the ELT Department started to be conducted via distance education following a four-week of face-to-face education. Therefore, students in each grade were required to follow courses held through Course Management Systems and participate in online classes. The sudden transition from face-to-face classes to distance education was an unforeseen case for the students who did not have experience in distance education practices. This inevitably resulted in initial confusion and challenge for the students to adjust themselves to the new system, which was also to affect their TD perceptions.

Data Collection Tools

The data were collected through the participants' informal self-reports and open-ended questions. The participating students were required to keep informal self-reports (three in total for each). They were explained the three dimensions of TD (dialogue, structure, autonomy) and asked to consider these dimensions in relation to their motivational experiences during distance education. There were no limits on the length of the reports, and the reports were kept in English.

The open-ended were formed by the researcher who was also a faculty member at the Department. The following questions were designed in the light of the dimensions

of TD proposed by Moore (1993) as well as the observations and experiences of the researcher who, too, followed her classes through distance education. The questions were checked for clarity and appropriateness by another field expert:

1. How do you evaluate your experiences in distance education in terms of your overall motivation?
2. How did the interactions you had with your instructors and classmates affect your motivation during distance education?
3. How did the structure of the courses you attended affect your motivation during distance education?
4. How did your sense of autonomy affect your motivation during distance education?

These two tools were utilized so that the TD experiences of the participants were cross-checked, which was also to increase the validity of the data collection and analysis processes.

Data Collection Process and Analysis

Before the data collection process, ethical permission was obtained from the Department. All the students were sent an e-mail asking for their voluntary participation in the study. Those who responded to the mail were considered voluntary as original signatures could not be obtained because of the quarantine process. Eighty-seven students volunteered to keep self-reports and provide written answers to the open-ended questions.

Before collecting the data, the participants were explained TD and its dimensions so that they could evaluate their motivational experiences during distance education touching upon the related dimensions. The reports were informal in nature to decrease the affective filters of the students and encourage them to reflect on their perceptions comfortably. Each participant was asked to keep three reports in total at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the mandatory distance education process. In this way, the participants had the chance to consider their experiences from the beginning to the end, revealing the change in their TD perceptions.

The open-ended questions were sent through institutional e-mail to the participants at the end of the term so that they had enough experiences in distance education practices. They were expected to answer the questions in three days and, though the questions were in English, they could also switch to Turkish, their native language, if they wanted to narrate their experiences more effectively. The parts written in Turkish were translated into English by the researcher and proofread by a native speaker.

The data were analyzed through conventional content analysis in three steps. In the first step, the researcher read the answers of the participants separately in order to reach an overall understanding of the experiences and perceptions. In the second step, the participant comments in each data set were analyzed separately to reveal major points, which also aimed to compare the comments in the same data set. In the third step, the two data sets were compared to reveal the common aspects, which also aimed to cross-check the comments in both sets. This three-step analysis was followed to increase validity. In addition, another field expert was consulted to follow the same steps to analyze the data to minimize single-rater bias. The Internal Rate of Return was calculated as %94 for exact coding and %6 for similar coding. Example analysis process is provided in the below figure.

Step 1: Overall analysis		
Step 2: Separate analysis (Analysis of Data set 1-open-ended questions)	Step 2: Separate analysis (Analysis of Data set 2-participant self-reports)	
“distance education offered an alternative version of cyber interaction which increased motivation for participation” (3 rd 5-OE)	“the interactional patterns available in distance education provided them with the stimulation to communicate with the peers and professors considering the communicative restrictions of the depressive period” (4 th 19-SR3)	Interaction and Motivation
“the structures of the departmental courses held through distance education as they compensated for the content to be covered in face-to-face education” (3 rd 4-OE).	“to keep on track to follow educational processes as it was in face-to-face education” (2 nd 6-SR2).	Structure and Motivation
Step 3: Cross-analysis of Data set 1 & Data set 2		Broader categories

Figure 1. Example data analysis

Results

The results are presented with excerpts from the participants' self-reports and answers to give a detailed narration of how their TD perceptions affected their motivation during mandatory distance education. Abbreviations are used for the excerpts; ex: 1st10-SR2-excerpt from the second self-report of the tenth student

studying the first grade; 1st10-OE=excerpt from the open-ended question of the tenth student studying the first grade.

Overall Motivation

The overall evaluations of the participants as regards their distance education experience pointed at the common initial concerns and challenges as it was their first-time participation in distance education. Most of the students stated that they “knew about distance education as an alternative form of education” (2nd13-OE) in courses during their face-to-face education; however, they “did not participate in genuine distance education during undergraduate education before the pandemic” (3rd8-SR1). Due to the unexpected change from face-to-face to distance education, the students “developed initial concern about how to go on with the new system” (3rd17-SR1).

The main source of the concern was the uncertainty about the new system. Most of the participants expressed that although they “knew almost nothing about the new system” (4th15-OE), they “were suddenly expected to follow all the course requirements in this unfamiliar system” (1st5-OE). The sense of uncertainty and unfamiliarity “naturally increased anxiety while decreasing motivation” (2nd19-SR1) of the participants. The below comment offers a vivid narration of the common initial concerns:

“Soon after the outbreak of the pandemic, we were informed that the departmental courses would be followed through distance education. Although our professors did their best to regularly inform and update us about the process, we clearly experienced the initial uncertainty and concern about what would happen and how we would follow the educational process. I felt quite demotivated during the initial phase.” (4th8-OE)

Another frequently stated source of the concern was about questioning their knowledge and capabilities to successfully follow the courses in distance education. Being used to the conventions and requirements in face-to-face education, the students experienced anxiety and had low levels of motivation because “distance education was different from face-to-face education and it required an almost totally different system” (2nd7-SR1). The sudden change leading to the questioning of their capabilities as students in distance education was also reflected as a source decreasing motivation, as presented below:

“Face-to-face education is what I have been used to so far. Normally, I have high motivation to actively take part in departmental courses. But this pandemic has changed many things. In the beginning I found myself questioning my knowledge and capabilities as a student to follow course requirements in distance education. It was quite depressing and demotivating.” (4th-13-OE)

The participants also experienced concern about evaluation and grading. As they got over the initial anxiety about adjusting to the new system, they started to think about grading. This source of demotivation again resulted from their “unfamiliarity with the new system that would also bring different assessment procedures” (2nd5-OE). “Not knowing how to be assessed and graded was among the major sources of concern after initial adaptation to the process” (3rd21-SR1).

The evaluation of the participant comments indicates that the students experienced primary concerns about how the new system would work, how they would deal with the transition and how assessment procedures would be conducted. What was common among these sources of concern was that all negatively affected the participants’ motivation since they led them to question their knowledge and capabilities and experience uncertainty.

