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EDITORIAL

We sincerely apologise to our readers, authors, and reviewers for the delayed publication of this issue of *Acta Anglica Tyrnaviensia*, caused by technical problems. We appreciate your patience, understanding, and continued support.

The present issue brings together contributions exploring English as a resource for intercultural exchange, professional communication, linguistic inquiry, and translation. Across diverse contexts, the articles invite reflection on how language knowledge becomes effective practice and how changing communicative needs shape research and teaching. Ivana Pondelíková and Veronika Benková examine English-language proficiency and intercultural communication in Slovak aquaparks, drawing attention to the relationship between staff preparedness and service quality. Their contribution finds a complementary perspective in Katarína Smolková's examination of intercultural communicative competence in EFL education, which highlights the uneven development of its dimensions and the need for systematic pedagogical support. Syed Majid Ali and Sunaina Khan extend these concerns to professional settings, exploring how anxiety, hesitation, and linguistic difficulties constrain spoken English. Together, these studies underline the importance of connecting language instruction with the social and emotional demands of communication. Questions of linguistic description and change provide another connecting thread. Aleksander Płaczkowski considers competing terminology for English verb-particle constructions, reminding us that descriptive labels carry theoretical assumptions. Božena Petrášová and Barbora Petrášová investigate the lexicographic treatment of vocabulary associated with electronically mediated communication, illuminating the challenges of documenting emerging usage. Katarína Welnitzová's analysis of anglicisms and internationalisms in EU documents addresses related questions of linguistic choice, examining the relationship between borrowed and native forms in Slovak translation. Two book reviews broaden the issue's scope. Marianna Hudcovičová discusses *Slovenský národný korpus pre prekladateľskú prax*, highlighting the contribution of parallel corpora to translator education and practice. Jakub Absolon reviews Laura Spinney's *Proto: How One Ancient Language Went Global*, considering the possibilities and limitations of an interdisciplinary account of language origins and dispersal. Collectively, these contributions demonstrate the value of bringing linguistic analysis into dialogue with educational, institutional, and cultural experience. We thank all contributors and reviewers for their work and invite readers to explore the questions, connections, and practical implications developed throughout this issue.

Editors

The Role of English Language Proficiency in Intercultural Communication and Service Quality in Slovak Aquaparks

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Abstract

The increasing internationalisation of tourism has intensified the need for effective communication between tourism employees and visitors from diverse cultural backgrounds. As English functions as the primary lingua franca in tourism, language proficiency and intercultural competence have become essential components of service quality. This study investigates the English language proficiency of employees in Slovak aquaparks and examines its implications for intercultural communication with international visitors. Using a mixed-methods research design, data were collected from 82 aquapark employees via a structured questionnaire and supplemented by qualitative interviews with three aquapark managers. The findings indicate that the majority of staff possess a functional level of English adequate for workplace communication. Intercultural barriers related to insufficient cultural knowledge were found to be relatively infrequent, which may reflect either a degree of cultural competence developed through practice or the relatively limited share of international visitors in Slovak aquaparks. The research also reveals a general absence of formal language and intercultural training within the sector. The study contributes to the growing body of research on communication in tourism and highlights the importance of English language proficiency in ensuring service quality and positive visitor experiences in Slovak aquaparks.

Keywords: English language proficiency, intercultural communication, Slovak aquaparks, tourism, service quality, visitor satisfaction

1 Introduction

Tourism is one of the fastest-growing sectors of the global economy, and with it comes an increasing demand for effective communication across linguistic and cultural boundaries. In

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the context of service industries such as aquaparks, staff's ability to interact with international visitors in English, the predominant lingua franca of global tourism, has become a critical determinant of service quality and customer satisfaction. Despite the growing internationalisation of leisure and wellness tourism in Central Europe, the linguistic and intercultural competencies of employees in Slovak aquaparks remain underexplored in the academic literature.

This study is situated at the intersection of applied linguistics, tourism studies, and intercultural communication research. Slovak aquaparks attract a growing number of international visitors, particularly from neighbouring countries such as the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Austria, as well as from more distant markets. As a result, front-line employees are regularly required to communicate across language and cultural boundaries, often without formal training or institutional support. The quality of these interactions can significantly shape visitors' perceptions of service quality and overall satisfaction.

The article aims to fill this gap by systematically investigating the English-language proficiency of aquapark staff and the extent to which intercultural barriers affect communication with international guests. Building on a mixed-methods research design that combines a structured questionnaire administered to 82 employees with qualitative interviews conducted with aquapark management, the study seeks to identify prevailing proficiency levels, assess the frequency and nature of communication barriers, and explore existing and desired forms of organisational support for language and intercultural development. The findings are expected to provide practically relevant insights for aquapark operators, human resource managers, and educators working in the field of tourism and hospitality.

2 Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Aquaparks represent a specific segment of tourism and leisure services in which the quality of customer experience is shaped not only by physical facilities, attractions, safety, hygiene, and catering, but also by the quality of interpersonal communication between staff and visitors. For international guests, service quality is closely linked to employees' ability to communicate in a foreign language, most commonly English, and to respond appropriately to culturally diverse expectations. This is particularly relevant for Slovak aquaparks. Scientific studies highlighted the importance of service quality in tourism and hospitality. Research suggests that visitor satisfaction is strongly influenced by staff professionalism, communication skills, hospitality, and customer-oriented service. Studies conducted by researchers in the field (Derco & Tometzová, 2025; Pellešová & Vacha, 2023; Miština, 2023; Dzurov, Vargová & Matušíková, 2025; Košíková et al., 2025) indicate that visitors tend to evaluate tourism facilities not only based on infrastructure and equipment but also through their interactions with employees. Consequently, effective communication, including the

ability to interact with international visitors in English, is an important component of overall service quality and customer satisfaction in aquaparks.

Foreign research on water parks confirms that customer satisfaction is strongly influenced by the quality of the experience provided. Jin, Lee, and Lee (2013) examined water park visitors and found that the quality of the experience significantly affects perceived value, water park image, and customer satisfaction. Similarly, Ghorbanzade et al. (2019) analysed behavioural intentions of water park visitors and confirmed that experience quality affects water park image, perceived value, visitor satisfaction, and future behavioural intentions. Their study is particularly relevant for research on Slovak aquaparks because it links service encounters, satisfaction, and loyalty. In practice, this means that communication with visitors, information clarity, staff responsiveness, and problem-solving ability may directly influence whether visitors perceive the aquapark positively and intend to return.

Service quality has also been examined in relation to customer satisfaction, loyalty, and revisit behaviour in water park settings. In a study conducted at Minang Fantasi Water Park in Padang Panjang, Indonesia, Zurnawati et al. (2018) found that service quality and customer satisfaction are significant predictors of visitor loyalty. Their findings suggest that higher satisfaction levels increase the likelihood of repeat visits, positive word-of-mouth recommendations, and favourable attitudes towards the destination. These conclusions were further supported by Cahyanti et al. (2020), who investigated 200 visitors of Hawai Waterpark Malang, Indonesia. Their research demonstrated that both service quality and destination attributes positively influence visitor satisfaction, which subsequently enhances visitors' intention to revisit the water park. Together, these studies highlight the crucial role of service quality in shaping visitor satisfaction, loyalty, and long-term behavioural intentions in aquapark environments.

The need to examine various forms of interaction among people from different cultural backgrounds has led to the emergence of intercultural communication as a distinct field of study. Intercultural communication combines three interconnected phenomena: culture, language, and communication. Culture permeates all areas of social life and, through language as one of its essential components, also shapes communication processes. Intercultural communication can be understood as communication between members of different cultures who possess distinct cultural perspectives, values, and patterns of behaviour. Various publications have endeavoured to define the essence of intercultural communication, including notable works by Hall (1989), Hofstede et al. (2010), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997), Průcha (2010), Mešková (2004), Miština (2023), Pecníková (2020), Poliak (2015), Pondelíková (2020), Dančišinová (2022), and others. For example, according to Nünning (2006, p. 345), intercultural communication is defined as "interpersonal interaction between members of different groups or cultures that takes place through linguistic codes." In addition, Lehmannová (1999, p. 114) uses the term cross-cultural communication and defines it as "a reflection of the communication process between individual and supra-individual subjects belonging to different cultural systems." Given the increasing

internationalisation of tourism, intercultural communication has become an essential component of aquaparks, as employees interact daily with visitors from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, making effective communication essential to ensuring service quality, visitor satisfaction, and positive customer experiences.

The article presented here contributes to this field by focusing on a less-explored aspect of aquapark services: English-language proficiency and intercultural communication among employees in Slovak aquaparks. This perspective extends existing research by showing that the level of service in aquaparks is determined not only by attractions and facilities but also by staff's ability to communicate effectively with international visitors and provide culturally sensitive customer service.

3 Research Methodology

The research methodology was systematically designed to align with the primary objective of assessing English language proficiency among staff employed in Slovak aquaparks and examining its implications for intercultural communication. To achieve this, a mixed-methods research design was adopted, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches in a complementary manner. Data were collected through two principal instruments: a structured questionnaire administered to aquapark personnel and semi-structured interviews conducted with aquapark management. The research further examined the extent to which language barriers may affect visitors' satisfaction and mediate intercultural experiences, with particular attention to interactions involving internationally diverse guests.

Central to this study was an anonymous online questionnaire divided into four core areas. The **Personal Profile** section established respondent diversity by capturing demographics and aquapark job roles. The **Communication and its Forms** section analysed operational adaptations for foreign guests, while the **Intercultural Barriers** section assessed English-language proficiency and past interactions with international visitors. Lastly, the **Intercultural Competence** section assessed the staff's training needs and expectations for employer-led support. To facilitate efficient data analysis, responses were measured using a frequency scale ranging from "Very Often" to "Never". The questionnaire was distributed digitally via email and social media platforms, specifically Instagram and Facebook. In addition to the questionnaire, we conducted qualitative interviews with aquapark managers. We contacted 22 aquaparks but obtained interview responses from only three, despite repeated follow-ups. The interviews nevertheless provided valuable insights into operational challenges, approaches to language barriers, and practices for enhancing intercultural interactions. While the interviews offered valuable insights, the limited sample size and subjective nature of the responses restricted the scope of the conclusions. Nevertheless, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods proved essential in defining the core research questions and hypotheses:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): *What is the English language proficiency level of staff employed in Slovak aquaparks?*

Hypothesis (H1): More than 50% of staff employed in Slovak aquaparks demonstrate an adequate level of English language proficiency for effective communication with international visitors.

Research Question 2 (RQ2): *To what extent are communication barriers in interactions with international visitors caused by insufficient English language proficiency and insufficient cultural knowledge among staff employed in Slovak aquaparks?*

Hypothesis (H2): Fewer than 30% of communication barriers experienced in interactions with international visitors are caused by insufficient English language proficiency, while fewer than 30% are caused by insufficient cultural knowledge and intercultural competence among staff.

The research questions and hypotheses provided a clear framework for data collection and analysis, enabling an examination of the relationships between language proficiency, intercultural communication, and visitor satisfaction in aquaparks. To ensure a comprehensive understanding of intercultural communication, the questionnaire addressed cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions, covering participants' knowledge, attitudes, and behavioural tendencies in intercultural interactions. By combining quantitative and qualitative methods, the research offers practical implications for improving staff training, communication practices, and intercultural competence within the aquapark industry.

3.1 Research Sample

The research sample consisted of 82 employees working in Slovak aquaparks. Collecting demographic and professional data provided important context for understanding respondents' English language proficiency, intercultural exposure, and communication needs within the tourism and hospitality environment. Of the respondents, 69.5% were women and 30.5% were men, all aged 16 years and older. Regarding educational attainment, 7.3% had completed primary education, 61% had completed secondary education, 15.9% held a bachelor's degree, and 15.9% held a master's degree. Most respondents (59.8%) reported an intermediate level of English proficiency (B1–B2), suggesting a functional command of the language for workplace communication. A further 26.8% indicated a basic level (A1–A2), while only 13.4% demonstrated advanced proficiency (C1–C2). The participants represented a variety of job positions. The largest group worked in food and beverage services (28%), followed by lifeguards (15.9%), marketing staff (12.2%), and receptionists (7.3%). Since different positions require different levels of interaction with international visitors, this distribution provides valuable insight into the language demands across departments.

Regarding employment status, 43.9% worked full-time under an employment contract, 40.2% were employed in part-time student positions, 12.2% worked part-time, and 3.7% were self-employed full-time. Only 26.8% of respondents had previous work experience abroad, whereas 73.2% had never worked outside Slovakia, indicating limited international experience

among most employees. In terms of length of employment, 35.4% had worked in the sector for less than one year, 29.3% for 1–2 years, 19.5% for 3–4 years, 8.5% for 5–6 years, and only 7.3% for more than seven years. These findings suggest relatively high employee turnover within the aquapark industry.

In addition, three managers from Slovak aquaparks participated in the qualitative part of the research. The respondents were aged 31, 40, and 44 years, respectively. Two respondents were female and one was male. They represented different regions of Slovakia, namely Trnava, Banská Bystrica, and Liptov. In terms of job positions, two participants worked as managers, while one held the position of manager of the economic and financial department. Regarding education, one respondent had completed secondary education, one held a bachelor's degree, and one had obtained a master's degree. Their employment tenure in the aquapark sector ranged from 5 to 10 years, indicating substantial professional experience. All three respondents reported intermediate English language proficiency, with one indicating a B2 level and the other two reporting proficiency between B1 and B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Ethical principles were rigorously observed throughout all stages of the research. Participation in both the interviews and the survey was entirely voluntary, with informed consent obtained from all participants before data collection commenced. To safeguard privacy and confidentiality, all data were anonymised and handled in compliance with applicable data protection standards. The study explored only participants' professional experiences, perspectives, and practices, and no personally identifiable information was collected. Furthermore, the use of artificial intelligence in the analytical process was carefully managed, with AI employed solely as a supplementary tool to support data analysis, while all interpretations and conclusions remained under the responsibility of the researchers.

4 Interpretation of the Research Results

Globalisation has increased the need for tourism employees to communicate effectively with visitors from diverse cultural backgrounds. As English serves as the primary lingua franca in tourism, both language proficiency and intercultural competence play key roles in ensuring high-quality service and positive visitor experiences. This study examines the English language proficiency of Slovak aquapark employees, their preparedness for intercultural communication, and the challenges they encounter in interactions with international guests. By identifying existing barriers and areas for improvement, the research aims to provide insights into potential training needs that could enhance employees' linguistic and intercultural skills. In addition to interpersonal communication, English is essential for providing information and services through digital channels. To evaluate how Slovak aquaparks address the needs of international visitors, the questionnaire also examined the availability of English-language content on websites, social media platforms, and other customer communication channels.