Interaction and Motivation

The interactional patterns available in distance education practices received various considerations. While most of the participants favored instructor-student and student-student interaction, some evaluated it as inadequate. Those students favoring the interactions held the common view that “distance education offered an alternative version of cyber interaction which increased motivation for participation” (3rd5-OE) and that it “served as a source of stimulation for their contribution to on-going interactions during synchronous sessions” (2nd8-SR2). This view was reflected in several statements pointing at the novelty in interactional patterns introduced with distance education. Calling attention to the effects of the interactions through distance education on their motivation during the pandemic, a participant explained that “the interactional patterns available in distance education provided them with the stimulation to communicate with the peers and professors considering the communicative restrictions of the depressive period” (4th19-SR3).

The participants who favored the interactional patterns available in distance education appreciated the motivating force of the interactions. The particular point of appreciation was the availability of synchronous interactions which “gave the motivation to move away from the depressive mood that the pandemic created” (1st 11-OE), which “offered a virtual satisfaction of interacting with professors and classmates for academic purposes” (3rd24-OE) and which encouraged them to “participate in interactions to share academic knowledge” (3rd13-SR3). Evaluating this experience from the motivational perspective, these participants referred to the positive contributions of the interactions to their motivation as the availability of communication helped them keep on their enthusiasm to interact with their instructors and peers for educational purposes, besides social purposes, despite the undesirable experiences they were going through.

Those favoring the interactions in distance education also added that especially synchronous sessions helped them improve their speaking skills. They referred to the “contributory effects of these sessions in the development of conversational skills particularly considering the possible regression in speaking because of the long-break to face-to-face education” (3rd7-OE). Sharing a similar perspective, another participant commented that “the unavailability of face-to-face communication resulting from the pandemic was compensated with the virtual interactions in online sessions, which was a motivating factor during distance education” (2nd21-OE). This view was also held by another participant who explained that their “drastically decreased levels of motivation in continuing educational processes increased with the synchronous interactions available in distance education” (3rd2-SR2).

There were also negative considerations regarding the interactions in distance education. The participants with this outlook stated that “despite the availability of virtual interaction in distance education, it was not adequate in quality and quantity to maintain motivation in learning” (2nd7-SR2). The virtuality of interaction was explained to be “a drawback resulting in decreased levels of motivation to interact with professors and peers” (4th3-OE). Another participant also touched upon a similar point explaining that “the virtual interaction in distance education is not comparable with the genuine interaction in face-to-face education and its being artificial in nature was the source of demotivation decreasing participation in online interaction” (3rd6-OE).

A general consideration of the comments on the motivational aspects of interactions in distance education revealed two different outlooks. The contributory effect of interaction in distance education was the point of appreciation for most of the participants. They explained that virtual interaction in distance education compensated for the cessation of interaction in face-to-face education, which was a source of motivation stimulating their interaction. However, the virtual nature of the interactions was the point of criticism for some students since they perceived this type of interaction as artificial and inadequate, which was reported to decrease their motivation to participate in online interactions.

Structure and Motivation

As was the case regarding interactions, course structure was also evaluated within two distinct viewpoints; motivating and demotivating effects of the course structure. Those participants holding the first view commented that they were satisfied with “the structures of the departmental courses held through distance education as they compensated for the content to be covered in face-to-face education” (3rd4-OE). The “course structures which were adequate both in quality and quantity were also motivating factors to keep on with educational requirements” (2nd1-SR3). The quality and quantity of instructions and course content also received positive considerations

as they motivated the participants “to keep on track to follow educational processes as it was in face-to-face education” (2nd6-SR2).

Course structures were also considered motivating as they promoted students’ language development. Some participants stated that “besides synchronous instructions, additional materials were uploaded to the system and it was encouraging to study further” (2nd12-SR2). Further development of field-specific knowledge with the help of these materials was also among the positive evaluations of the participants. Distance education sessions were considered contributory and motivating because they helped the students “develop both overall English proficiency and specific knowledge in the field of language education” (2nd5-SR3). In addition, the students were “exposed to different forms of academic language use available in articles and books in the field, which was also a source of motivation for linguistic and academic development” (4th7-OE).

The other group of participants who did not consider course structure effective held the assumption that “the compensation for the content in face-to-face education created an overloaded content in distance education and it was tiring and discouraging after some time” (3rd8-SR3). The “intense course structures aiming to cover theoretical and practical information only in virtual platforms” (2nd13-OE) were criticized by this group.

Homework was also the foremost complaint of these participants who were not pleased with the overload in structure. They complained that “homework was not perceived as a reinforcing practice in distance education; instead, it is a time-consuming and hard-to-handle practice that decreased willingness and motivation” (3rd15-OE). Holding a similar perspective another participant expressed that “homework did not contribute to learning as an essential part of the process, it was mostly a duty to complete” (2nd20-SR3).

The evaluation of course structure in distance education indicated that the new design of the departmental courses motivated some students encouraging them to further develop in language proficiency as well as content-specific and academic knowledge. However, it also received criticism because of the extended workload discouraging students from following the required procedures effectively, which decreased their motivation.

Autonomy and Motivation

With respect to autonomy, though not many in number, the participant comments directed attention to the motivating and demotivating effects of the process. A few participants did not favor distance education stating that “it did not much support autonomy development due to the decreasing levels of motivation caused by its limited

flexibility and the feeling of distance” (3rd21-OE). Pointing to the interactional patterns in distance education, a participant expressed that “interactions with peers and instructors created an artificial sense of communication over which we had artificial control and this sense was demotivating, also affecting autonomy development” (1st12-SR2). Another participant with a similar viewpoint related the three dimensions of TD in her comment and explained that “autonomy development was restricted within the virtual nature and boundaries of the system that creates an artificial interactive environment full of dense structure” (2nd8-OE).

The dimensions that negatively affected some participants' sense of autonomy were perceived contributory by the other group of participants. The presence of interaction, though it was virtual in nature, was appreciated as “a motivating source as it still offered the chance to control and direct interactions for educational purposes, which also supported autonomy” (2nd13-OE). Referring to the interactional patterns in distance education, another participant explained that “interacting with peers and instructors to share educational information was a stimulation for motivation and autonomy, particularly within the pandemic process in which people have almost no control over many processes” (4th18-OE).

Strict course structures in distance education were also considered as a dynamic contributing to learner autonomy by some students. These participants maintained that they “developed more control and regulated the learning process more effectively with the help of the motivation in synchronous sessions and the strict steps in asynchronous sessions” (1st7-OE). This self-control was also reported in “homework delivery because the automatic due date for submissions implied a stricter control compared to the face-to-face submissions” (3rd9-SR2). This strict schedule assigned to the system was perceived as “contributory to autonomy development as it formed an external stimulation to catch up with the course requirements” (2nd19-OE). Upon the positive relationship between autonomy and motivation resulting from the dense course content, a participant offered the detailed comment below:

“The content designed to compensate for the missing aspects available in face-to-face education was a source of motivation as it increased our willingness to put further effort to study in a more regular and conscious manner. With the help of this distance education process, I have taken more conscious responsibility in following the educational requirements. This obviously developed the sense of control and autonomy in the learning process.” (2nd15-OE).

The analysis of the effects of autonomy on motivation revealed that the interactional patterns and structure were the factors creating different senses of motivation for the participants. The density of duties and strict structure which were perceived as an overload by some students were evaluated as features supporting autonomy. As the students maintained regular control in the process to accomplish required tasks, they experienced an increased sense of autonomy, which also stimulated their motivation.

Discussion

The results of this exploratory case study revealed different considerations of a group of EFL students' experiences in distance education regarding learner motivation. The existence of the same component was evaluated as either motivating or demotivating based on the TD perceptions of the participants. The results can be discussed under the three dimensions (dialogue, structure and autonomy) proposed in TD Theory (Moore, 1997) in the light of the participants' experiences and relevant literature.

The first dimension to discuss is dialogue which is basically about the interactional patterns available in distance education practices. Within the discussion of the dialogue dimension; the availability of the interactions can be evaluated in relation to Chen's (2001) expansion of the dialogue concept covering learner-interface, instructor-learner and learner-learner interaction. As regards learner-interface interaction, the initial experiences of the participants were reported to be anxiety-provoking and demotivating as they did not have early practice in distance education format. Therefore, lack of experience and ambiguity in the steps to be followed in the new format resulted in initial demotivation for most of the participants. The existence of ambiguity can be assumed to have decreased the internal motivation of the students as they felt lost at the beginning of the process. As regards instructor-learner and learner-learner interaction suggested by Chen (2001), the comments of the participants showed that they were content with the availability of interaction with their instructors and friends through online sessions. Though the interactions were virtual in nature, they increased the participants' motivation as the students were able to maintain the connection with the people they were familiar with during the depressive atmosphere caused by the pandemic. Thus, from this experience, it can be inferred that distance education sessions provided the participants with an opportunity to get over the sense of isolation, as also reported in previous research (Andersen, 2009; Cho & Tobias, 2016; Hew & Cheung, 2013). In light of the results of previous research and those in this study, one can, therefore, reach the conclusion that the type of interaction available in distance education was satisfactory in compensating the drawbacks coming along with the lack of genuine face-to-face interaction. Unlike the participants reported to have experienced isolation and subsequent dissatisfaction in online courses in some studies (Hodges & Kim, 2010; Vonderwell, 2003), most of the ELT participants in this study were not negatively affected by the feeling of isolation. They maintained interactions with their instructors and classmates, particularly through online sessions and thus overcame the sense of having to live in a limited and threatening space. Taking the particular case of the pandemic into account, one can assume that the availability of interaction with other members of the educational process was of critical contribution as the participants were going through a mentally-tiring process which was full of depressing news in CORONAPOLIS. The participants were able to cope with the sense of isolation caused by the exceptional pandemic case with the help of the interactions through distance education. Hence, most of the participants

held positive considerations regarding the interaction dimension of TD, which served as a source of both external motivation as a venue to keep communicating and internal motivation driving their inner enthusiasm to participate in interaction for educational purposes. At this point, regarding the transition from face-to-face education to distance education mode, it can be maintained that the interaction in the new mode of education offered them a chance to preserve their motivation in the educational process, which can be regarded as a promising case considering the demotivating atmosphere created by the pandemic conditions.

Within the first dimension, the presence of instructor-student and student-student interactions were also valued by the students for the development of communicative skills. Since the participants were students learning English as a foreign language, they were experiencing contextual limitations for the development of their communicative skills, as a common case experienced in EFL contexts (Arroba & Acosta, 2021; Nazara, 2011). For EFL learners, classroom was mostly the main setting to be exposed to and practice the target language. However, the cessation of face-to-face classes would mean the cessation of communicative production in practical and educational terms. Yet, synchronous courses conducted during distance education offered them an alternative platform for language practice with instructors and classmates. Therefore, assessed from the dialogue dimension, chances to interact with instructors and classmates and the opportunity to practice the language through these interactions increased the students' motivation in developing their communicative skills during Covid-19 distance education. Though results of research conducted under same conditions are not available, a similar point referring to the increase in motivation and development in language skills supported by interactional chances was also reported in previous studies (Abuseileek, 2012; Alshumaimeri & Alhumud, 2021; Balaman & Sert, 2017; Corraera, 2015). Still, not all the considerations of the dialogue dimension were optimistic. Some participants did not favor interactions in distance education as it created an artificial atmosphere and virtuality spoiled the natural pattern in face-to-face communication. This case was assumed to block effective communication, decreasing some participants' motivation. Interaction was claimed to be mostly limited in asynchronous sessions, which was also a point also touched upon in the literature (Pelowski, Frissell, Cabral, & Yu, 2005; Vlachopoulos & Marki, 2019). When the peculiar nature of language education is taken into account, it can be commented that distance education, though it offered overall satisfaction in interactional patterns, still posed some limitations in its particular comparison with face-to-face education which is rich of ample chances for exposure and genuine practice. However, upon the observation of the researcher both in face-to-face and in distance education, it mostly depends on learner's effort in benefiting from the interactive opportunities in the learning context. In other words, either in face-to-face or in distance education, it is mainly the learner who puts effort in finding paths to develop his/her language knowledge and skills considering the pros and cons of the learning environment.

The second dimension to discuss is structure covering course design in distance education. Participant evaluations of course structure revealed two perspectives; structure as overload and structure as a chance for language development. The negative perceptions of course structure as overload caused by excessive amounts of homework and limited flexibility were reported to decrease participant motivation. Losing the rationale of doing homework for developmental purposes, some participants felt demotivated and questioned the effectiveness of homework which was mostly perceived as a workload to be completed within a certain period in distance education. Regarding the flexibility and density of course structures, Moore (1993) and Drennan, Kennedy and Pisarski (2005) pointed at the negative correlation between these variables and TD perceptions. Therefore, the participants experiencing low levels of motivation because of their negative perceptions of course structure were not satisfied with the course content and flexibility levels. When this finding is evaluated, it sounds natural that the participants in this study may have experienced demotivation regarding the structure component in distance education probably because they were asked to accomplish certain course requirements without explicitly-explained rationale. Thus, it seems crucial that the faculty should be clear on the objective and content of their courses so that students do not feel lost and out-of-meaning in the educational process and are able to preserve their motivation in following structure effectively. On the other hand, there were also some participants who held positive perceptions of the course structure. These participants shared the view that the content, design and instruction of the courses, which were also suggested to be essential for effective course structure (Chen, 2001; Desharnais & Limson, 2007; Huang & Liaw, 2004), promoted their development in overall language proficiency and field-specific knowledge. Evaluated in the light of the suggestions by Moore and Kearsley (2005), the increase in the motivation of these students can be the result of the satisfaction they felt with the effectiveness and contributions of course content. Viewed from the motivational perspective, it can be maintained that the dense but satisfactory educational content offered a source of external motivation for these participants who also developed, in time, their internal motivation with further engagement in their studies.