4.1 Evaluation of English-Language Accessibility in Slovak Aquaparks

An analysis of the websites of five major Slovak aquaparks revealed that only three of them, namely Tatralandia, Aquacity Poprad, and Podhájska, offer an English-language version, while the others provide information primarily in Slovak and, in some cases, Czech. Questionnaire results showed an equal distribution of responses, with half of the respondents reporting the availability of an English-language website and the other half indicating its absence. The in-depth interviews largely confirmed the questionnaire findings. Two respondents indicated that their aquaparks do not provide an English-language website and do not intend to implement one in the future, primarily due to the availability of automatic translation tools and the limited presence of international visitors. In addition, one respondent (R2) reported that their aquapark does offer an English-language website, stating: *“We are a regional aquapark with a small number of international visitors.”* Social media communication constitutes an important channel for reaching international visitors in the tourism industry. The results showed that 41.5% of aquaparks use English on their social media platforms, whereas 58.5% do not. This trend was also reflected in the in-depth interviews, where managers reported a lack of English-language communication on social media. Furthermore, the results showed that 50% of aquaparks provide information systems, such as signposts, information boards, and screens, in English, while the remaining 50% do not. The in-depth interviews largely supported these findings. Respondents R1 and R3 confirmed the availability of English-language informational materials, whereas R2 reported their absence, again referring to the low number of international visitors.

Recent Slovak studies (Derco & Tometzová, 2025; Pellešová & Vacha, 2023; Miština, 2023; Dzurov Vargová & Matušíková, 2025; Košíková et al., 2025) suggest that visitor satisfaction in tourism and hospitality is strongly influenced by staff quality, communication skills, and customer-oriented service. While the quality of food and services remains an important factor, negative visitor reviews are often associated with unhelpful staff attitudes and insufficient hospitality. As language accessibility plays a key role in communication with international guests, the study also examined the availability of English-language menus in aquaparks. The results indicate that 53.7% of aquaparks provide menus in English, while 46.3% do not. These findings were largely confirmed by the interviews, with respondents R1 and R3 reporting the availability of English menus, whereas R2 indicated that this option is not provided.

The findings indicate that the use of English in Slovak aquaparks remains inconsistent, with only around half of the facilities providing English-language websites, information systems, or menus, and even fewer using English on social media. The main barriers identified were the perceived low number of international visitors and a reliance on automatic translation tools, which often reduce the motivation to invest in comprehensive English-language communication.

4.2 Evaluation of English Proficiency, Intercultural Competence, and Training Needs of Aquapark Employees

The results indicate that intercultural barriers associated with English proficiency (**H2**) are uncommon among most respondents, with 62.2% reporting they encounter them rarely or never. However, 28% experience such barriers occasionally, while 9.8% face them often or very often (Figure 1). Although most employees appear to communicate effectively with international visitors, the findings suggest that intercultural challenges remain a relevant issue for a notable proportion of staff.

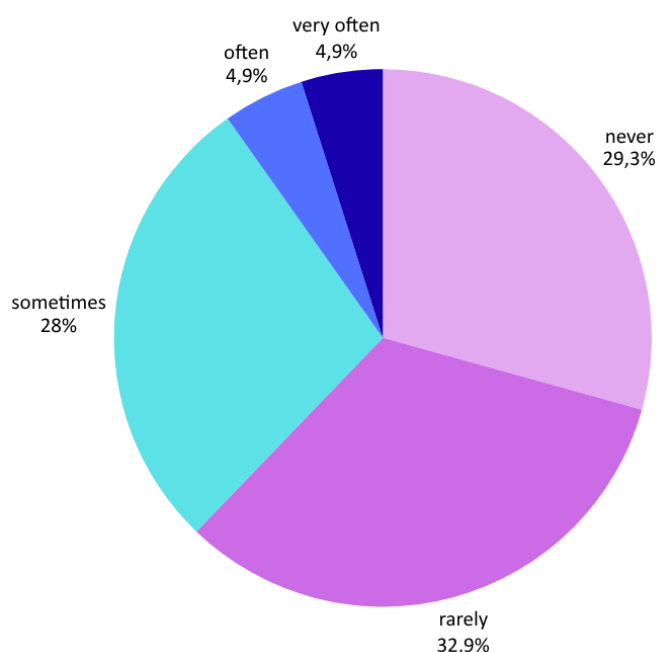


Figure 1 Encountering Intercultural Barriers Associated with Limited English Proficiency.

Source: own processing based on retrieved data

When communicating with international visitors, aquapark employees encounter varying levels of difficulty across different language skills. Difficulties with grammar and vocabulary were reported rarely or never by 42.7% of respondents, occasionally by 34.1%, and frequently by 23.2%. Listening comprehension appeared to be less problematic, with 60.9% reporting little or no difficulty. However, 39% of respondents experienced listening challenges at least occasionally. According to Lynch (2024), such difficulties may stem from limited vocabulary, unfamiliar expressions, regional accents, pronunciation differences, and grammatical structures encountered in authentic communication.

Speaking skills presented similar challenges. While 54.9% of respondents rarely or never struggled with speaking, 45.1% reported occasional or frequent difficulties, particularly regarding fluency, confidence, and the ability to formulate accurate responses in real-time

interactions. Despite these findings, the in-depth interviews revealed limited support for English-language development. Respondents consistently stated that formal language training was unnecessary, emphasising that English proficiency is either expected of employees or considered a basic requirement for recruitment.

Writing was identified as a challenging skill for a considerable proportion of respondents. Although 52.5% reported rarely or never experiencing writing difficulties, 47.6% encountered them at least occasionally, and 26.9% often or very often. These findings suggest that, despite the growing availability of AI-assisted writing tools, English-language communication continues to present challenges for a significant number of aquapark employees.

These findings support hypothesis **(H1)**, indicating that more than half of aquapark employees have English proficiency adequate for effective communication with international visitors. Most respondents reported rarely or never experiencing difficulties in listening (60.9%), speaking (54.9%), and writing (52.5%).

Aquaparks typically attract diverse international visitors, requiring employees not only to possess relevant professional skills and language skills, but also to demonstrate intercultural competence. Effective interaction with visitors depends on the ability to adapt to different cultural backgrounds, expectations, and communication styles. However, the findings revealed that 75.6% of respondents rarely or never experienced intercultural barriers (Figure 2). As a result, hypothesis **(H2)** was not supported. This outcome may indicate a relatively high level of cultural awareness among employees, or it may reflect the lower proportion of international visitors in Slovak aquaparks compared to similar facilities in more tourism-intensive destinations.

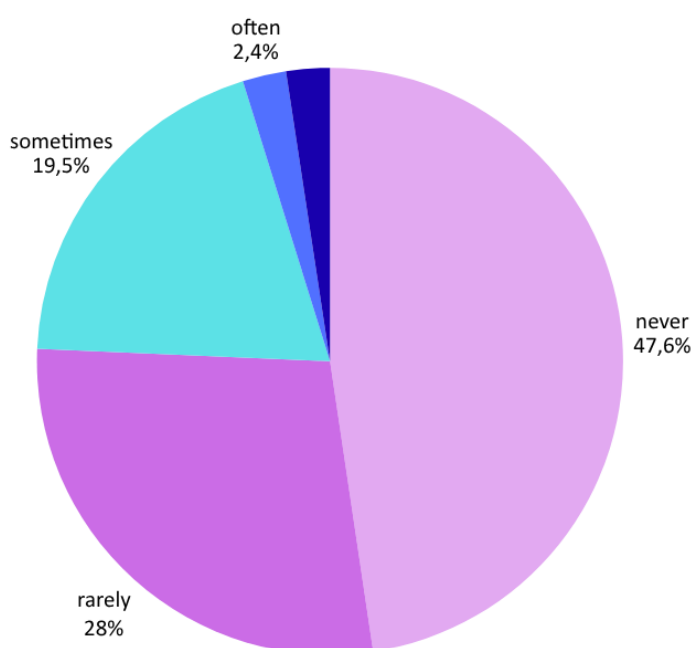


Figure 2 Encountering Intercultural Barriers Associated with Insufficient Cultural Knowledge.
Source: own processing based on retrieved data

Beyond cultural awareness, prejudice and bias may also influence intercultural interactions and communication in the workplace. The findings indicate that prejudice-related intercultural barriers are relatively uncommon among aquapark employees. Most respondents (61%) reported never encountering such issues, while 23.2% experienced them rarely and 13.4% occasionally. Only 1.2% reported facing prejudice-related barriers often or very often. As part of our in-depth interviews, respondents shared their experiences regarding prejudice in their workplaces. Respondent R1 said, *“Yes, I have encountered such situations. It involved skin colour, country of origin, and nationality. For example, Indian visitors wanted to swim in their underwear, and the lifeguards explained that this is inappropriate in our culture, so they had to purchase swimsuits.”* On the other hand, respondent R2 explained that *“there are no prejudices against cultures, but individual biases may arise among employees. Any situations are handled through communication with the specific employee, ensuring understanding and harmonious cooperation.”* Respondent R3 shared their opinion by saying, *“We select staff who have experience working in different cultures and can prevent intercultural conflicts.”* By carefully selecting experienced staff, the aquaparks adopt a proactive approach to fostering a cooperative and efficient work environment.

Kriglerová et al. (2015, p. 21) emphasise that *“for intercultural communication, it is absolutely crucial that we perceive different cultures merely as alternative perspectives on the world and let go of the belief that our culture is the only correct one. The belief that other cultures should adapt to ours causes us to communicate from a position of “superiority,” which prevents a thorough understanding of other cultures and hinders empathy and effective communication”*. The authors (ibid. 2015, p. 21) stress that *“in intercultural communication, we should avoid judging another culture as “wrong,” and it is important not to mock or demean others”*. In this regard, the research focused on adherence to intercultural requirements in the workplace. The responses suggest that a substantial share of employees demonstrate effective intercultural behaviour, with 48.8% reporting that they often or very often act appropriately in intercultural situations. Another 14.6% do so occasionally, while 36.6% rarely or never encounter such situations in their work.

The study also explored whether employees expected their employers to provide English language courses. The results revealed mixed opinions. While 42.7% of respondents did not expect such courses to be offered and 20.7% expected them only rarely, 36.7% expressed at least occasional interest in employer-provided English-language training. Employees were also asked whether they felt a need to improve their intercultural competence through training provided by their employer. The majority of respondents (62.2%) reported little or no need for such training, whereas 19.5% considered occasional training beneficial and 18.3% expressed a desire for more frequent opportunities. The findings from the in-depth interviews support these results. When asked whether their companies provide support for the development of English language skills and intercultural competence, respondent R1 stated, *“We do not provide any such support.”* Similarly, respondent R2 commented, *“No, we do not offer any form of training.”* Respondent R3 reported that development is achieved *“through*

practice and communication with employees who describe situations on the basis of which the operational strategy of individual departments and employee behaviour requirements are designed.” These findings suggest that formal language and intercultural training are not currently a priority for most employers. Nevertheless, many employees demonstrate a willingness to improve their English proficiency independently, with 31.7% reporting that they often engage in self-development and a further 4.9% indicating that they do so very often. Interest in expanding intercultural knowledge was less pronounced but still notable. A total of 13.4% of respondents reported often feeling the need to learn more about other cultures, their customs, and traditions, while 8.5% reported this need very often. However, given the increasing diversity of international visitors, there is a growing need to equip employees with the linguistic and intercultural skills necessary for effective communication across cultures.

5 Final Discussion, Limits of the Research, and Recommendations

The primary aim of this study was to evaluate the English language proficiency of employees working in Slovak aquaparks and to examine the extent to which language and cultural factors influence intercultural communication with international visitors. The findings confirmed hypothesis **(H1)**, which assumed that more than 50% of aquapark employees possess an adequate level of English proficiency for effective communication with foreign guests. Most respondents reported rarely or never experiencing difficulties in listening, speaking, and writing, indicating that their language skills are generally sufficient for workplace communication. In contrast, hypothesis **(H2)** was not supported. The results revealed that intercultural barriers related to insufficient cultural knowledge and intercultural competence occur relatively infrequently. Most respondents reported rarely or never encountering such barriers, suggesting either a relatively high level of intercultural awareness among employees or a lower level of exposure to culturally diverse visitors in Slovak aquaparks.

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. The most significant limitation concerns the study's qualitative component. Although 22 Slovak aquaparks were contacted, only three managers agreed to participate in the in-depth interviews. Despite repeated attempts to engage with them via email, phone calls, and in-person visits during and after the summer peak, most aquaparks remained unresponsive or unwilling to participate. To support this observation, Aquapark Podhájska stated that *“after careful consideration, the management has decided not to answer the in-depth interview questions. However, we are willing to complete the questionnaire.”* As a result, the managerial perspective represented only a limited portion of the sector. To partially compensate for this limitation, an analysis of the websites of the five most popular Slovak aquaparks was conducted. Nevertheless, the restricted number of interview participants limits the generalisability of the qualitative findings.

A particular strength of this study lies in its focus on a relatively underexplored segment of the Slovak tourism industry. Responses from 82 aquapark employees provided a substantial basis for examining English-language proficiency and intercultural communication in this context. In addition, the combination of employee and managerial perspectives contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of workplace communication practices.

Future research may build on these findings by including international visitors and employing additional assessment methods to further deepen the understanding of intercultural communication in tourism settings. Further studies could investigate the relationship between English language proficiency, customer satisfaction, and service quality in greater depth. In addition, the research could be extended to related sectors of tourism and hospitality, particularly restaurants, hotels, wellness centres, and spa facilities, where intercultural communication plays an equally important role. Finally, future studies may explore the effectiveness of language and intercultural training programmes and assess how artificial intelligence and translation technologies influence communication practices in tourism services.

Despite its limitations, the study contributes to the growing body of research on language proficiency and intercultural communication in Slovak tourism. The findings highlight the generally satisfactory level of English proficiency among aquapark employees while also identifying areas where further development of language skills, intercultural awareness, and organisational support could enhance communication with international visitors.

6 Conclusion

In Slovakia, where tourism represents an increasingly important sector of the economy, aquapark employees serve as key intermediaries between service providers and international visitors. Their ability to communicate effectively in English and respond appropriately to cultural diversity significantly influences service quality, visitor satisfaction, and the overall image of aquaparks as tourism destinations. Consequently, examining the English language proficiency and intercultural competence of Slovak aquapark employees is particularly relevant, as it provides valuable insights into current communication practices and identifies areas for further professional development and service improvement. The findings indicate that most employees possess an adequate level of English proficiency for effective communication with international visitors. The research also demonstrated that intercultural barriers associated with insufficient cultural knowledge occur relatively infrequently. An important finding concerns the inconsistent provision of English-language information across Slovak aquaparks. English-language websites, social media communication, information systems, and menus are available only in some facilities, potentially limiting accessibility for international visitors. Furthermore, despite the growing importance of intercultural communication in tourism, the use of formal language and intercultural training remains uncommon among aquapark employers.