The third dimension to discuss is autonomy in distance education. There were also two main considerations in this dimension. While some participants stated not experiencing explicit feelings of autonomy, others expressed that they had better control over and regulation of their learning, which was considered as the essence of autonomy by Holec (1981). The first group of participants reflected the view that strict course structure restricted their autonomy, therefore, motivation. The effects of high-structured courses on learner autonomy were also considered by Moore (2007), who proposed that high perceptions of transactional distance regarding course structure result in low learner autonomy. Therefore, low autonomy experienced by some participants during distance education can be a natural consequence of their structure perceptions. A practical suggestion to deal with the decrease in learner motivation

pertaining to the sense of autonomy can be to involve learners in the process of decision making while the program structure is established. When learners are given some voice in identifying course objectives, materials or course content, the sense of autonomy and therefore motivation is expected to increase. Student involvement in such steps can be even more vital considering the physical distance between learner and instructor within the nature of distance education. The second group of participants reported development in their autonomy and an increase in motivation referring to intense course structures as the main source of this development. This case was also reported by Irizarry (2002) reaching the conclusion that high structure in distance education courses increases self-discipline and learner independence, which increases learner motivation. The second group of participants also favored taking more responsibility in the learning process, accepted as a fundamental component in autonomy (Lenkaitis, 2020). Upon learner agency and autonomy, Kohn and Hoffstaedter (2017) explained that language learners, particularly non-native ones, need support to develop their agency and identity in distance education, which seems to be a condition met for some participants who felt the internal motivation to develop their autonomy in this study.

The results of this study showed that students formed different evaluations and perceptions of dialogue, structure and autonomy dimensions of TD; therefore, experienced varying motivational levels, internally and externally, during distance education sessions compulsorily held during the Covid-19 outbreak. In terms of dialogue; effective and sufficient instructor-student, student-student and student-interface interaction resulted in mostly positive considerations of the process and high levels of motivation. In terms of structure; satisfaction with course content, instruction and flexibility decreased negative TD perceptions while increasing motivation. In terms of autonomy, course structure was reported to be the main source increasing/decreasing learner autonomy, therefore, motivation. All in all, the findings of this study revealed varying considerations of EFL learners of distance education. At this point, it can be expressed that though the current research focused on the motivational experiences of EFL learners shaped under their TD perceptions, the positive and negative considerations of the participants regarding the three dimensions of TD point at individual differences in learners once again even under mandatorily-conducted processes.

Conclusion, Limitations and Pedagogical Suggestions

This study investigated the peculiar case of distance education which was conducted at an ELT Department at a Turkish state university within the physical, psychological, social and educational boundaries of CORONAPOLIS. The results of the study

revealed that the EFL students formed different perceptions of transactional distance regarding their participation in a/synchronous classes in relation to their motivation. In the light of the results, several pedagogical implications can be made as follows:

- Under/graduate programs can integrate courses in which not only theoretical but also practical dynamics of distance education are introduced to students in detail so that they can become familiar with this alternative platform.
- Under/graduate programs can revise their existing systems to integrate distance education into their regular operations. In this way, students can learn about the basic requirements and processes by actively participating in distance education sessions.
- In order to integrate distance education practices into under/graduate programs, faculty members are to be trained to be aware of learner expectations and needs during distance education in relation to three TD dimensions.
- Faculty members also need to promote chances for effective interaction besides planning an efficient course structure in order to respond to learner needs and help them develop positive perceptions of distance education.

Though introducing a diverse perspective to motivation studies, the results of this study are not generalizable as it reported the lived experiences only of a particular group of EFL students. Because of the restrictions of the pandemic process, no observation was possible to witness the in-class practices of the participants. Hoping that such a disastrous case of the pandemic will never be experienced again, the adoption of longitudinal studies including observations to evaluate learners' TD perceptions are suggested to reach deeper conclusions.

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A Comparative Linguistic Analysis of English and Spanish Phonological System¹

Un Análisis Lingüístico Comparativo del
Sistema Fonológico del inglés y el español

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Abstract

This paper analyzes a few significant differences between Spanish and English in relation to phonological patterns. First, a short introduction is given about these two languages, and it is briefly explained in what linguistic aspects they are similar or different. Then, each of these linguistic features is analyzed in detail, clearly establishing the differences existing between Spanish and English. The specific phonological features that are addressed on this academic paper are vowel and consonant phonemes, diphthongs and triphthongs, as well as word and sentence stress. Furthermore, several pronunciation difficulties for Spanish speakers are discussed. Finally, some didactic implications are considered so that teachers can help their students of either language learn the second one considering important linguistic features.

Keywords: Spanish, English, vowel and consonant phonemes, word and sentence stress, pronunciation difficulties, didactic implications.

Resumen

Este artículo analiza algunas diferencias significativas entre el español y el inglés en relación con los patrones fonológicos. En primer lugar, se hace una breve introducción sobre estos dos idiomas y se explica brevemente en qué aspectos lingüísticos son similares o diferentes. A continuación, se analiza en detalle cada uno de estos rasgos lingüísticos, estableciendo claramente las diferencias existentes entre el español y el inglés. Las características fonológicas específicas que se abordan en este artículo académico son los fonemas vocales y consonantes, diptongos y triptongos, así como el acento de sílabas y oraciones. Además, se discuten varias dificultades de pronunciación para hispanohablantes. Finalmente, se consideran algunas implicaciones didácticas para que los profesores puedan ayudar a sus alumnos de cualquiera de los dos idiomas a aprender el segundo considerando características lingüísticas importantes.

Palabras claves: español, inglés, fonemas vocales y consonantes, acentuación de palabras y oraciones, dificultades de pronunciación, implicaciones didácticas.

Resumo:

Este artigo analisa algumas diferenças significativas entre o espanhol e o inglês em relação com os padrões fonológicos. Em primeiro lugar, faz-se uma breve introdução sobre estes dois idiomas e explica-se brevemente em que aspectos linguísticos são similares ou diferentes. A continuação, analisa-se em detalhe cada uma destas características linguísticas, estabelecendo claramente as diferenças existentes entre o espanhol e o inglês. As características fonológicas específicas que se tratam neste artigo académico são os fonemas vocais e consoantes, ditongos e tritongos, bem como o acento de sílabas e orações. Além disso, discutem-se várias dificuldades de pronúncia para hispano-falantes. Finalmente, consideram-se algumas implicações didáticas para que os professores possam ajudar seus alunos de qualquer um dos dois idiomas a aprender o segundo, considerando características linguísticas importantes.

Palavras chaves: espanhol, inglês, fonemas vocais e consoantes, acentuação de palavras e orações, dificuldades de pronúncia, implicações didáticas.

A brief review describing my professional opinion about the paper

The current paper I have written has a significant impact on the teaching and learning of both target languages, which are Spanish and English. Teachers and students ought to be aware of the main phonological differences existing between these languages so that the teaching-learning process regarding pronunciation can take place smoothly. Being conscious of features such as vowel and consonant phonemes, diphthongs and triphthongs, word and sentence stress and identifying common pronunciation difficulties will definitely facilitate learning. Teachers can easily and smartly address those problems by using some meaningful and practical techniques so that students can hone their pronunciation. Therefore, the content of this paper will positively contribute to those who are teaching or learning Spanish and English as a foreign or second language.