The study confirms that English-language proficiency and intercultural competence are significant components of service quality in contemporary tourism. As aquaparks increasingly operate in an international environment, investment in employee language development, intercultural training, and multilingual communication strategies may improve visitor satisfaction and the overall customer experience. Future research should include the perspectives of international visitors and investigate the relationship between communication practices, service quality, and customer loyalty in greater detail.

In light of these findings, it is recommended that aquapark management consider investing in structured English language training programmes, particularly for staff in customer-facing roles. Equally, raising intercultural awareness through workshops or experiential learning opportunities could enhance employees' readiness for interactions with visitors from diverse cultural backgrounds. Future research should extend this investigation to include the perspectives of international visitors themselves, employ standardised language assessment tools to obtain more objective measures of proficiency, and broaden its scope to encompass other sectors of the Slovak tourism and hospitality industry where similar communicative challenges are likely to arise.

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Alternative Terminology in Linguistics: Special Reference to English Verb-Particle Constructions

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Abstract

Linguistic scholarship has long been characterised by the coexistence of competing terminologies describing identical or closely related language phenomena. Such variation reflects both the historical development of linguistic thought and the diversity of theoretical approaches adopted by researchers. This article examines the role of alternative terminology in linguistics, with particular attention to English verb–particle constructions. After outlining the broader issue of terminological variation in linguistic description, the study surveys a range of labels, both historically and currently used, to denote phrasal verbs and related multi-word verb constructions. The analysis evaluates the descriptive adequacy of these terms and considers the extent to which they accurately reflect the grammatical and semantic properties of the structures they describe. Special attention is devoted to the relationship between terminology and theoretical perspective, as well as to the distinction between genuine verb–particle constructions and superficially similar idiomatic expressions. The findings suggest that although numerous alternative designations have been proposed, the terms phrasal verb and verb–particle construction remain the most transparent and widely accepted labels in contemporary English linguistics.

Keywords: *phrasal verbs, verb-particle constructions, multi-word verbs, linguistic terminology, English grammar, descriptive linguistics*

1 Introduction

As with any scientifically oriented discipline, linguistics has developed an extensive body of specialised terminology. This becomes particularly evident when one considers the field's historical development and the numerous theoretical approaches that have emerged throughout its evolution (Trask, 1999, pp. 171–173). In addition to a rich inventory of technical

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terms and definitions, linguistic scholarship is characterised by the coexistence of alternative designations that are often used alongside one another or have gradually replaced older terminology. An illustrative example is the term *accidence*, which is rarely employed in contemporary linguistics and has largely been superseded by the more neutral and precise designation *inflectional morphology* (Trask, 1997, p. 3).

The existence of multiple terms referring to the same or closely related linguistic phenomena raises an important question: is such terminological variation necessary, particularly when some designations appear outdated, redundant, or superfluous? The answer is, to a considerable extent, affirmative. Scientific inquiry requires precision in the description and analysis of concepts, and the development of specialised terminology is often motivated by the need to avoid ambiguity and potential misinterpretation. Since linguistics is fundamentally a scientific discipline, discussions of language-related phenomena benefit from terminological accuracy and consistency.

A further issue is that linguists frequently use different terms to describe similar phenomena. The term *formative*, for example, has been used in various ways within linguistic literature and, according to Bauer (2004, p. 45), may refer to as many as five distinct linguistic concepts. Although such variation may initially appear problematic, it is often justified by the complexity of language itself. Linguistic research has repeatedly demonstrated that phenomena which appear similar on the surface may arise from different underlying processes. A representative example is the diachronic account of the Great Vowel Shift, where scholars continue to debate the factors that triggered this far-reaching phonological change (Brinton & Arnovick, 2006, pp. 308–309). Consequently, alternative terminology may reflect different analytical perspectives rather than mere inconsistency.

Historical considerations also contribute to terminological diversity. Earlier grammarians and linguists worked within intellectual frameworks that differed substantially from those available today. Since many contemporary linguistic theories had not yet been developed, their descriptions of language naturally reflected the prevailing scholarly assumptions of their time. As a result, terminology employed in earlier grammatical traditions often differs from that used in modern linguistic analysis. For instance, some traditional grammarians used the term *substantive* to refer to what is now generally recognised as the category of the noun, whereas contemporary grammar reserves the term for more specific applications and classifications (Crystal, 2008, p. 463).

Against this background, the present article examines the phenomenon of alternative terminology in linguistics, with particular attention to the terminology used to describe English verb–particle constructions. By exploring the historical development and current usage of competing designations, the study seeks to evaluate their descriptive adequacy and to determine the extent to which terminological variation contributes to a more precise understanding of this important grammatical category.

The issue of alternative terminology is also closely related to the level of formality at which language is discussed. Since the present article is primarily concerned with grammatical phenomena, any terminological variation examined here should be understood within the context of grammatical description. When the structure of English sentences is analysed in relatively formal terms, the approach adopted is typically descriptive rather than pedagogical. This is also the perspective taken in the present study.

The discussion, therefore, occupies a position between two extremes. On the one hand, there is the practical grammar classroom, where the focus may be on exercises involving phrasal verbs, selecting appropriate particles, or replacing multi-word verbs with synonymous lexical items. On the other hand, there is a highly theoretical linguistic inquiry that may address abstract issues such as the emergence of grammatical categories or the nature of linguistic representation. The choice of terminology is often determined by the level of analysis at which a particular discussion is conducted.

The relationship between grammatical terminology and scholarly practice is highlighted by Leech (2006, pp. 1–4), who points out that the proliferation of grammatical terms stems partly from the existence of different communities of language scholars:

“But there is an additional reason why terminology proliferates in the study of grammar. There is not one undivided ‘community of English grammarians’, who talk to one another and exchange ideas in a single forum... Rather, in broad terms, there are three communities. There is a community of grammar teachers – people interested in grammar from a pedagogical perspective. There is a community of theoretical researchers who are primarily interested in English grammar as an exemplar of human knowledge. And, between these two, there is a middle-of-the-road body of descriptive grammarians, people who are interested in giving an account of English grammar as a goal in itself”.

Leech’s observation is particularly relevant to the present discussion. The terminology examined in this article belongs primarily to the domain of descriptive grammar, which seeks to provide systematic accounts of linguistic structures without necessarily adopting the highly specialised terminology of theoretical linguistics or the simplified nomenclature characteristic of pedagogical grammar. Consequently, the alternative designations discussed in the following sections should be viewed not merely as competing labels but also as reflections of different descriptive traditions and analytical perspectives within the study of English grammar.

2 Terminological Variation in Linguistics and English Verb-Particle Constructions

The existence of alternative terminology is a characteristic feature of linguistic description. Different terms may emerge from historical developments, theoretical preferences, descriptive traditions, or attempts to achieve greater analytical precision. This chapter first illustrates the broader phenomenon of terminological variation in linguistics and then focuses

on the terminology used to describe English verb–particle constructions, a grammatical category that has generated a particularly wide range of competing designations.

2.1 Alternative Terminology in Linguistics

As noted in the Introduction, linguistics employs numerous alternative terms to describe identical or closely related language phenomena. However, the reasons for the coexistence of such terms are not always consistent. Bauer (2021, pp. 128–135) devotes an entire chapter to illustrating the extent of terminological variation in contemporary linguistics. It should be noted, however, that some of the competing terms discussed by Bauer arise primarily from synonymy rather than from a genuine need for a new or theoretically better-motivated designation. Table 1 presents a representative selection of examples adapted from Bauer (2021, pp. 128–135). The list illustrates the breadth of terminological variation found across different branches of linguistics.

Table 1 *Selected examples of alternative linguistic terminology (adapted from Bauer, 2021, pp. 128–135)*

Preferred term	Alternative designation(s)
allomorph	morpheme alternant, morpheme variant
allophone	phoneme alternant
alveolar ridge	alveolum, teeth ridge
analytic	isolating
anticipatory assimilation	regressive assimilation
antonym	opposite
approximant	semivowel, glide
baby-talk	caregiver language, child-directed speech, motherese
back-derivation	back-formation
blend	portmanteau word
calque	loan translation
centre	determinant, head; nucleus, peak
close vowel	high vowel
closed syllable	checked syllable
content word	lexical word, full word
continuous	progressive
coordinating conjunction	coordinator
dark	velarised
defining relative clause	restrictive relative clause
ending	inflectional suffix
formative	morpheme
fossilization	idiomatisation, lexicalisation
genitive	possessive

Grimm's Law	First Germanic Consonant Shift
headword	lemma
inflecting	inflectional, fusional
lax vowel	checked vowel
mass noun	non-count noun, non-countable noun
phone	speech sound
realization	exponence, manifestation
suffix	ending
tip of the tongue	apex
velum	soft palate
word class	lexical category, part of speech
zero derivation	conversion, functional shift

The examples listed above represent only a small fraction of the alternative terminology encountered in linguistic literature. Nevertheless, they demonstrate that terminological variation is a widespread and persistent feature of linguistic description.

2.2 Alternative Designations for English Verb-Particle Constructions

Interestingly, Bauer's (2021) survey does not include terminology associated with phrasal verbs and related verb-particle constructions. This omission provides an opportunity to examine a category in which terminological variation is particularly extensive. Throughout the present article, the term *multi-word verb* will be used as a relatively neutral and readily recognisable designation encompassing phrasal verbs and related verb-particle constructions. In the literature on English grammar, phrasal verbs remain one of the most widely used designations for verb-particle constructions. In many descriptive accounts, the term is employed broadly and often overlaps with the more general label multi-word verb. In this article, unless otherwise indicated, the two terms will be used more or less synonymously along with the other equally neutral term 'verb-particle combination.' As will be demonstrated below, however, the number of labels employed in the literature to describe these structures is surprisingly large.

Despite the prominence of verb-particle constructions in English grammar, relatively little attention has been devoted to the terminology used to describe them. When terminological issues are discussed, they are often treated as matters of individual scholarly preference or as the result of established descriptive traditions (Bolinger, 1971, p. 3; Hiltunen, 1983, p. 17). Although Bolinger (1971, pp. 3–22) dedicates an entire chapter of *The Phrasal Verb in English* to questions of terminology, the scope of his discussion differs considerably from the concerns of the present study.

One notable exception is Sroka's (1972, pp. 13–21) monograph, which includes a substantial discussion of alternative designations. Although written within the framework of

post-structural linguistics, an approach no longer widely practised, the study remains valuable for its systematic treatment of terminological issues.

Another important contribution is Lipka's (1972, pp. 16–20) study, which approaches verb–particle constructions primarily from semantic and morphological perspectives and places considerable emphasis on English word-formation processes. An additional merit of both Sroka's and Lipka's works is their discussion of earlier dissertations and articles that are often difficult to access today. The problem with some of the above-mentioned studies, especially doctoral dissertations, is that most were written many years ago and have not been digitised. This, of course, makes it especially difficult for a linguist or a student to consult them. From a terminological perspective, Lipka's designation of *prepositional-phrasal verbs* deserves particular attention. This term differs from the more widely accepted label phrasal-prepositional verbs and appears problematic because, in three-word verb constructions, the first particle is typically adverbial and the second prepositional.

The following examples illustrate the structure of phrasal-prepositional verbs:

(1) He **looks down on** anyone who did not go to university.

In this example, down functions as an adverbial particle, whereas on functions as a preposition.

(2) How has Jan **put up with** him for so long?

Similarly, up functions as an adverbial particle and with as a preposition (Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus, 2009, pp. 265, 351).

Hiltunen's (1983, p. 17) discussion of terminology in his influential diachronic study is relatively brief. He simply observes that the term phrasal verb has achieved broad acceptance in linguistic scholarship and therefore adopts it as the principal designation throughout his work.

A more recent contribution is the doctoral dissertation by Płaczkowski (2011, pp. 10–11). Although this study adopts a more revisionist perspective on earlier terminology and offers a more comprehensive treatment of verb–particle constructions, terminological issues remain secondary to the dissertation's broader objectives. Consequently, even in this case, the question of naming and classification does not receive exhaustive treatment.

3 Historical Designations and Terminological Issues in the Description of English Verb-Particle Constructions

English multi-word verbs constitute a distinct grammatical category alongside other verb-related categories such as mood, aspect, and modality. The existence of this category is widely recognised, as evidenced by the numerous specialised dictionaries and reference works devoted exclusively to phrasal verbs and related constructions. Such recognition highlights the importance of distinguishing genuine verb–particle constructions from other idiomatic

expressions that may display superficially similar semantic or syntactic characteristics. A detailed discussion of these distinctions will be postponed to later sections of the present article. At this stage, the primary objective is to examine and evaluate some of the most frequently used designations applied to English multi-word verbs.

A survey of the literature reveals a considerable diversity of terminology. Among the earliest scholars to address the phenomenon was Sweet (1900/2005), who employed the term "group-verbs". The same term was later adopted by Denison (1981, pp. 9–10) in his doctoral dissertation, although with a somewhat different emphasis. Denison's use of the term is motivated primarily by morphological considerations, as he defines group-verbs as constructions in which the verbal element undergoes inflexion while the particle remains unchanged. He also argues that Sweet's original application of the term was more restricted.

Another early contribution is Eitrem's (1903, p. 69) study, which employs the designation verb-adverb groups. Although the article is chiefly concerned with stress placement in multi-word verbs, it remains one of the earliest investigations of the category. Kennedy's (1920, p. 9) monograph likewise deserves special attention, as it constitutes one of the earliest comprehensive treatments of the suprasegmental features of verb–particle constructions. Stress placement in multi-word verb constructions is commonly regarded as one of the principal diagnostic criteria in modern English grammar for distinguishing between adverbial and prepositional particles and, by extension, between phrasal and prepositional verbs (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 1157).

The term phrasal verb itself appears relatively early in the literature. Smith (1925/1943) formally adopts this designation, although, as will be shown later, his choice appears to have been motivated by considerations that extend beyond the grammatical structure of multi-word verbs. Other scholars proposed alternative labels reflecting different aspects of the phenomenon. Roberts (1936, p. 466) uses the term verb-adverb locutions, whereas Kruisinga (1932, p. 337) and Curme (1947, p. 24) employ the designation separable compounds. Stevick (1950, p. 214), in his discussion of deferred prepositions, introduces the term poly-word verbs. Similarly, Anthony (1953, p. 1) and Taha (1960, p. 115) use the label two-word verbs.

Further terminological variation can be observed in later studies. Francis (1958, p. 265) adopts the designation separable verbs in his description of American English grammar. Live (1965, p. 428) refers to discontinuous verbs, Marchand (1966, p. 86) to post-particle verbs, and Fraser (1976, p. 1) to verb-particle combinations. More recently, Dehé (2002, p. 5) has employed the term particle verbs. Table 2 summarises the principal designations encountered in the literature.