Introduction

Learning English as a foreign or second language (EFL/ESL) involves, just like Spanish or any other language, the development of the four fundamental skills, which are reading, listening, writing and speaking as well as grammar, discourse, lexis and phonology. Uribe, Fuentes, Vargas, and Rey (2019) state that in communication, that is, when learners apply their speaking skill, the phonological system plays an important role. Pronunciation defines how comprehensible ideas are so that their interlocutors can understand them smoothly.

Therefore, to convey a clear message, it is fundamental to have good pronunciation. However, mastering appropriate English pronunciation can represent a big problem for EFL or ESL learners since there are several factors that generate obstacles when learning pronunciation. But naturally, that does not only happen with English, but with other languages as well. If we take, as an example, English and Spanish native speakers, trying to learn these languages as a second or foreign language, it will definitely cause a problem in several areas, but especially in pronunciation because the phonological system of each language works differently.

Now, English and Spanish languages, at first sight, may seem to have quite similar phonological features; but this is not necessarily true. Even though the alphabet is nearly the same in both languages, there are extreme differences in pronunciation. Shoebottom (2017) states that the phonological system of English differs a lot from that of Spanish, especially in several significant aspects such as vowel and consonant sounds as well as syllable and sentence stress. As a result, for English speakers, trying to learn to speak Spanish, at times may not be such an easy task to do because there are certain sounds that they do not have in their mother tongue. Similarly, for Spanish speakers, it becomes quite complicated to acquire English as a second or foreign language due to the complexity of pronunciation of words in L2. But differentiated phonemes are not the only factor that students must be aware of at the moment of learning proper pronunciation in the target language, syllable and sentence stress also play a significant role when dealing with phonological patterns. Comparing and contrasting the phonological systems of both languages will allow them to have a better panorama of which these differences are that seem to make learning more difficult or easy for some language learners. This paper will, therefore, present some of these differentiated phonological aspects that are extremely influential when learning either language: Spanish or English.

Literature Review

Vowel Phonemes

First, let us compare the number of vowels found in each language. On the one hand, according to Shoebottom (2017), there are only 5 pure vowels in Spanish, where the length of the vowel is not meaningful when differentiating between words. These vowel sounds are: *a* (*paso*), *e* (*peso*), *i* (*piso*), *o* (*poso*), *u* (*puso*). On the other hand, there are 12 pure or basic vowel sounds in Standard English, being the following: *i*: (*sheep*), *ɪ* (*ship*), *e* (*pet*), *æ* (*cat*), *ʌ* (*sun*), *ɑ:* (*father*), *ɒ* (*dog*), *ɔ* (*all*), *ʊ* (*put*), *u:* (*soon*), *ɜ:* (*bird*), and *ə* (*the*). As just seen above, the number of pure vowel sounds in English is significantly higher than the ones in Spanish, and that is one of the salient reasons why Spanish speakers frequently find it grueling to produce all English vowel sounds properly.

Now, let us notice that the number of English vowel sounds shown above is only referring to the basic ones; if we consider the variations coming from those pure sounds, we can get more. If we start from saying that English vowel sounds can be divided into several categories: monophthongs (short and long vowels) diphthongs, triphthongs, vowels before historical R, and weak vowels. According to Wood (2019), the number of vowel sounds in English depends upon the variety of English we are talking about. Although, in the written alphabet of both target languages (English and Spanish) there exist 5 vowel letters (a, e, i, o, u), in spoken English the case is different. Generally speaking, there are approximately 20 distinct vowel phonemes in English. But, as mentioned above, the exact number of this type of sound will vary according to the English accent we are talking about. Ballester (2015) also suggests that the exact number of these sounds usually depends on the manner the system is analyzed. Equally, their sound qualities may vary significantly from accent to accent. To give an example, the American English vowel sounds are evidently different from those of British or Australian. However, this is not the case of Spanish vowel sounds as they are clearly differentiated in pronunciation.

So, if we consider the Standard Southern British English, the number of vowel phonemes is 19, being these: */ɪ/* (*sit*), */e/* (*dress*), */æ/* (*trap*), */ʌ/* (*strut*), */ɒ/* (*lot*), */ʊ/* (*foot*), */i:/* (*sea*), */ɔ:/* (*north*), */u:/* (*goose*), */ɑ:/* (*palm*), */aɪ/* (*price*), */eɪ/* (*face*), */ɔɪ/* (*choice*), */aʊ/* (*brown*), */əʊ/* (*boat*), */ɪə/* (*near*), */e:/* (*square*), */ɜ:/* (*nurse*), and */ə/* (*about*). However, the total number of vowels in General American English is 21 and those are the following: */ɪ/* (*myth*), */e/* (*bread*), */æ/* (*cat*), */ʌ/* (*son*), */ʊ/* (*took*), */i:/* (*people*), */ɑ:/* (*watch*), */u:/* (*tuna*), */aɪ/* (*try*), */eɪ/* (*say*), */ɔɪ/* (*noise*), */aʊ/* (*noun*), */oo/* (*slow*), */ɪr/* (*clear*), */er/* (*fair*), */ɔr/* (*four*), */ar/* (*car*), */ɔr/* (*ensure*), */ɜ:/* (*mercy*), */ə/* (*feather*), and */ə/* (*common*). As it is clearly seen, one important detail to mention is that some of the phonetic symbols also change from British English to American English.

Now, considering the numerous vowel sounds found in English, it is now understandable why it is extremely difficult for Spanish speakers to learn to differentiate

among all those phonemes. Shoebottom (2017) states that some typical problems entail the failure to differentiate between sounds in words such as sit/seat, cat/cut, fast/first, etc. In the first illustration, for example, students may not be able to easily differ the short /ɪ/ from the long /i:/. Normally, English learners, whose mother tongue is Spanish, struggle a lot with such differentiated sounds since in their mother tongue there is only the phoneme /ɪ/ not the long /i:/. Consequently, dealing with minimal pairs, especially beginner or basic levels, is quite challenging for them. In Spanish, though, learning minimal pairs is not as hard as in English because the vowel sounds are quite different from each other.

Diphthongs and Triphthongs

With regards to diphthongs, which is the combination of two vowel sounds, according to Vizental (2008), there are 8 diphthongs in English, and these are divided into 2 types of sounds (considering the position of the speech organs): closing and opening diphthongs. In closing diphthongs (ei, ai, oi, au, əu), the nucleus is more open than the glide, whereas in opening diphthongs (iə, eə, uə), the vowel is closer than the glide. In Spanish, however, diphthongs, which can be rising or falling. Rising diphthongs entail a semivowel + a full vowel (ia, ie, io, ua, ue, uo, iu, ui). In contrast, falling diphthongs consist of the opposite sequence (ai, au, ei, eu, oi, ou), giving a total number of 14 diphthongs in this language (Garita & María González, 2019).

In relation to the number of triphthongs, which refers to a combination of three vowel sounds in one syllable, Ballester (2015) states that there are 5 in English, being these: /eɪə/ (*player*), /aɪə/ (*fire*), /ɔɪə/ (*soya*), /əuə/ (*lower*) and /avə/ (*hour*). Basically, as seen above, all triphthongs combine a diphthong and the schwa sound /ə/. Nonetheless, triphthongs are uncommon in Spanish. Salcedo (2010) states that they may emerge in strange noun forms such as *buey* and *huey*. Likewise, they might appear in the second person plural form of the verbs, which is in the *vosotros* endings such as *limpiéis*.

Consonant Phonemes

Interestingly, there are numerous differences between the consonants in English and Spanish. Vizental (2008) contends that, according to phoneticians, there are 24 consonant phonemes in English, and they are grouped as plosive, affricate, fricative, nasal, and lateral consonants. In Spanish, however, Salcedo (2010) says that most American Spanish dialects have 19 consonant phonemes, and they are classified as stops, slit fricatives, groove fricatives, affricates, nasals, laterals, and tap consonants based upon the manners of articulation.

Frederi (2005) points out that there are 15 phonemes that happen in both languages, but 5 from these only occur in Spanish, and 9 only in English. Some of the phonemes that occur in both languages can be “ch” and “sh”. Even though these are different phonemes in English, in Spanish, these sounds may be pronounced interchangeably in the same word whose meaning will not be changed. This can be done in the word *chimenea*, where students might say “*chimenea*” or “*shimenea*”. Evidently, something like this cannot happen in English because the meaning would be totally different. For example, in the words *cheap* and *sheep*, it is not possible to pronounce these sounds interchangeably because they are referring to two different things. The same happens with the letters “v” and “b”. Although in English these are different phonemes, in Spanish, depending on the dialect, both consonants appear in written words, but people usually pronounce these two phonemes as “b”. For instance, the word *vaca* (cow) sounds like *baca*.

As mentioned above, there are certain consonant sounds that only occur in Spanish, but not in English (Frederi, 2005). For example, the trilled “rr”, a phoneme which can be heard in words such as *carro* meaning *car* and *pero* which is the conjunction *but*. Evlampieff (2017) posits that this is one of the typical phonemes English speakers find quite challenging to correctly pronounce in order to have a proper Spanish accent. If the phoneme is not correctly pronounced, the meaning of the word will be totally different from the one intended. Another phoneme that exists only in Spanish, but not in English is “ñ” as in *baño* to say *bathroom*. English speakers at first might be unclear about how to pronounce this consonant, however, paying attention to the phoneme “jə” as in the word *canyon*, they can become successful in producing this phoneme accurately. The consonant sound “ll” as in *lluvia* meaning *rain* may also be complicated to pronounce for English speakers. What they can do to properly pronounce this sound is focus on their sound “ʒ” as in the word *genre*. This phoneme resembles the one in Spanish “ll” and can facilitate learning its proper pronunciation.

Similarly, there are consonant phonemes that only occur in English but not in Spanish. Whitley (2002) states that there are unshared consonants in these two languages. For example, “ð” is in *father*, appears in English, but not in Spanish. Nonetheless, learning to produce this phoneme does not really seem extremely difficult for Spanish speakers because they can merely connect “ð” to the sound “d” as in *día* meaning *day* or use “t” instead of /θ/ in the word *thank*. Another phoneme existing in English, but not in Spanish is “dʒ” as in *jungle*. Yet, the closest Spanish sound that resembles “dʒ” is “ll” as in *llorar* meaning *cry*. To some extent, these two consonant phonemes may sound pretty much the same and students might not be able to clearly identify the difference in pronunciation unless they are carefully explained about the manner of articulation of each sound. Whitley (2002) also mentions that the English phoneme “ŋ” as in *king* does not exist in Spanish. Still, Spanish speakers might focus on the phoneme “g” as in *gato* meaning *cat* to try to produce the phoneme “ŋ” at the end of an English word.

Word and Sentence Stress

Frederi (2005) states that Spanish is a syllabic language. He explains that each syllable in this language has the same duration regardless of where the stress falls in the word. Usually, this is one of the main reasons for several English speakers to assume that Spanish speakers are “rapid” talkers. This responds to the fluent manner syllables are pronounced in Spanish. English, on the other hand, is characterized by having an accentual rhythm of speech. In other words, the accented syllables in a word tend to have a longer duration in comparison to the unaccented ones. For instance, in the word *banana* in English, the first and last syllables are pronounced very quickly because they have the unstressed schwa phoneme /ə/ while the second syllable is stressed as it has the phoneme /æ/. Taking the same word in Spanish, all the three syllables have the same duration and stress, and of course, the schwa phoneme /ə/ does not exist in this language. With regards to this phoneme, Shemesh (2012) indicates that there are 3 types of stress in English being these primary, secondary, and weak, which is the schwa sound. She goes on to explain that the primary stress is always longer, louder, and higher on pitch. For instance, in the word *tomorrow*, the first syllable sound “tə” has a weak stress, /mɒr/ has a primary stress, and /əʊ/ has a secondary stress. In Spanish though, there are only 2 two types of stress: primary and secondary, no matter how many syllables there are in a word. Taking the same example, *mañana*, which is “tomorrow”, the syllable “ña” has a primary stress, while the other two syllables “ma” and “na” have a secondary stress.

Another noticeable difference between these two languages is the use of a dash representing an orthographic sign that goes on the vowel of the stressed syllable, which is found in various cases of Spanish words (Lavandeira, 2015). This dash clearly suggests what syllable must be stressed in the word, and depending on the utterance, the meaning will change. For example, *tomate* without this accentual dash means “tomato” in English; with the orthographic sign though, *tómate*, the meaning of the word changes to the imperative form of verb *take* conjugated in the second singular person. This orthographic sign does not appear in English words; hence, it becomes more complicated for Spanish speakers to know what syllable is the one which has to be stressed in an English word. This is one of the reasons why English learners sometimes have trouble accentuating the right syllable in certain words.

For example, beginner English students might accentuate the syllable “ti” in the word “article” because the word in Spanish is *artículo*, being “ti” the accented syllable with the orthographic sign. Another example would be in the word *helicóptero*, where “có” is stressed; as a result, students might think that in English, the right syllable to accentuate is not “co” in *helicopter*, but first one “he”. Hence, this linguistic detail might cause confusion to Spanish speakers with regards to learning to accentuate syllables in English. For people who are learning to speak Spanish though, the orthographic sign can facilitate their learning as this dash explicitly tells them what syllable they are supposed to stress in a word.

With regards to sentence stress, Ballester (2015) points out that the relative stress of words in a sentence relies on their relative importance. In other words, the more significant a word is in a sentence, the stronger it will be stressed. These content words include nouns, adjectives, main verbs, and adverbs. This linguistic detail is found in both languages: Spanish and English; nonetheless, having a longer duration in content words of a sentence does not occur in Spanish.