Table 2 *Historical designations for English verb–particle constructions*

Author	Term employed
Sweet (1900/2005)	group-verbs
Eitrem (1903)	verb-adverb groups
Kennedy (1920)	phrasal verbs-related description

Smith (1925/1943)	phrasal verbs
Kruisinga (1932)	separable compounds
Roberts (1936)	verb-adverb locutions
Curme (1947)	separable compounds
Stevick (1950)	poly-word verbs
Anthony (1953)	two-word verbs
Francis (1958)	separable verbs
Taha (1960)	two-word verbs
Live (1965)	discontinuous verbs
Marchand (1966)	post-particle verbs
Fraser (1976)	verb-particle combinations
Denison (1981)	group-verbs
Dehé (2002)	particle verbs

The diversity of labels outlined above demonstrates that the terminology used to describe English multi-word verbs has never been fully standardised. Depending on the theoretical orientation and the level of technicality adopted, different scholars have favoured different designations. Among these, one of the most neutral and technically precise labels appears to be Fraser's (1976) term verb-particle combination (or verb-particle construction). The principal advantage of this designation lies in its grammatical neutrality. Since such constructions consist of a lexical verb followed by either an adverbial or a prepositional particle, the term accurately describes the formal structure of the construction without imposing a specific grammatical interpretation on the particle.

Another advantage of the term verb-particle combination is that it postpones the need to determine whether the particle should be classified as an adverb or a preposition, a distinction that frequently plays a crucial role in the analysis of multi-word verbs. The distinction between adverbial and prepositional particles is a recurring topic in the literature on phrasal verbs and is discussed in virtually every grammar and scholarly study dealing with verb-particle constructions. In this context, it is worth mentioning another term that occasionally appears in the literature, namely *adprep*. The designation was probably first adopted by Taha (1960) and was subsequently employed by several authors for different analytical purposes.

Bolinger (1971, pp. 26–28), for example, uses the term when discussing cases in which the grammatical status of the particle is particularly difficult to determine. Among the examples he cites are the following:

(3) *He ran **down** the road.*

(4) *She swept **off** the stage.*

(5) *We backed **up** the stream.*

According to Bolinger (1971, p. 27), if the particles in these examples are analysed as adverbs, the corresponding pronominalised constructions yield the following interpretations:

(6) He **ran it down**. (*'disparaged it'*)

(7) She **swept it off**. (*'cleaned it'*)

(8) We **backed it up**. (*'clogged it'*)

If, however, the particles are interpreted as prepositions, different meanings emerge:

(9) He **ran down it**. (*'performed his running somewhere down the road'*)

(10) She **swept off it**. (*'performed her sweeping somewhere not on the stage'*)

(11) We **backed up it**. (*'performed the backing movement at some point upstream'*)

Bolinger further argues for a third interpretation of these pronominalised constructions:

(12) He **ran down it**. (*'descended it'*)

(13) She **swept off it**. (*'departed from it majestically'*)

(14) We **backed up it**. (*'ascended it in reverse direction'*)

According to Bolinger (1971, pp. 27–28), examples (12)–(14) differ from examples (9)–(11) because they simultaneously exhibit properties associated with both phrasal verbs and prepositional phrases. He describes this phenomenon as dual constituency and adopts the term *adprep* to account for the double grammatical function performed by the particle.

The notion of *adprep* is also valuable because it helps distinguish genuine verb–particle constructions from superficially similar expressions whose grammatical properties differ substantially from those examined in the present study. As such, it represents an attempt to account for cases that resist straightforward classification within the traditional categories of phrasal and prepositional verbs.

4 Ambiguous Terminology and the Relationship between Phrasal Verbs and Compounds

Among the alternative designations discussed in the previous chapter, some appear to be potentially ambiguous or misleading. One such example is Francis's (1958, p. 265) term *separable verbs*. On the one hand, the designation highlights an important syntactic characteristic of many multi-word verbs, namely the possibility of inserting a noun phrase or a pronoun between the lexical verb and the particle. In the case of transitive phrasal verbs, the insertion of a pronoun such as *it* or *them* between the verb and the particle is obligatory. Even when longer noun phrases are inserted, the semantic unity of the verb–particle construction is generally preserved. It should be noted, however, that excessively long noun phrases are rarely placed between the verb and the particle, as such separation may create both syntactic and semantic difficulties.

On the other hand, the term separable verbs may be interpreted in more than one way. The separability of the verb and the particle may refer either to the fact that the two elements are written separately or to the possibility of inserting other sentence constituents between them under specific grammatical conditions. This is particularly evident in the case of transitive phrasal verbs:

(15) He **handed in** his essays on time.

(16) He **handed** his essays **in** on time.

Consequently, the designation separable verbs may refer both to the formal independence of the verb and particle and to the syntactic flexibility characteristic of certain multi-word verb constructions.

An even more problematic designation is separable compounds, employed by Kruisinga (1932, p. 337) and Curme (1947, p. 24). In contemporary linguistics, the term compound is generally contrasted with the term phrase, although the distinction between the two is not always straightforward. Since this distinction bears directly on the classification of multi-word verbs, it merits closer examination.

A particularly useful comparison of compounds and syntactic phrases is provided by Brinton and Brinton (2010, pp. 103–107), whose discussion forms the basis of the following analysis. To begin with, orthography often provides little assistance in distinguishing between compounds and phrases. Both may be written as separate words or as hyphenated forms, while compounds may additionally appear as single orthographic units. Brinton and Brinton (2010, p. 103) illustrate this point with the compound ice cream, which may occur as ice cream, ice-cream, or icecream.

From a semantic perspective, both compounds and phrases are capable of expressing coherent units of meaning. Examples include the compound shipyard and the phrase automobile assembly plant. Brinton and Brinton (2010, p. 103) further observe that compounds tend to be organised from a less literal to a more literal element, as in forthcoming and off-putting, whereas corresponding phrasal constructions, such as come forth and put off, display the opposite ordering.

Another important characteristic of compounds is what Brinton and Brinton (2010, p. 103) describe as external mobility. Compounds function as single units within a sentence, and their internal components cannot normally be separated. Consider the following example:

(17) The lawyer conducted **the cross-examination**.

(18) **The cross-examination** was conducted by the lawyer.

In both sentences, the compound remains intact and functions as a single constituent. By contrast, phrasal verbs behave more like syntactic phrases, allowing movement of one of their elements:

(19) He **checked out** the witness.

(20) He **checked** the witness **out**.

As these examples demonstrate, the rearrangement of elements within a phrasal verb typically has little or no effect on the overall meaning of the sentence.

Brinton and Brinton (2010, p. 104) further note that compounds and phrasal verbs share several important characteristics. Semantically, both types of construction may be relatively opaque, meaning that their overall meanings cannot always be predicted from the meanings of their constituent parts. In addition, both compounds and phrasal verbs display a high degree of semantic cohesion. This is particularly evident in the fact that many phrasal verbs can be replaced by single-word verbs, often of Romance or Latinate origin, for example:

Table 3 *Examples of phrasal verbs and their approximate one-word equivalents (adapted from Brinton & Brinton, 2010, p. 104)*

Phrasal verb	Approximate one-word equivalent
break out	erupt, escape
take off	depart, remove
put out	extinguish
take up	adopt

Despite these similarities, several important differences distinguish phrasal verbs from compounds. These differences are sufficiently significant to justify the classification of multi-word verbs as phrasal rather than compound verbs. Brinton and Brinton (2010, p. 106) point out that phrasal verbs permit internal modification, as illustrated by forms such as burn down, burned down, and burning down. Furthermore, phrasal verbs typically exhibit two primary stresses, as in work out. Finally, as demonstrated earlier in this article, the verb and the particle may often be separated, a characteristic feature of syntactic phrases rather than compounds.

The role of stress placement as a criterion for distinguishing compounds from phrases has also been discussed in earlier studies. Schlauch (1959, pp. 214–215), for example, considers stress patterns to be one of the important diagnostic features for differentiating between these two types of linguistic structures. Taken together, these observations suggest that the designation separable compounds is problematic because it conflates characteristics associated with compounds and syntactic phrases, thereby obscuring important grammatical distinctions.

5 Additional Terminological Alternatives for English Verb–Particle Constructions

The preceding discussion identified Fraser’s (1976) designation of verb–particle combination as one of the most neutral and technically precise terms available for describing

multi-word verbs. Another relatively neutral and technical designation is a two-word verb, employed by both Anthony (1953) and Taha (1960). Nevertheless, several difficulties arise from using this term.

First, the designation fails to accommodate phrasal-prepositional verbs, which consist of three elements rather than two. Consequently, a purely numerical label, such as a two-word verb, cannot adequately account for all types of multi-word verb constructions. In this respect, the term phrasal verb possesses a clear advantage, as a phrase may consist of more than two elements. Secondly, the designation of a two-word verb may inadvertently evoke the structure of a compound, which in English is frequently composed of two lexical elements.

Another noteworthy designation is Live's (1965, p. 428) term discontinuous verb. Live justifies its use by referring both to the syntactic structure and semantic unity of these constructions:

"There exists in English a considerable group of basic verbs, each of which is, in certain of its occurrences, closely linked with a particle – adverbial or prepositional – in such a manner as to justify considering the two elements as constituting one discontinuous verb. (e.g., look up, -into, -for; make up, -out; carry on, -out, -through; pass off, -in, -over, -up). This observation is supported by the retention of the particle along with the verb-component in the passive and by its substitutability by a single, usually a more learned synonym."

The term appears both neutral and sufficiently broad, particularly because it is not restricted by the number of elements accompanying the lexical verb. Nevertheless, to the best of the present author's knowledge, this designation has not gained wider acceptance in the literature on phrasal verbs. This is somewhat surprising given that discontinuity is a well-established term in linguistics and is applied to a variety of grammatical phenomena (Crystal, 2008, pp. 147–148). Since the present article focuses primarily on competing labels for multi-word verbs, other aspects discussed by Live, such as stress placement, nominalisations formed on the particle + lexical verb pattern, and the historical development of phrasal verbs, will not be examined here.

Marchand's (1966, p. 86) designation of post-particle verbs reflects the characteristic syntactic arrangement of modern phrasal verbs, in which a lexical verb is immediately followed by an adverbial or prepositional particle. This ordering is particularly significant when contrasted with earlier stages of English, in which new verbs were predominantly formed by prefixation. Marchand employs the term primarily for contrastive purposes, emphasising the shift from prefixation to post-modification by verbal particles as an important mechanism of verb formation in Modern English.

An illustrative example of a relatively recent phrasal-verb innovation is provided by Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus (2009, p. LS24):

(21) *An error message appeared and I was **bumped off** the Net.*

In this context, bumped off refers to an unexpected interruption of an internet connection. Previously, the expression was used primarily as an informal synonym for murder.

Another unusual designation is Stevick's (1950) term poly-word verbs. The prefix poly- derives from Greek and denotes multiplicity or a large number of elements. From this perspective, the designation appears acceptable, since multi-word verbs consist of at least two components. However, the term has the disadvantage of having been used only once in the literature and consequently remains unfamiliar to most contemporary grammarians and linguists.

Finally, Dehé's (2002, p. 5) designation of particle verbs deserves consideration. The term is both concise and neutral, drawing attention to the particle's central role in these constructions. It is particularly useful in discussions where the number or nature of particles is analytically important. Nevertheless, contemporary descriptive grammars generally favour the more widely established labels phrasal verbs and multi-word verbs..

5.1 The Term Phrasal Verb

Among all the designations discussed in this article, the phrasal verb is undoubtedly the most widely recognised and frequently used. The term has a long history and, according to Smith (1925/1943, p. 172), originated in the following manner:

"The term 'phrasal verbs' was suggested to me by the late Dr. Bradley; not, as he wrote, that he was satisfied with it (...) But, as he said, one cannot write of these verbs without some workable description".

Today, the designation is so firmly established that it appears in the titles of countless books, articles, dictionaries, and teaching materials devoted to the subject. Since a phrase consists of at least two elements, the term is well-suited to describing multi-word verb constructions. Like verb-particle combination and multi-word verb, it functions as a relatively neutral cover term encompassing the various subtypes of verb-particle constructions discussed in the literature.

The widespread acceptance of phrasal verbs ultimately explains why they remain the preferred designation in both descriptive and pedagogical accounts of English grammar, despite numerous competing alternatives.

6 Constructions Excluded from the Category of Multi-Word Verbs

In studies devoted to phrasal verbs, discussions of constructions that do not qualify as multi-word verbs are often placed at the beginning of the analysis in order to establish clear classificatory boundaries. In the present article, however, such a discussion is reserved for a later stage because the preceding chapters have focused primarily on the terminology associated with genuine verb-particle constructions. Having examined the principal designations used in the literature, it is now appropriate to consider those structures that should not be classified as phrasal verbs despite exhibiting certain superficial similarities.

The following discussion is based largely on Płaczkowski (2011, pp. 12–14) and seeks to identify combinations that fall outside the category of multi-word verbs. As the literature on phrasal verbs demonstrates, the term is subject to a number of semantic and syntactic constraints. These constraints are essential for distinguishing genuine verb–particle constructions from other fixed expressions and idiomatic combinations.

As noted earlier, the position of a pronoun may significantly influence the interpretation of a sentence, particularly when the status of the following element is ambiguous and may be analysed either as an adverbial particle or as a preposition. Furthermore, phrasal verbs containing adverbial particles may occur either transitively or intransitively. In the former case, they are commonly described as separable phrasal verbs because the particle may be repositioned within the construction.

Consider the following example:

(22) *He always **took** his teachers **off** at school.*

The particle may be moved, yielding the alternative structure:

(23) *He always **took off** his teachers at school.*

Various explanations have been proposed for the differences between such constructions, many of them involving subtle semantic distinctions. These issues, however, lie beyond the scope of the present discussion. What is important here is that phrasal verbs display characteristic syntactic behaviour, one manifestation of which is the mobility of the adverbial particle. It should also be noted that adverbs generally exhibit greater positional flexibility than many other word classes, a fact that lends support to the view that particles in phrasal verbs are fundamentally adverbial in nature.

By contrast, constructions that are not normally classified as phrasal verbs tend to form fixed and highly idiomatic expressions whose constituents differ substantially in both form and distribution. Bolinger (1971, pp. 5–6) provides numerous examples of such expressions, including *fall ill*, *ring true*, *loom large*, *sit tight*, *blow hot and cold*, *die happy*, *eat crow*, *turn turtle*, *cut a figure*, *do nicely*, *wish well*, *pay handsomely*, *go to bed*, and *go to sleep*. These combinations are excluded from the category of phrasal verbs because the element following the verb does not function as an adverbial particle.

Consider the expression *to loom large* in the following sentence:

(24) *The fear of defeat **loomed large** in his mind.*

A rearrangement of the constituents produces an unacceptable result:

(25) *The fear of defeat **loomed** in his mind **large**.*

From a syntactic perspective, such expressions are generally inseparable, while semantically they tend to be fixed and highly idiomatic. The principal feature they share with phrasal verbs is the possibility of being paraphrased by a single lexical verb. For example, sentence (24) may be reformulated as:

(26) *The fear of defeat **worried** him very much.*

Even here, however, the verb worried could be replaced by several alternative expressions, such as made him nervous, kept him awake, or terrified him, depending on the intended meaning.