Let us take the example of a complete sentence: “We stayed there for a while”, there are two accented areas of stress and as opposed to the other sounds in this statement, they have a slightly longer duration. This phonological phenomenon would not take place in Spanish even if the same sentence were translated into this language (Frederi, 2005). “Permanecemos ahí por un tiempo” does not have any special longer accented area of stress that stands out from the other sounds in the sentence. Indeed, the primary stress occurs in the syllables “ci”, “hí” and “tiem”, but this does not mean that the syllable sound is going to be longer as it happens in English. Therefore, accentual rhythm of speech would never take place in Spanish unless this were deliberately done to emphasize something like the message to be delivered or proper articulation of the syllable being accentuated.

Pronunciation Difficulties for Spanish Speakers

Undoubtedly, one of the biggest challenges for Spanish speakers when learning English as a foreign language is pronunciation. Afonso (2021) explains that they usually struggle to make certain sounds in English which are not found in their mother tongue. For example, they generally have trouble with these sounds /ɪ/ /i:/ /æ/ /ʌ/ /ɜ:/ /ɛ:/ /ə/ /ʊ/ /w/. For example, Spanish speakers find it hard to say *feel* and *fill* accurately as in their mother tongue they only have the short /ɪ/, not the long vowel sound. The same happens with /æ/, /ʌ/ and /a:/ which correspond to Spanish /a/ so Spanish native speakers struggle with these 3 different sounds. As a result, they will say these 3 words, for example, *bad*, *but* and *bar* in the same way with the sound /a:/. Besides vowel sounds, Spanish speakers also have issues with several consonant sounds. Uribe, Fuentes, Vargas, and Rey (2019) state that typically, it is hard for them to produce certain sounds like /ŋ/ /dʒ/ /ʒ/ /ð/ /θ/ /z/. It is common to hear learners using the /t/ sound instead of /θ/ in words like *thanks* or *through*, /s/ sound instead of /z/ in words such as *is* or *zoo* and the /g/ sound as in *good* in words like *wood* or *would*.

These authors also point out that regarding phonological differences between English and Spanish, some phonemes in these languages are done in a different manner and place of articulation. For instance, the phoneme /r/ is vibrant alveolar in Spanish, whereas in English, it is approximant post-alveolar. As a result, the speech organs of the Spanish speakers who are learning English have to be adjusted to the exact English articulation movements so that the phonemes are produced appropriately. Another

case is the phonemes /d/ and /t/. In English, these sounds are produced by touching the tip of the tongue against the upper gumline. In Spanish, however, these sounds are made by touching the blade of your tongue (just behind the tip) to this same position.

Another difficulty Spanish speakers have in pronunciation is word stress. Darren (2020) posits that in English, vowels are eaten. He explains that both of these languages have cognates, which are words that have the same origin. When these cognates are pronounced, however, the sound of certain phonemes change. For instance, in Spanish, vowels are normally produced more completely; meanwhile in English, they are usually reduced to the “schwa” sound /ə/. This occurs in syllables that are not stressed. A few examples of these cognates are: *color*, which in English it sounds like “colr”, but in Spanish it sounds exactly as the way it is written. Another example can be the word *normal*, which in English the sound goes like “norml”, but in Spanish it also sounds the way it is written.

Cognates can also lead to mispronunciation of certain phonemes of some particular words in English. Likewise, Spanish spelling has a big influence on English pronunciation. (Afonso, 2021) explains that spelling and pronunciation are very strongly associated in Spanish, so beginning students commonly pronounce English words in the same way they are written, letter by letter. Here we are also talking about L1 interference since their mother tongue negatively influences the way they read English. There are some common words Spanish speakers mispronounce. For example, *mother* /moder/, *money* /monei/, *chocolate* /tʃokoleit/, *friend* /friend/. But they also have problems identifying letters or sounds which are silent in English, so it is hard for them to identify and memorize which phonemes do not sound in English. Some typical examples are *answer*, *island*, *honest*, *palm*, *climb*, *knife* among other words.

Moreover, some Spanish speakers tend to drop consonant sounds at the end of words. Moore (2020) points out that this usually happens in words like “breakfast”, and learners just say “brekfas”. Another example is when they say *mine* trying to say *mind*, or *tex* instead of *text*. But this also occurs when they have to say the plural form of certain words. For example, in *sentences* they only say *sentence*, or *task* instead of *tasks*. Another mistake they make in pronunciation is when they have to use the past of some regular verbs and they don’t add the phoneme /d/ in verbs like *loved*, *decided*, *created*, *changed*, etc. They say these verbs as if they were in the present tense.

Now, Spanish speakers not only tend to drop consonant sounds at the end of terms, but they also tend to add the sound /e/ at the beginning of some words starting with ‘s’ and a consonant. Some typical examples happen in these words: *street* as ‘estreet’, *school* as ‘eschool’, *strict* as ‘strict’, and some others. According to Moore (2020), this occurs because words in Spanish do not normally start with a consonant cluster. Therefore, sounds like /sp/, /st/, /sk/, /sl/, /sm/ do not exist in Spanish and they will always have a vowel sound before. For example, *esperar*, *estado*, *esmero*, etc. A good way to correct

this pronunciation mistake in learners is to practice saying ‘sssss’ several times before actually saying the word which starts with /s/.

Didactic Implications

Unquestionably, learning to properly articulate and produce the target phoneme in either language (English or Spanish), at times, might not be very straightforward to carry out. However, it is the teacher’s responsibility to give students the necessary linguistic tools so that they become successful in pronouncing well the vowel, consonant, or syllabic sounds in the language they are learning. But in order to be able to accomplish this, students need to know the correct position of their mouth, tongue, lips and other speech organs when learning to articulate new phonemes.

Frederi (2005) points out that when language teachers are working with bilingual students, it is essential to know about common articulation rules as well as patterns of speech of the learners’ language. Being aware of these linguistic factors helps the language instructor better appreciate the phonological differences of these two languages, but more importantly, how to take advantage of these variances to smoothly teach the students the second or foreign language, which in this case would be Spanish or English.

Similarly, it is important and beneficial for students to work with minimal pairs since working with words, whose meaning and pronunciation differ from one sound, allows them to practice using correct pronunciation for each pair of words. Tursunkulova & Juraboyeva (2021) point out that minimal pairs offer great benefits when teaching and learning pronunciation of another language. They help students overcome their difficulties in pronunciation. Working with two words at the same time, where only one phoneme is different in each word, helps students’ identity and learn proper articulation of sounds of each phoneme as they can contrast two nearly alike sounds.

Likewise, Nordquist (2017) agrees that minimal pairs serve as linguistic tools which permit to indicate that two sounds are contrastive. He also claims that a minimal pair is the easiest and clearest manner to recognize phonemes in a language. Yule (2010) also suggests that minimal pairs allow students to develop their capacity to comprehend the distinction in meaning based upon the minimal sound contrast. Hence, these pairs of words help students practice and differentiate common bewildering sounds like /s/ and /z/, /tʃ/ and /ʃ/, /i:/ and /i/ among other phonemes in English. When learning Spanish, minimal pairs also help distinguish consonant and vowel sounds such as in words like *poca* and *foca*, *diga* and *digo*, *fuerte* and *suerte*, etc.

Having several repetition exercises is another key factor that greatly contributes to model and obtain proper pronunciation of such complicated sounds in either language,

Spanish or English (Ballester, 2015). Students should have as many opportunities as possible to practice listening to words, and then repeating them right after the word heard because the more they repeat, the faster they will learn to accurately pronounce the new utterances. But it is essential that language teachers wisely correct students' mispronunciation on time by using appropriate techniques to avoid making students feel frustrated or demotivated because of having too much correction.

According to Thornbury (2005), repetition and drilling is generally seen as an advantage when learning correct pronunciation of new items because it develops articulatory control over language. In other words, drilling allows proper articulation of sounds because the organs of speech production take the right position in order to properly say the utterances intended. But drilling is also seen as a fluency-enhancing technique because it does not only improve correct pronunciation of chunks but also speaking in a more natural manner without hesitation. So, the teacher should model correct pronunciation of the target words by having choral drilling, that is, asking all the students to repeat the words at the same time, and individual drilling, which means asking individual students at random to repeat the words to check and correct pronunciation.

But error correction ought to be used wisely and appropriately. Gumbaridze (2012) argues that one type of error correction cannot always be seen as the only primary method for all types of learners because for some students it can be motivating while for others it might be discouraging. Indeed, it is necessary to have many drilling exercises to enhance and perfect pronunciation of words, but it is also crucial to correct students' mistakes in a proper way utilizing different appropriate strategies that do not hinder learners from speaking the language. Thus, constant repetition exercises help optimize pronunciation and avoid having fossilization mistakes, but the teacher should be cautious and sensible in the way they correct learners' inappropriate articulation of sounds.

There are many other activities that can be applied in the classroom to model proper pronunciation of words, phrases and complete sentences. For example, to practice pronunciation of words, the technique "Odd One Out" is useful. Tursunkulova & Juraboyeva (2021) points out that this activity can make any pronunciation rules more memorable for learners. The idea is to choose some similar words in terms of pronunciation or their meaning. For instance, *leap*, *tea*, *sea*, *great*, etc. and students are supposed to choose the word, which is different from the group, which in this case is *great*. This activity can be done either as a reading exercise, where learners can read the words to themselves aloud and then identify the target sounds in the written words or as a listening exercise, where the teacher reads the words and the student just chooses the odd one out.

The activity "Reading out-loud" is another great tool to rehearse pronunciation. Uribe, Fuentes, Vargas, & Rey (2019) postulate that this technique has been

implemented in L2 teaching so that student's oral production can be enhanced. This activity offers several advantages. It not only improves pronunciation of individual words, but it also fosters fluency so that students can speak faster in a natural way. Moreover, it helps learners to improve word and sentence stress as well as intonation patterns. Naturally, this helps the teacher identify pronunciation mistakes and correct those errors afterwards. The teachers' role is extremely important in this exercise since if they do not model proper pronunciation of words, phrases, or even sentences, the students will continue making the same mistakes and those will become fossilized.

Thornbury (2005) also suggests using this technique as it has the advantage of providing a safe framework within which students can concentrate on lower-level features of speaking, such as pronunciation, stress and intonation. So, it is helpful if learners first mark onto their script the main stressed words and then divide each word or expression into meaningful chunks. This will allow them to sound more natural, accurate and fluent when speaking the target language.

This author also recommends using chants in the classroom because they represent a more playful way of practicing repetition and drilling of chunks. Thornbury (2005) states, "because they are contextualized, the chunks in chants may in fact be more memorable than in standard drills" (p. 66). In order to work best, the chants ought to include repeated examples of short, multi-word series, and should also have a constant rhythm. Once learners have heard the chant a couple of times, learners can try to reconstruct it in a written version, before they chant it in unison. Teachers can also ask students to mark the main stressed words to practice sentence stress. If tough utterances are included or found in the chant, they can be modeled in an isolated way and have learners repeat them a few times until correct pronunciation is heard.

There are many other activities that can be done when teaching both languages to improve the learner's pronunciation. Afonso (2021) suggests several famous techniques that teachers can apply in the classroom. For example, the phoneme race where the class is first divided into two teams and the teacher jots down some phonetic symbols on the board. These will be pronounced for students to listen to. Then he will write words on cards and the learners from each group have to run towards the teacher to obtain a card. Later, each team needs to identify the phoneme of the word pronounced, write it down on the back of the card and then run back to the teacher. If the word written is correct, that group is given another card. In the end, the group that has accumulated the most cards is the winner.

Afonso (2021) also recommends playing the game *Chinese whispers* where learners sit in a circle. The instructor displays one of the students a symbol and he has to whisper it to the next student. The next student whispers the symbol he heard to the next student and so on until the last learner gets that symbol. They should say the sound of that symbol to compare with the original one given to the first student. Now, this technique can be used not only symbols, but words, phrases or even sentences. It

all depends on what the teacher wants students to practice such as pronunciation of individual utterances, intonation, word or sentence stress.

Another useful technique to improve students' pronunciation in either language, Spanish or English, is using dictionaries. This activity works well if students are teenagers and adults whose level of English is at least (pre) intermediate and who have a good understanding of the phonetic alphabet. The teacher selects five words and at the same time they are phonetically transcribed. Individually or in pairs, they are required to write the corresponding word. Then learners exchange papers with another pupil or pair and are asked to check whether they have done it correctly. The winner is that learner or pair of students who got it right.

For students whose level of English is more basic or have no good domain of the phonetic alphabet, audio dictionaries can be used. The idea is that the teacher plays the audio of the word/s that need to be practiced and then students are asked to listen and repeat. Listening to the correct pronunciation provided by the dictionary can significantly help improve students' pronunciation. The teacher can even foster autonomous learning by encouraging learners to visit an online audio dictionary or download a complete one such as Cambridge, Oxford, Longman, etc. so that they can check the correct pronunciation of any word that they want to practice. Dictionaries with audio are such great tools to learn and improve pronunciation. But eventually, learning to read the phonemic charts is extremely important and beneficial because students will know exactly how to pronounce each symbol and consequently how to pronounce words correctly. So, language teachers should gradually incorporate pronunciation lessons along with the phonemic chart to help their students to improve this speaking sub-skill.

Conclusions

To sum up, there are a few similarities between Spanish and English regarding their phonological system, but there are more differences encountered between these two languages. In this paper, it was seen that even though several phonemes and a few other phonological patterns such as vowel and consonant sounds, diphthongs, triphthongs, word and sentence stress occur in both languages, the number of distinctive features between them is not the same. For example, considering the numbers of sounds mentioned above, it is concluded that English has a total of 44 phonemes, whereas Spanish has only 24 phonemes. Another difference is that English has an accentual rhythm of speech, where some syllables are longer than others, while in Spanish certain syllables are stressed, but they do not have longer duration. Finally, teachers need to take into consideration several factors when teaching about pronunciation to their students so that words are properly pronounced in either target language they are

learning. There are a variety of strategies and techniques such as the ones mentioned above that teachers can employ to help their learners improve their speaking skills, particularly pronunciation, intonation, proper word and sentence stress.

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