One might object that the presence of an adverbial element should not be regarded as a defining characteristic of phrasal verbs, since ordinary adverbs may also follow lexical verbs. Consider the following example:

(27) *They are **leaving immediately**.*

The crucial distinction is that the adverb immediately can freely combine with a wide range of lexical verbs, merely modifying their meaning. Adverbial particles, by contrast, contribute to the formation of a new lexical unit and often alter the meaning of the verb substantially. Consider the following examples:

(28) *I wish he'd **leave off** moaning about everything.*

(29) *I **left in** the chapter about my childhood.*

In sentence (28), leave off means 'stop doing something', whereas in sentence (29), leave in means 'not remove something'. In both cases, the particle contributes significantly to the meaning of the entire construction. This differs fundamentally from the role of an ordinary adverb such as immediately, whose function is merely to modify the lexical verb rather than create a new semantic unit.

Further evidence comes from highly idiomatic expressions that may superficially resemble verb-particle constructions but do not satisfy the criteria discussed above:

(30) *A new lock on my office door **put the stoppers on** people borrowing my books without asking.*

(31) *I've been ill for a month, so I've got a lot of **leeway to make up** at school.*

(32) *Her latest film didn't exactly **set the world on fire**.*

These expressions differ from phrasal verbs in several important respects. First, they are highly fixed and idiomatic. For example, replacing world with universe in sentence (32) would produce an unacceptable expression despite the semantic similarity of the two nouns. Likewise, the noun leeway in sentence (31) cannot simply be replaced by the near-synonymous backlog, since the latter normally collocates with the verb clear rather than make up.

The examples discussed above demonstrate that the category of phrasal verbs must be defined with considerable precision. Although many idiomatic expressions share certain semantic or syntactic properties with verb-particle constructions, they fail to satisfy the structural criteria that characterise genuine multi-word verbs. Consequently, they should be treated as distinct grammatical and lexical phenomena rather than as members of the phrasal-verb category.

7 Conclusions

The number of alternative terms that have been proposed to describe what are today commonly referred to as multi-word verbs or phrasal verbs is remarkably large. As demonstrated throughout this article, terminological variation has accompanied the study of verb–particle constructions for more than a century. The proliferation of alternative designations appears to have been particularly pronounced during the mid-twentieth century. This development may be partly explained by the influence of American structuralism, whose emphasis on linguistic classification and description created favourable conditions for introducing new terminological labels.

The survey of the literature has shown that most of the terms discussed in this article can, with varying degrees of success, serve as alternatives to the now widely established designation phrasal verb. Only a few labels, notably separable compounds (Kruisinga, 1932; Curme, 1947), poly-word verbs (Stevick, 1950), and, to some extent, separable verbs (Francis, 1958), appear problematic because they either introduce unnecessary ambiguity or emphasise only one aspect of the phenomenon under discussion.

The analysis has also demonstrated that the evaluation of terminological alternatives cannot be restricted solely to the labels themselves. Equally important is the scope of linguistic phenomena subsumed under each designation. Different terms often reflect different theoretical assumptions, descriptive traditions, or analytical priorities. For example, Live's (1965) designation of discontinuous verbs possesses certain advantages over more narrowly defined terms because it can be applied to all major types of multi-word verbs without reference to the number or grammatical status of accompanying particles. By contrast, the term separable compounds is less satisfactory because it partially overlaps with the notion of a syntactic phrase and therefore obscures important distinctions between compounds and verb–particle constructions.

The discussion of expressions that do not qualify as phrasal verbs further highlighted the importance of precise classification. A number of highly idiomatic constructions share certain semantic characteristics with verb–particle combinations, yet they fail to meet the syntactic criteria that define genuine multi-word verbs. Their components are often fixed, inseparable, and resistant to the structural manipulation that characterises many phrasal verbs. Consequently, such expressions should be regarded as distinct lexical and grammatical phenomena rather than as members of the category of verb–particle constructions.

Overall, the findings suggest that despite the abundance of competing designations, the terms phrasal verb, multi-word verb, and verb–particle combination remain the most transparent and descriptively useful labels in contemporary English linguistics. Their continued use reflects not only scholarly convention but also their ability to accommodate the structural diversity of English verb–particle constructions while avoiding unnecessary theoretical restrictions. The persistence of alternative terminology nevertheless provides

valuable insight into the historical development of linguistic description and the evolving perspectives from which English multi-word verbs have been analysed.

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On Selected Aspects of Electronically Mediated Communication

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Abstract

The aim of the article is to present a state of contemporary English neography within the realm of electronically mediated communication by comparing word entries in three selected dictionaries, namely Slang.net, Merriam-Webster's Slang Section, and Urban Dictionary. The research examines the presence or absence of lexicographic features in these dictionaries. Based on comparative linguistic analysis of a hundred expressions described in the dictionaries, the collected words are precisely studied and described. Classification of the research sample words determines them into three categories according to their occurrences in dictionaries and evaluates the frequency of their presence as neologisms, neosemanticisms, and nonce formations.

Keywords: *electronically mediated communication, lexicography, neography, dictionary, neologism, nonce formation*

1 Introduction

With advances in technology, the range of media we use for everyday communication has expanded, encompassing not only traditional forms, such as letters and books, but also more advanced technologies, such as phones, television, computers, and others. Some linguists say that language itself is a form of communication technology. However, language serves not only a communicative purpose, but also a cognitive one. Over time, there has been significant evolution in communication technologies, and various media and their variations have been developed. Early innovations included the telephone and broadcasting for spoken communication, while printing and telegraphy began to enable written communication as well (Crystal, 2004). From primary face-to-face verbal and non-verbal communication, the desire to overcome the constraints of time and space accelerated the development of Information

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and Communication Technologies (ICTs) (Šušol, 2009), which now play an integral role in modern communication.

The term Information and Communication Technologies refers to the systems and components that support modern computing. They aim to improve the process of creating, analysing, and sharing data by people with other people. At the same time, ICTs contribute to advancements in several fields, such as business, education, healthcare, problem-solving, and recreational activities such as music, sports, and film. However, as ICTs have continued to evolve, there is no single definition that encompasses all technologies. Nevertheless, the term is broadly understood to refer to all devices, network elements, and applications that enable people and businesses to connect and communicate in the digital world (Awati, Pryatt, 2023). With the development of new communication technologies, a remarkable number of the already existing ones have surprisingly not disappeared. Many of them are still used, and newly developed media simply expand the range of communication possibilities. Interactional models introduce the concept of feedback, acknowledging that communication is rarely a one-way process. Instead, the participants alternate the roles of both the sender and the recipient, responding to and shaping each other's messages. These models emphasise the role of context and understanding in effective communication (Kirtiklis, 2020).

Another aspect of communication models targets its pragmatic dimensions. Bergman challenges traditional views by suggesting that communication should not be seen as a static system, but rather as an ongoing process shaped by its practical effects and its role in discourse. From this perspective, communication is not just about exchanging messages, but also about the way how the messages function within social and cultural contexts (Bergman, 2020). Šušol (2009) classifies communication based on two primary criteria: the medium used and the aspect of time. From this perspective, communication can be either direct, occurring face-to-face in real time, or mediated, requiring a medium to facilitate interaction, allowing communicators to be in different places and respond at different times. However, modern technologies can minimise the barriers of mediated communication, bringing it closer to the characteristics of direct communication. Another aspect of communication is the fact that it can be synchronous or asynchronous, depending on whether participants engage in real-time exchanges or respond with a delay (Šušol, 2009). With the growing influence of digital technologies, communication increasingly takes place through electronic platforms that blur the boundaries between synchronous and asynchronous interaction. This phenomenon has led to the rise of electronically mediated communication (EMC), which has become an essential aspect of modern-day interactions. Communication conducted through platforms like Facebook or WhatsApp remains asynchronous, whereas applications such as Zoom, MS Teams, and video chats on Facebook, Instagram, and others enable predominantly synchronous, verbal, and audiovisual interactions, usually supplemented with written chat (Lančarič et al., 2022).

2 Electronically Mediated Communication

In recent years, a great boom in the use of electronically mediated communication has been witnessed. Phones, computers, tablets, and other information and communication technologies have become an integral part of our lives. Without electronically mediated communication, many people would have no chance of connecting with their relatives, friends, business partners, or even complete strangers. They enable clusters of people with shared interests to come together virtually, often in real time (Baron, 2000). Nowadays, we use media as a tool for finding love, friends, jobs, and accessing all kinds of information, e.g. “to learn airline schedules or a museum’s opening hours, place an order for a book, flowers, or even an automobile” (Baron, 2000, p. 277) and they help us with many other aspects of our lives leading to our complete dependence on them. We rely on media in many ways, and to some extent, we have become enslaved by technology. However, it is important to acknowledge that technology has a significant positive impact on our lives and offers numerous benefits.

Electronically mediated communication is defined as “an umbrella term that encompasses both computer-mediated communication, the study of the style of online communication and the information it conveys, and ICTs (information and communication technologies), the machines themselves, the computers, the tablets, the smartphones, and mobile phones” (NetLingo).

The term computer-mediated communication (CMC), which was first used in the 1980s, encompasses various tools for online communication, such as e-mail, instant messaging, and chat (Baron, 2008). The existence of computer-mediated communication is tied to the invention of the first computer during World War II and spread a bit more at the beginning of the 1960s, when the exchange of prototype email was first documented. From that period, the rise of personal computers has been the most remarkable and by the end of the 1990s, computers became an integral part of our everyday lives, including both work and personal zones. Since the mid-1990s, computer-mediated communication has experienced a golden age and attracted substantial scholarly interest (Thurlow et al., 2004). This phenomenon has been revolutionary not only in technological and social aspects, but also linguistically (Crystal, 2004). The language of electronically mediated communication, mainly in text messages, is often characterised by abbreviations and initialisms. A group of people expresses concern that younger generations will be unable to spell and that their language skills will decline. However, the use of abbreviations is not a new phenomenon. They have been utilised by generations of people, and such rebuses have long been part of games and word-puzzle books. The reason for using abbreviations seems to be embedded in the character limitation of text messages (ibid.). At the same time, abbreviating the words saves time, which is a primary driver for the specific language of EMC. In EMC, the principle of least effort is applied, meaning that users want to perform the most comprehensive communicative act with the least possible physical and cognitive effort. In addition to using various abbreviations and initialisms, the occurrence of multiple types of ellipses is very common (Lančarič et. al., 2022). These syntactic features

are closely related to neologization, as new words and their forms are created through electronically mediated communication and its specific features. Since online communication has changed the platforms from computers to other media, especially due to the development of mobile phones and the rapid and enormous emergence of information and communication technologies in general, the term computer-mediated communication has become less suitable. Instead, Baron and her colleagues introduced a new and perhaps more fitting term, electronically mediated communication (EMC) (Baron, 2008). Additionally, Crystal suggests alternative terms such as Internet communication or digitally mediated communication (Crystal in Lančarič et al., 2022), and Thurlow highlights the popularity of terms such as weblish, netlingo, netspeak, e-talk, and others (Thurlow et al., 2004).

2.1 The Specifics of Electronically Mediated Communication Compared to Face-to-Face Communication

Crystal proposes that alongside the three primary models of communication (speech, writing, and sign language), a fourth dimension - digital or electronic communication was developed. Unlike traditional speech or writing, digital communication, or internet language in general, has characteristics that do not align with either of them. Although the language used in communication media such as emails, chat groups, instant messages, and texting is written, it resembles speech. These forms are “time governed, expecting or demanding an immediate response; they are transient, in the sense that messages may be immediately deleted (as in emails) or be lost to attention as they scroll off the screen (as in chatgroups); and their utterances display much of the urgency and energetic force which is characteristic of face-to-face conversation” (Crystal, 2011, p. 20).

Despite these similarities, the differences between speech, writing, sign language, and electronic communication are still significant. A crucial factor is the role of technology, which leads to the absence of immediate feedback, a vital component of successful communication. Immediate feedback includes verbal and non-verbal acts, such as facial expressions, gestures, nods, and vocal tones that signify agreement or disagreement.

EMC can be seen as written language influenced by speech but attempting to strictly categorize EMC as either speech or writing can be misleading. EMC is a unique form of communication, selecting aspects from both speech and writing but altering them into something new (Crystal, 2004). Its distinct features, such as multimodality, linguistic simplification, and adaptability to different platforms, reflect the evolving nature of digital interaction. While EMC enables fast and effective communication, it also presents challenges, such as the lack of immediate feedback and an increase in potential misunderstandings.

An inseparable part of this type of communication is neologization and especially its essential role in modern electronically mediated communication. Neologization is a linguistic process that involves creating and integrating neologisms into language and possibly general communication. It is a response to the need for novel terms that name contemporary phenomena for which existing vocabulary may lack the necessary accuracy. Before fully diving

into neologization itself, it is crucial to define what neologisms are and how they differ from nonce formations and occasionalism.

2.2 Neologization. Neologism, Nonce Formation, and Occasionalism

Many linguists have tried to provide deeper insights into the understanding of neologism, such as “newly coined lexical units that are in the process of entering common usage but have not yet been accepted into mainstream language” (Malmjaker, 2006 in Böhmerová, 2014, p. 31) or “a word which has lost its status of nonce-formation but is still one which is considered new by the majority of the members of speech community” (Fischer, 1998 in Böhmerová, 2009, p. 56). Böhmerová claims that “neologisms represent lexical additions or modifications which are new in the vocabulary or are perceived by the linguistic community as being new” (Böhmerová, 2009, p. 34), while Hohenhaus states that “neologism is the next stage in the life of a word, namely when it begins to be recognized as an item familiar and catches on in the usage of other speakers” (Hohenhaus, 2005, p. 364).

Cabré presents four criteria for determining whether a naming unit is a neologism or not. These are:

1. “diachrony: a unit is a neologism if it has arisen recently,
2. lexicography: a unit is a neologism if it is not in dictionaries,
3. systematic instability: a unit is a neologism if it exhibits signs of formal instability (e.g. morphological, graphic, phonetic) or semantic instability,
4. psychology: a unit is a neologism if speakers perceive it as a new unit” (Cabré, 1999, p. 205).”

Comparing Cabré’s requirements with the mentioned definitions, it is evident that all cited linguists (Malmjaker, Böhmerová, Hohenhaus), including Cabré, agree that neologisms are relatively new naming units and are perceived this way by speakers.

Cabré (1999) expands the meaning of a neologism by adding systematic instability. Once a word is relatively new, it is natural that it will not be used correctly and uniformly by all speakers until it becomes more familiar to the majority.

Once these words become very popular and are used by most of the population, making them a part of active language vocabulary, they cease to be perceived as new and therefore lose their status of a neologism (Kvetko, 2001). There is no strict line as to when an expression stops being a neologism. Some linguists, for example, Cabré (ibid.), claim that a neologism ceases to be one once it is included in a dictionary; however, several dictionaries of neologisms now exist, so this view seems a bit contradictory.

The main difference between a neologism and a nonce word or a nonce formation is the fact that a nonce word was created without any aim of being more widely spread. Mattiello explains that James Murray coined the term “to refer to a word apparently used only for the nonce, i.e. on one specific occasion or in one specific text or writer’s works” (Mattiello, 2017,

p. 25), therefore, the author did not intend for the nonce word to become a part of regular communication and the probability of its general acceptance tends to be very low. However, Bauer (2003) claims that it might not be possible to say whether a nonce formation will become a neologism or will remain just a nonce formation at the time of its creation.

The terms "nonce formation" and "occasionalism" are often used interchangeably. However, a difference between occasionalism and nonce formation was pointed out by Chanpira. He believes that occasionalisms are connected only to literature and serve a poetic purpose. Similarly to nonce formations, occasionalisms do not attempt to become a part of casual speech, on the contrary to both occasionalisms and nonce formations, neologisms do intend so (Chanpira in Poix, 2017).

There are several options as to how a neologism can be created. Lančarič and Hroteková (2023) provide insights into neologization processes based on whether the creation of a new word happens:

- by using the already existing morphemic and phonemic tools of the language,
- by expanding the meaning of another existing word,
- by borrowing a word from a foreign language.

According to the mentioned options for creating new words, either a lexical neologism, a semantic neologism, also called a neosemanticism, or a loan or borrowing by taking a word from a foreign language are formed.

By expanding the meaning of another, already existing word, a neosemanticism is created. It is a special subcategory of neologisms, but the creation of neosemanticisms does not require a new lexical unit, as another meaning to an already used expression is added. In this way, although people are familiar with the word, they might find and use it in different contexts. Neosemanticisms are made through semantic processes such as metaphor, metonymy, and generalization of the original meaning or its specification. The word *mouse* can be used as an example. Its original meaning, an animal, was expanded by the meaning of the mouse one uses for working at a computer, hence, a neosemanticism was created through the process of metaphor, as these two phenomena look alike. Another category of neologisms is known as revitalized lexemes. These have already existed in the language before but have not been used widely enough to be known by larger groups of the population (Lančarič and Hroteková, 2023).

Recent neologisms are connected to electronically mediated communication, as it is almost effortless for new expressions to be shared quickly, making it easier for them to reach masses of people and become popular faster. During the Covid-19 pandemic, many neologisms were created not only to name the disease and its medical effects, but people created their own nonce formations to describe how they were living under lockdown. Many of them are also connected to online learning and calls and meetings in the home office. On the website of the University of Hamburg, Susannah published an exercise called *Brand New Neologisms* dealing with the neologisms that were gathered by the University of Toledo professor. The exercise consists of blank spaces and definitions. At the bottom of the article,

there is a list of words that one can choose from. Several of them are connected to online meetings via Zoom, for example, “Zombie – what teachers feel they’ve become after conducting classes all week on Zoom”, “Zumping – dumping a romantic partner via Zoom”, “Zoomdressing – wearing a nice shirt but having bare feet and/or surf shorts or exercise pants underneath” (Susannah, 2020). Others are connected to lockdown and quarantine, such as “Quarantini – an alcoholic cocktail created or drunk more frequently while in quarantine”, “Quarantcut – a haircut of oneself or a family member at home”, “Procrastibaking – baking as a coronahobby (a hobby newly discovered or more frequently practiced during Corona-determined isolation)”, or “Covidorce – when a married couple decides to separate after spending every second together in quarantine” (ibid.).

New expressions are created through various word-formation processes. Word-formation processes belong to the category of intralingual processes, as borrowing words from other languages is not necessary for their creation, and they are put together using English vocabulary. Some of the most common are blending, derivation, compounding, and abbreviating (Lančarič and Hroteková, 2023). During the years 2013 and 2014, Böhmerová researched word-formation processes in the context of neologisms, and she observed which ones were the most productive. The results showed that over 30% of all the new entries were blends, a little behind were derivatives, followed by compounds, collocations, and shortenings. The last three were not as numerous as the first two word-formation processes (Böhmerová, 2014). Kerreman’s (2012) findings were very similar, as from the chosen neologisms, most were created through blending, followed by derivation (prefixation and suffixation) and compounding.

Lančarič talks about abbreviatory processes such as clipping, initialism, acronymy, and others. He explains that abbreviations and their types belong to minor word-formation processes. The created word forms are simply shortened versions of already existing words, but their meaning usually remains the same. He later claims that the rapid development of EMC in a way promoted the use of shortening, mainly thanks to the effectiveness and economy of abbreviated naming units (Lančarič, 2016).

Similarly, Hohenhaus claims that in computer-mediated communication with a focus on short text messages and chat, shortenings and their subtypes such as abbreviation or acronymy are thriving (Hohenhaus, 2005).

The massive usage of electronically mediated communication in the contemporary world gives great space and opportunity for the creation of new naming units, whether they become neologisms or stay as nonce formations. This illustrates how the lexicon continuously adapts to evolving communicative and societal needs. As electronically mediated communication accelerates the process of lexical innovation, neologisms not only reflect emerging trends but also contribute to shaping the language.

3 Neography

Neography, also known as neological lexicography, is a subdiscipline of both neology and lexicography that emerged in the early 1970s (Mertová, 2021). A key part of neography, neological excerption, focuses on collecting new words for the creation and compilation of neological dictionaries (Ološtiak, 2023). Neography includes:

- incorporating new words into standard editions or re-editions of explanatory dictionaries of the contemporary standard language,
- compiling supplementary editions or appendices to previously published dictionaries,
- creating specialized dictionaries dedicated exclusively to new words (Mertová, 2021).

When adding new words to dictionaries, lexicographers categorize them according to their stability and usage. Zgusta identifies three main groups, 1. established words that are widely accepted and commonly used, 2. ephemeral expressions and nonce-formations that may disappear quickly, and 3. productive morphemes and word-formation rules that help to expand the vocabulary. This classification helps lexicographers determine whether a word has long-term potential or is merely a temporary trend (Zgusta, 2006).

A great overview of neological dictionaries can be found in Lančarič and Hroteková (2023), published in Ološtiak (2023). The authors compare the entries in various dictionaries and focus on their structure. Some of them are Barnhart's (1991) *Neo-Words: Dictionary of the Newest and Most Unusual Words of the Decade*, which highlights distinctive neologisms from the 1990s, or Green's (1991) *Neologisms: New Words: A Dictionary of Neologisms since 1960*, which documents over 2,600 lexical innovations from 1960 to 1991. Another key work is Tulloch's (1991) *The Oxford Dictionary of New Words: A Popular Guide to Words in the News*, which focuses on tracking lexical changes from the 1980s. Similarly, Algeo's (1993) *Fifty Years Among the New Words: A Dictionary of Neologisms (1941-1991)* and Ayto's (2007) *A Century of New Words* provide historical insights into lexical changes throughout the 20th century. Other notable dictionaries include Hargrave's (2004) *The Oxford Essential Dictionary of New Words* or McFedrie's (2004) *Word Spy: The Word Lover's Guide to Modern Culture*, both of which document emerging vocabulary and linguistic trends.

Similar to other dictionaries, besides general neological dictionaries, the specialized ones exist too; for instance, a dictionary called *Twittonary* lists the neologisms found on Twitter. In 2010, there were around 600 of them (Crystal, 2011). Several other specialized dictionaries focus on different domains of language innovation. Prucher's (2007) *Brave New Words – The Oxford Dictionary of Science* collects neologisms from science fiction literature, fanzines, scripts, and online sources. Mortov's (1986) *Longman Guardian Original Selection of New Words* documents neologisms appearing in *The Guardian*, while Ayto's (1989) *The Longman Register of New Words* compiles a selection of lexical changes observed between 1986 and 1988. Additionally, dictionaries dedicated to technology and digital communication include Harris' (1995) *Dictionary of Computer Words: An A-to-Z Guide to Computer User*, Pfaffenberger's (2000) *Webster's New World Dictionary of Computer Terms*, and Rigdon's

(2016) Dictionary of Computer and Internet Terms. Dictionaries such as Chandler and Munday's (2016) A Dictionary of Social Media and A Dictionary of Media and Communication (2020) focus specifically on digital and online communication trends (Lančarič and Hroteková, 2023).

Finally, collaborative online platforms such as the Urban Dictionary and the Macmillan Dictionary's Buzzword section allow users to submit and define new words, demonstrating a shift toward community-driven lexicography. Similarly, new words are also documented in neologism databases such as the Rice University Neologism Database and platforms like Dictionary.com neologism section. Prestigious dictionaries also contribute to tracking lexical innovations through blog sections, such as New Dictionary Words by Merriam-Webster and the Oxford English Dictionary Blog (ibid.).

Lexicography has evolved into a dynamic and multidisciplinary field that connects linguistics, technology, and information science. The shift from printed to digital dictionaries has significantly changed the way dictionaries are created and used, making them more accessible, interactive, and user-friendly. The growing importance of electronic and neological dictionaries demonstrates how lexicography continues to evolve alongside language itself, ensuring that dictionaries remain practical and relevant even during linguistic changes.

3.1 Printed and Electronic Dictionaries

Besides electronic dictionaries, printed dictionaries can be classified according to various criteria. The broad term electronic dictionary includes not only online internet dictionaries but offline dictionaries as well. Lehr suggested a typology of electronic dictionaries based on technical evaluation to:

- online dictionaries – require an internet connection to function,
- offline dictionaries – can be accessed without the internet, these include:
 - o pocket electronic dictionaries (PEDs) – small, portable devices for quick reference,
 - o PC-dictionaries – stored on physical media such as CD-ROMs, floppy disks, etc. (Lehr, 1996).

Lehr also distinguishes between

- electronic dictionaries based on print versions – digital adaptations of existing paper dictionaries,
- newly developed electronic dictionaries – designed specifically for digital use, no print predecessor,
- hybrid electronic dictionaries – combine traditional print elements with modern digital features (ibid.).

The lexicographic aspects of English neologisms were examined and described by Rodríguez Guerra (2016). In his research article, he compared 12 dictionaries of neologisms from 6 different languages, including English. He examined the micro- and macrostructure of each of them. His findings show that, as for macrostructure, the dictionaries of neologisms

employ three different strategies when it comes to the treatment of formal variations, such as the word's spelling. Some dictionaries include all variants as independent entries, other dictionaries cluster the variants under a single headword, including the Oxford Dictionary of New Words, and a lower number of dictionaries of neologisms includes these variants in the explanatory article of an entry.

He also focused on the origin of the entries, concluding that most of the dictionaries acknowledge the source of the neologism, while some of the most common are social media, internet, politics, books, computer science, or medicine (ibid.).

As for microstructure, Rodríguez Guerra (2016) examined lexicographic aspects such as definition and meaning, examples, dating, thematic fields, and some other aspects, including phonetic transcription, usage labels, or the presence of synonyms. Naturally, all dictionaries define the neologism. However, some of them are conceptual, either analytical or based on synonyms, while some provide simple explanations. Most dictionaries provide authentic examples with dates and sources that demonstrate the actual usage of the expression, with a varying number of examples per entry.

Most dictionaries in his research also specified the date of the quotation, while some added the date of the first appearance of the expression as well. As for thematic fields, only a few dictionaries provided such information, while the most common fields were computer science and medicine, followed by sports and politics.

Other lexicographic aspects included usage labels stating the register of the expression, while some of the most common were pejorative, humorous, ironic, informal, or vulgar. Interestingly, only a small number of dictionaries included phonetic information, such as transcription and only two English dictionaries of neologisms, namely NW21Century and OxfordDNW, listed them consistently. Some dictionaries also included synonymous terms, while etymological information was offered rarely (ibid.).

A closer examination of selected dictionaries of neologisms, or rather new slang expressions, is the objective of the research presented in this article.

4 Research

The research focused on the lexicographic aspects of English neologisms, neosemanticisms, and nonce formations, with a focus on the ones that occur in the dictionaries. The primary objective of the research was to compare their descriptions in three selected slang dictionaries. The aim was to present the state of contemporary English neography within the realm of electronically mediated communication. A qualitative linguistic approach is used to analyse each of the expressions.

4.1 Research sample and methods

A hundred different expressions were collected from the selected dictionaries between September 2025 and February 2026. Their occurrences and characteristic microstructure features were researched through comparative linguistic analysis. The collected expressions were analysed from three different slang dictionaries, namely *Urban Dictionary*, *Slang.net*, and *Merriam-Webster's slang section*. These dictionaries were chosen because each of them encompasses a different strategy of data collection and thus provides a deeper insight into modern neography.

Urban Dictionary is a user-generated dictionary where anyone can add a word definition. Its LinkedIn profile claims that it is a "crowdsourced online dictionary for slang, cultural expressions, and phrasal verbs not found in standard dictionaries. It is prepared by a community of contributors and covers language from pop culture, subcultures, and regional dialects". By clicking + *Define a Word* on the urbandictionary.com website, the user is redirected to a submission form where they can add the word, definition, an example of usage and some specific required tags. After having typed all the information the contributor wants to provide about the entry, they select a language and submit the specific word.

Slang.net is an online dictionary that specializes in acronyms, abbreviations, and slang terms. Unlike *Urban Dictionary*, the content found on *Slang.net* is curated rather than fully user-generated. However, users also have the possibility to add slang and suggest new terms, although these are managed by a team of editors who compile the suggestions and combine them with their research. Thus, every headword appears only once. When adding slang, the user needs to provide their name, e-mail, slang term, meaning, and a short message (*Slang.net*).

Merriam-Webster is one of the most renowned and trusted dictionaries, with over 180 years of existence. It provides language information in both printed and online dictionaries, and only recently it got started using the slang section.

4.2 The analysis

The research presented in this article aimed at the analysis of the data found in the three dictionaries for the research sample words. The selected words were also analysed owing to their occurrences in the three analysed dictionaries. For each word, the analysis was provided as follows:

CHEUGY / *Slang.net*

Definition	<i>Something that is outdated or inauthentic</i> ...something or someone that appears to be inauthentic or outdated and trying too hard to be in fashion. ...became popular in April 2021, primarily on TikTok...
Pronunciation	chew-gee
Usage	...similar to "basic" but not...derogatory

	...primarily used as an observation instead of looking down on someone or something. People may use the term online, especially on...TikTok and Twitter, and may also use it in person. Although it is not meant to be derogatory, people may receive it that way because it's a label with a negative connotation.
Example	"OMG, that woman at the checkout is so cheugy."
Etymology	Cheugy was created by TikToker Hallie Cain in a March 30 TikTok post to refer to people or things that are trying too hard to be "en vogue," thus coming across as inauthentic. The term is not based on anything; Cain just thought it sounded phonetically accurate for what it meant. Other teenage and 20-something TikTokers quickly picked up on the term and began applying it to things and people, mainly millennial women, that were either out-of-style or trying too hard to keep up with style in a tacky way. Examples include generic signs from major decorating store chains or women spending a lot of money on clothing, like Gucci.
Register	General
Related Slang	Cheug, Basic, Normcore...

Merriam-Webster's Slang Section⁶

Word class	adjective
Pronunciation	CHOO-ghee
Definition	<i>Makes fun of being uncool</i> ...a slang way of calling someone or something uncool or unfashionable, especially when seen as slightly cringeworthy or trying too hard. It's mainly used as a jokey put-down of trends stereotypically associated with millennials.
Usage	...Examples and use of <i>cheugy</i> tend to center on the lifestyle associated with millennials, particularly women and what clothing they wear, what things they buy, and how they act and present their lives online. Use of the word remains both self-aware and self-deprecating, with <i>cheugy</i> not being a wholly bad quality...Someone thought of as <i>cheugy</i> is humorously called a <i>cheug</i> . The connotation is a little judgy but ultimately joky. As trends shift, what's considered <i>cheugy</i> shifts—including the word itself, which has seen some playful but slightly more genuine uptake since its 2021 peak, especially in women's lifestyle and fashion media.
Example	"I don't care how <i>cheugy</i> it is, I'm sharing my favorite quotes", Andra Liemandt, <i>X</i> (formerly <i>Twitter</i>), 12 Aug. 2024
Etymology	<i>Cheugy</i> was first used by a group of young women in the 2010s. They used the word to poke fun at other young women whose taste, fashion, and self-presentation they found to be outmoded and overearnest enough to be considered uncool, basic, or cringy. In March 2021, a young woman named Hallie Cain posted on TikTok about her and her friends using the word. That post went viral. Covering the story for the New York Times in April, journalist Taylor Lorenz traced cheugy back to Gaby Rasson, a twentysomething woman from Los Angeles who

⁶ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/slang/cheugy>

	said she coined the term and used it with her friends in high school in 2013. Why cheugy? It's a nonsense formation, but Rasson has said it simply sounded right.
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Urban Dictionary⁷

Definition	The opposite of trendy. Stylish in middle school and high school but no longer in style. Used when someone still follows these out-of-date trends. This may include but not be limited to fashion, habits on social media, usage of slang, etc.
Example	"My friend told me to change out of my favorite pair of Miss Me jeans because they were cheugy."

Summary

Cheugy is not included in the *Cambridge Dictionary* and is therefore considered a **nonce formation** with the potential of becoming a neologism.

Among all the entries, *cheugy* is the first where *Slang.net* provides the word's pronunciation. The other lexicographic aspects remain the same throughout the other entries, apart from the occasional option of different spellings. The same applies to *Merriam-Webster's Slang Section*, whose entries are the most detailed, and the highest number of lexicographic aspects are provided in all its entries. Traditionally, *Urban Dictionary's* entries provide only definitions and examples, though some exceptions can be found.

While *Slang.net* and *Merriam-Webster's Slang Section* both mention Hallie Cain in their etymologies and both claim that the term was created because it simply sounded right for its meaning, *Slang.net* gives the credit to Hallie Cain herself, while *Merriam-Webster's* etymology is somewhat more detailed and traced the term back to Gaby Rasson who was the first one to use it with her friends back in the 2010s. This might be evidence of *Merriam-Webster's* higher credibility and the depth of their entries, reflecting that they are written by professional lexicographers.

Urban Dictionary's entry describes *cheugy* more negatively than the other two dictionaries, which point out that it is not necessarily negative and can be used slightly judgy or jokey.

SIGMA (MALE)⁸ / *Slang.net*

Definition and Usage	<p><i>An introverted guy who goes his own way</i></p> <p>...a loner who stands outside the "typical" male social hierarchy...has no interest in belonging or looking cool like many others. Instead, they do what they want because they want to...</p> <p>Males who give thought to social rankings (including incels and overly egotistical teens) often consider sigma males to be the coolest of the cool. In these men's minds, a sigma's introverted, regimented, asocial,</p>
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⁷ <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=cheugy>

⁸ https://slang.net/meaning/sigma_male

	and confidential demeanor is something to which all men should aspire. However, netizens who self-identify as sigma males often do so to look cool to others...they are not true sigmas...many social media and forum users may mock self-identified sigma males...
Different spelling	<i>sigma</i>
Example	"I'm living that sigma male lifestyle; I don't care what anyone else thinks."
Register	Social Media, Web Forums
Related Slang	Alpha male, Beta male, Omega male...

Merriam-Webster's Slang Section / SIGMA⁹

Word class	noun
Pronunciation	SIG-muh
Definition	<i>A coolly independent, successful man; excellent; an Internet nonsense word</i> ...especially among young men, referring to a man whose self-assured, dogged individualism is considered a model of status, success, and attractiveness. It can also mean "extremely good," and is also widely used as a nonsense term and meme online.
Usage	...used to refer to the <i>sigma male</i> archetype...in online content...Much use of the word...is increasingly ironic, pejorative, or found in critical discussions of the toxic masculinity... <i>Sigma</i> also has currency as a slang equivalent to "cool," though it is now more widely encountered as a humorous expletive in the phrase <i>what the sigma</i> —or a gibberish term sometimes referred to as "brain rot"...
Example	"Bro, just forget that <i>sigma</i> alpha nonsense. Not every [business] connection [you have] has to be hyper-successful..." @neosugar, <i>Threads</i> , 18 Oct. 2024
Etymology	<i>Sigma</i> is based on <i>sigma male</i> ...credited to controversial far-right activist Theodore Robert Beale...the <i>sigma male</i> is a charismatically aloof model of masculinity...based on pseudoscientific archetypes of social hierarchy that classify animals—and men—using letters of the Greek alphabet. He adopted <i>sigma</i> ...to describe...a "lone wolf." The term spread in the 2010s, especially within the online community popularly referred to as the "manosphere"...Among them, the fictional character Patrick Bateman from the 2000 movie <i>American Psycho</i> became a popular reference point for the ideal <i>sigma male</i> , who exemplified the so-called sigma grindset, or a mindset glamorizing unabashed overwork, fitness, and nonconformism as the height of masculinity. By the 2020s, <i>sigma male</i> , shortened to <i>sigma</i> , went viral as the subject of Internet jokes, particularly in a 2022 meme known as Sigma Face... In October 2023, <i>sigma</i> gained further popularity when a TikTok user used it in the lyrics of a song and video, called "Sticking Out Your Gyatt for

⁹ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/slang/sigma>

	the Rizzler (Fanum Tax)...The lyrics also helped popularize <i>sigma</i> as a more generic slang term meaning “excellent,” based on admirable qualities associated with sigma males. In April 2024, a video featured a cartoon character from SpongeBob SquarePants, popular inspiration for Internet humour, saying “Erm, what the sigma?”...equivalent to “What the heck?” <i>What the sigma</i> received mainstream attention after middle school students reportedly overused it in classrooms as a joke to confuse teachers or other adults.
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Urban Dictionary / SIGMA MALE¹⁰

Definition	...sigma male prefers to forego the social hierarchy and need for external validation altogether and pursue internal strength instead. Essentially a "loner"...not socially inept but simply socially disinterested. Prefers solitary activities where he doesn't have to play social politics and can simply focus on himself. The sigma male accepts that he does not need power over others as the alpha male desires but rather needs only power to control himself and preserve his own autonomy from others. Sigma males are often pragmatic but may be seen by others as aloof, paranoid, secretive or selfish. Not to be confused with simply being an unlikeable asshole, edgelord, or misfit.
Example	John: Hey, who's that over there on a table by himself? Mary: Oh, that's Patrick. He's a bit of a sigma male.

Cambridge Dictionary¹¹

Word class	noun
Pronunciation	/ˈsig.mə/ (UK) /ˈsig.mə/ (US)
Plural	language, mathematics, science
Definition	the 18th letter of the Greek alphabet
Example	“The bold <i>sigma</i> here stands for the syllable containing the measured token.”
Related words and phrases	Aitch, alphabetic, alphabetically...

Summary

The slang use of *sigma* is not yet listed in the *Cambridge Dictionary*, although it does include the entry in its literal sense as a Greek alphabet letter. Thus, it is a **neosemanticism**.

All three slang dictionaries acknowledge both *sigma* and *sigma male* as variations of the same slang expression, however, *Urban Dictionary* is the only one that does so in different entries. The entry that was chosen for analysis is among the most detailed and most liked, thus it was used.

¹⁰ <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=sigma%20male>

¹¹ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/sigma>

An extensive etymology is provided by *Merriam-Webster's Slang Section* and, in this case, is completely omitted by *Slang.net*, and as usual, by *Urban Dictionary* too. *Slang.net* does not have a clear section for usage either, although some instructions can be found in the definition itself.

There are also some semantic discrepancies between the three entries. They all agree that *sigma (male)* is a positive label given to men who do not feel the need to belong and are referred to as loners. While *Slang.net* claims that *sigma males* are considered cool by incels, they omit the rest of the population, which is important to mention, since *sigma* is now used as a synonym for being cool in general. The general admiration is, luckily, mentioned by the two remaining slang dictionaries.

Merriam-Webster's Slang Section is the only one to go beyond this original meaning of *sigma (male)* and explains that it is a part of brain rot words used as gibberish, while also being used as a general expression for excellent or cool. It also lists the very popular phrase – *What the sigma*, which is used in the same context as *What the heck*.

SKIBIDI / Slang.net¹²

Definition and Usage	<i>A nonsensical word</i> ...a viral Internet phenomenon that has no inherent meaning...a nonsensical utterance...use(d) in various situations...as an adjective (could mean "dumb," "cool," or "bad" depending on the context) or as a filler gibberish word (similar to yeet when throwing something).
Example	"S1: we got paid! S2: skibidi S1: also, half of it goes to mom and dad to pay them back. S2: skibidi"
Etymology	...originated in 2018 from a catchy and absurd song by the Russian rave band "Little Big"...The song gained popularity across social media platforms, especially its accompanying dance, leading people to recreate it in their own videos and generate memes. TikTok played a major role in amplifying the dance trend when Turkish TikToker Yasin Cengiz went viral with a belly-bouncing dance to the song "Dom Dom Yes Yes" by Biser King in 2022. It then evolved further with the help of the <i>Skibidi Toilet</i> YouTube Shorts series (leading to "Skibidi Toilet Syndrome") that led to countless memes and eventual use as a nonsensical slang term, especially among Gen Zers and Gen Alphas.
Register	General
Related Slang	Skibidi Toilet Syndrome, Yeet, Fanum Tax...

Merriam-Webster's Slang Section¹³

Pronunciation	SKIB-ih-dee
Definition	<i>A nonsense Internet term connected to an absurdist YouTube show about evil toilets</i> ...a gibberish word spread by <i>Skibidi Toilet</i> , a popular YouTube show featuring human-headed toilets battling camera-headed humans. It is

¹² <https://slang.net/meaning/skibidi>

¹³ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/slang/skibidi>

	widely used as a nonsensical (and occasionally pejorative) expression and meme online.
Usage	<p>...appears in reference to the show <i>Skibidi Toilet</i>, and other content it has inspired, from memes to merchandise. Due to its sudden and extensive popularity, it also comes up in mainstream discussions of so-called “brain rot,”...the effects of such content...have prompted a fictional ailment dubbed <i>Skibidi Toilet Syndrome</i>.</p> <p>Outside of these contexts, <i>skibidi</i> is mainly used for humorous, expressive, and ironic effect. It can mimic the grammatical versatility of expletives, as in “Oh, my skibidi! I didn’t expect this game to be so skibidi hard.”...While it doesn’t have a set meaning, its connotation can skew negative, due to its association with nefarious sentient plumbing, and frequent appearance in <i>skibidi Ohio rizz</i>, a mostly joking insult for someone thought of as bizarre or awkward.</p>
Example	<p>“It’s really hard to get in the spooky scary mood when some girl behind me keeps screaming “<i>SKIBIDI</i>” every time she gets scared in a haunted house”</p> <p>@thebookschack, <i>Threads</i>, 13 Oct. 2024</p>
Etymology	<p>...experienced great popularity in 2023 and 2024 thanks to a short-form computer-animated YouTube series called <i>Skibidi Toilet</i> (created by Alexey Gerasimov on his channel, <i>DaFuq!?Boom!</i>). First released in February 2023, Gerasimov’s show depicts a darkly comic war between the Skibidi Toilets...and humanoids with surveillance cameras for heads... In early episodes, the titular toilets sing along to a remix of Bulgarian singer Biser King’s 2022 song “Dom Dom Yes Yes,” which features scat-style singing—including...<i>skibidi</i>—over an electronic dance beat. This was not the first (nor the last) time the nonsense syllables of <i>skibidi</i> went viral in a song. In 2018, the Russian satirical band Little Big released a song (and bleakly silly video) called “Skibidi,” which used the nonsense sound in lyrics set to a dance. In October 2023, <i>skibidi</i> gained additional prominence when a TikTok user used it in the lyrics of a song and video, called “Sticking Out Your Gyatt for the Rizzler (Fanum Tax)...</p>

Urban Dictionary¹⁴

Definition and Etymology	Skibidi is a wide ranged universal word that originated from an Arabic song with the word "skibidi" in it and then blew up from a guy shaking his stomach to that song. Then started getting recognized as "skibidi toilet" starting lores with loads of different memes. Also, just until recently a little kid remixed the lyrics to a tiktok sound and said and I quote "sticking out your gyatt for the rizzler, that's so skibidi"
Example	"AHHHH THE SKIBIDI TOILET IS AFTER ME"

Cambridge Dictionary¹⁵

Word class	adjective
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¹⁴ <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=skibidi>

¹⁵ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/skibidi>

Pronunciation	/ˈskɪ.bɪ.di/ (UK) /ˈskɪ.bɪ.di/ (US)
Register	humorous slang
Definition	a word that can have different meanings such as "cool" or "bad", or can be used with no real meaning as a joke
Example	"What was the most skibidi part?"
Related words and phrases	Babble, balls, blah...

Summary

The analysed expression, *skibidi*, is an example of a recently created **neologism** since it became an entry in the *Cambridge Dictionary*. It has not been in use as long as other neologisms, such as *no cap* or *rizz*, however, there was a massive boom about this expression, which is probably the reason for its inclusion in a rather short period.

Although not having a specific category, *Slang.net* clarifies that *skibidi* can be used as an adjective or a gibberish word. Unusually, *Merriam-Webster's Slang Section* does not provide a word class in this specific entry but claims that it is used as a gibberish word, omitting its function as an adjective. On the other hand, the *Cambridge Dictionary* mentions only its latter function.

Urban Dictionary provides some etymological background; however, it does not seem to be fully correct and in line with the other two slang dictionaries. It gives credit to an Arabic song, although the other two mention Russian and Bulgarian songs that use *skibidi* in their lyrics. Other than that, the etymology seems to be correct, although less detailed. The most influential factor in the spread of *skibidi* appears to be its connection to short YouTube videos about *Skibidi Toilet*.

Besides *Urban Dictionary*, the other slang dictionaries mention the term's connection to *skibidi toilet syndrome* as an effect of TikTok brain rot that was described in this research.

4.3 Results and findings

Among all the expressions that were initially collected, only fifty per cent (50%) were found in all three dictionaries and thus were used in the comparative analysis. Based on these data, it is possible to observe how quickly the slang expressions appear in slang dictionaries. Most of the expressions appear in at least 2 dictionaries.

The criterion for establishing whether the expression is a neologism, a neosemanticism, or a nonce formation was tied to its presence in the renowned *Cambridge Dictionary*. Among all those expressions, twenty-six were classified as neologisms, thirty as neosemanticisms, and the remaining forty-four as nonce formations (see graph 1). From the results, it is evident that the process of involving new expressions in official dictionaries is slow but steady, since 25% of the analysed expressions are already included in the *Cambridge Dictionary*.

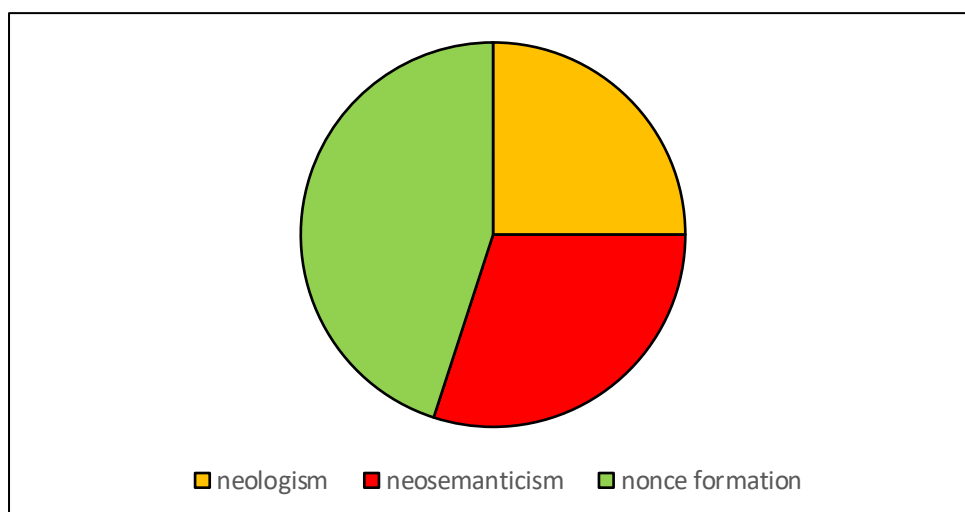


Figure 1 Classification of the analysed slang expressions

The results showed that *Merriam-Webster's Slang Section* was the only slang dictionary that followed a consistent structure in every entry. Although there were slight discrepancies in providing a word class and pronunciation, all the other lexicographic aspects followed a clear order. Each entry began with the **headword**, followed by its **pronunciation** and a **word class**. Next came a **short definition**, which was in italics in the tables. Below the short definition, a section “**What does (*slang expression*) mean?**” followed, which contained a more detailed explanation of the meaning. This section was followed by “**Examples of (*slang expression*)**”, which included three or four examples taken from social sites or interviews that serve as authentic usage material. For the analysis, it was sufficient to list only one of the examples in the tables. The next section, “**Where does (*slang expression*) come from?**” described the etymology. The entry was concluded with the section “**How is (*slang expression*) used?**” that provided insights into the usage of the expression.

Merriam-Webster's Slang Section was also the only slang dictionary which described not only the expression's lexicographic aspects but also its grammatical aspects. In several entries, the possible word classes the expression can take were described, followed by an example. In one entry, *ate (and left no crumbs)*, a potential clause element function (object) was presented, again followed by an example.

It is evident that *Merriam-Webster's Slang Section* is a dictionary prepared by professionals and thus follows clear standards of a renowned dictionary throughout all its entries. In contrast to *Slang.net*, it lacks the word's register. However, given the section's title, it is evident that all expressions belong to the slang register.

An additional lexicographic aspect that could be added is a **related terms** section, which was included in *Slang.net's* entries. At the end of each entry on *Merriam-Webster's Slang Section*, there was a list of “more slang words”, but it was simply a list of the eight following slang terms in alphabetical order. The omission was probably caused by the limited number of slang entries, most of which are not closely related. However, the related terms could be taken from the larger database of the whole *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary*.

Slang.net's entries had a clear structure, although it was not consistently applied in all the entries. Unlike *Merriam-Webster's Slang Section*, *Slang.net* lacked some precision, and a large part of the entries lacked at least one of the sections. After all, the lexicographic aspects were usually present, although not written in a specific category.

Similar to *Merriam-Webster's Slang Section's*, *Slang.net*'s entries began with a **headword**, followed by a **short definition** (again presented in italics in the tables) and a more **detailed definition** of the expression below. These aspects were present for all the entries, and the structure was followed thoroughly. The following section, "**Origin of (slang expression)**", described the etymological background, although this was usually less extensive and sometimes even less accurate than the one provided by *Merriam-Webster's Slang Section*. The next section, "**How do people use (slang expression)?**", described the way how the expression was used, but this section was missing in more than half of the entries. Despite that, the usage was clearly stated in other sections, either in the extended definition or the etymology. The next section was "**Example**". It always contained two speech bubbles having a conversation for using the expression, followed by a picture below, usually taken from social sites such as TikTok, Instagram, or X (Twitter), demonstrating an actual, authentic usage. The pictures were followed by a useful section, "**Related Slang**", where several synonymous slang expressions were listed. At the end of each entry, there was a section "**Categories**", which provided a word's register, classifying it into one or more categories, such as General, Social Media, Twitter, etc. The last two lexicographic aspects were absent in *Merriam-Webster's Slang Section*.

Additionally, *Slang.net*, similarly to *Urban Dictionary*, allows its users to like or dislike the entries, providing feedback on their trustworthiness and usefulness. This aspect suggests a more collaborative approach of the two dictionaries, where the entry's reliability is influenced by the dictionary's users. For example, when analysing *gyat*, the entry was highly disliked and omitted some important details compared to the other dictionaries.

Overall, *Slang.net* serves as a fairly reliable source, providing mostly detailed and trustworthy information. It is evident that the entries are not written by the general public, but rather by a team of editors, however, there is no certainty whether they are professionals.

Compared to the other two dictionaries, the entries found in *Urban Dictionary* were the least detailed and lacked several lexicographic aspects. They contained only the **definition** and an **example**. There were a few exceptions, where a very brief **etymology** (*canon event*, *fanum tax*, *mewing*, *skibidi*), **usage** (*ate that*), and **word class** (*chad*, *looksmax*) could be found. The inclusion of these aspects, as well as the overall length and depth of the entry, is highly dependent on its author. The same applies to other lexicographic aspects, such as register or related terms.

As already mentioned, both *Slang.net* and *Urban Dictionary* allow their users to like or dislike the entries, showing their (dis)agreement with the definitions listed under the headword. Therefore, the users can vote for the definitions they relate to the most, helping

others find a more proper or relatable definition of a specific expression. Another advantage of *Urban Dictionary* entries is that they include the **date of publication**, which can be helpful when focusing on semantic shifts of expressions across time, as it was with the analysis of *boujee*. *Merriam-Webster's Slang Section* and *Slang.net* both provide the date of the last updates made within the entry.

5 Conclusion

Overall, the research has shown that *Urban Dictionary* lacks any editorial oversight. Many entries are very brief, and some are even inaccurate, which is often indicated by a high number of dislikes. Additionally, the use of vulgar language is quite common in *Urban Dictionary's* entries, far more than in the other two dictionaries.

All three slang dictionaries provide valuable insights into modern neography, each through a slightly different approach. *Merriam-Webster's Slang Section* offers the most professional and consistent entries, while *Slang.net* provides slightly less structured but still editorially overseen entries. Despite lacking many lexicographic features and a fixed structure, *Urban Dictionary* remains an important resource for understanding how the general public perceives and uses these expressions, not just lexicographers and linguists.

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Teaching Intercultural Communicative Competence in EFL Classes: A Comparative Perspective on the Development of Its Key Dimensions

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Abstract

The article examines intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in English as a Foreign language (EFL) education through a comparative perspective on its key dimensions. The study is based on partial research related to the series of pedagogical interventions designed to foster learners' intercultural awareness, intercultural attitudes, intercultural knowledge, intercultural skills and the recognition of the different body language expressions. The findings of the pre-intervention measurement indicate that certain dimensions of ICC are more strongly represented, more developed, or more prominent in the initial measurement. From a pedagogical perspective, the article proposes classroom activities aimed at supporting the development of individual ICC dimensions, emphasising the need for systematic integration of intercultural content, reflective activities and learner-centred approaches in institutionalised language acquisition.

some dimensions

Keywords: Intercultural Communicative Competence, English Language, Pedagogical Intervention, Tertiary Education, Statistical Analysis

1 Introduction

In the context of increasing globalisation and intercultural interaction, the integration of ICC into EFL instruction has become an inevitable component of contemporary language pedagogy. The goal of language education is to enable students to use a foreign language competently. In today's multicultural society, creating an environment that fosters mutual understanding and respect for individuals of different cultural backgrounds is imperative. Language is considered a key element of culture that shapes the interactions, perceptions,

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and behaviours of communication participants. Cultural nuances embedded in communication patterns are fundamentally influenced by mutual understanding. Language learning through culture is therefore an essential part of the educational process at all stages of institutional education.

2 Dimensions of Intercultural Communicative Competence

The ICC concept expands upon the broader notion of intercultural competence by incorporating a focus on communication, specifically how a communicator's extensive cultural competence or a set of skills is manifested in foreign-language expression.

The theoretical framework of intercultural communication competency was established by Byram, a prominent authority in intercultural studies. ICC denotes the capacity to respond proficiently in intercultural contexts using a foreign language, specifically “to communicate appropriately and effectively despite linguistic and cultural barriers” (Byram, 1997, p. 7). Effective communication extends beyond the mere application of linguistic means. The ICC thus combines the principles of communicative competence defined in linguistics with those of intercultural competence, creating a multidimensional model that reflects the nature and needs of intercultural interaction. According to Byram (1997, pp. 31–63), ICC is commonly referred to as the combination of intercultural knowledge, intercultural skills, and intercultural attitudes.

When it comes to intercultural attitudes, intercultural communication should encourage openness, curiosity, and empathy, as well as overcoming assumptions and prejudices towards other cultures. However, it is equally important to reflect on one's own culture in the same way. Effective intercultural communication also requires a solid foundation of cultural knowledge about one's own and different cultures, different values, customs, rituals and ways of life of members of other cultures. Intercultural skills involve the ability to interpret, relate and interact appropriately in intercultural situations, including the ability to manage misunderstandings and adapt communication strategies.

Contemporary approaches to ICC (Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006; Kramsch, 2014; Hoff, 2020 et. al) emphasise the importance of extending this model to include intercultural awareness and sensitivity to different expressions of body language. Intercultural awareness enables learners to critically reflect on their own cultural assumptions and recognise how culture shapes communication and interpretation. Equally important is the understanding of non-verbal communication, including gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, posture, proxemics, and intonation, as these elements often convey implicit meanings that vary across cultures. Developing awareness of body language and other paralinguistic features enhances learners' ability to interpret messages accurately and communicate more effectively in intercultural contexts.

The dimensions raised interest in further exploring this phenomenon, which led to the following questions: To what extent are the dimensions of ICC interrelated? How can the individual dimension be developed?

3 Methodology

For the purposes of the present study, the research instrument (the self-assessment questionnaire) developed by Kazykhankyzy & Alagözlü (2019) was used (in its original version). The questionnaire consists of a 51-item test designed to assess ICC through participants' self-evaluation. Individual items were rated using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 – strongly agree to 5 – strongly disagree. The individual items were divided into five dimensions, as discussed above: intercultural skills (21 items), intercultural attitudes (13 items), intercultural awareness (11 items) and intercultural knowledge (6 items). The preference for assessing ICC levels using scaling is supported by numerous studies, e.g., Hammer et al., 2003; Paige et al., 2003; Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006; Arasaratnam, 2009; Timpe, 2013; and Bérešová, 2019.

The research sample comprised 35 higher education students. Participants were selected using a convenience sampling strategy, which was adopted in consideration of the practical and logistical constraints associated with the implementation of the study, since the research was conducted as teacher research.

In accordance with the aim of the article, the pedagogical interventions aimed to enhance the level of ICC among English learners were designed and subsequently implemented with participants of the research. The development of the individual interventions was formed by key aspects associated with the cultivation of ICC. The thematic structure of the interventions was further grounded in a synthesis of topics systematised by Ritlyová (2015, pp. 93 – 94), drawing on the works of Stern (1992) and Byram & Morgan (1994). These topics represent areas that should be incorporated into foreign language curricula in line with the cultural focus of foreign language instruction: national geography, people and society, stereotypes and national identity, social interaction, institutions, arts, music and literature. The series of interventions was designed considering diverse learning styles (Gondová, 2012, pp. 19 – 23) of participants, such as utilising videos for visual learners, listening comprehension for auditory learners and role-plays for the students with a kinaesthetic learning style. Equally important was implementing various forms of activity-based tasks, i. e., working on tasks individually (e.g. as a home assignment), working in pairs (e.g. role-plays), and participating in group activities (e.g. whole-class discussions). To enhance the level of ICC, the content of the interventions incorporated a personalised approach – a core tenet of educational humanisation (Lojová, et. al., 2011, p. 22). The personalisation allowed learners to draw upon their authentic intercultural experiences, from either time spent abroad or their personal opinions on the issues.

4 Results

The results of the confirmation factor analysis (CFA) of ICC for the first measurement (T1; pre-intervention self-assessment questionnaire) reveal significant findings. The overall model fit assessed through the chi-square test was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 3286.43$; $df = 1529$; $p < 0.001$), indicating a discrepancy between the proposed theoretical model and the observed

data. Nevertheless, this outcome should be interpreted cautiously, as the chi-square statistic is highly sensitive to sample size and model complexity. Additional goodness-of-fit indicators further point to an inadequate model fit. Specifically, the comparative fit index (CFI = 0.509) and the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI = 0.488) fall substantially below the recommended threshold values ranging from 0.90 to 0.95. These results suggest that the proposed model demonstrates limited explanatory power and insufficiently accounts for the variability observed in the dataset when compared with the null model. Other research limitation is the self-reporting bias, since the data were obtained relying entirely on self-perception of the respondents.

Despite the mentioned limitations, the individual items generally load well with their respective factors, as depicted in Figure 1 below.

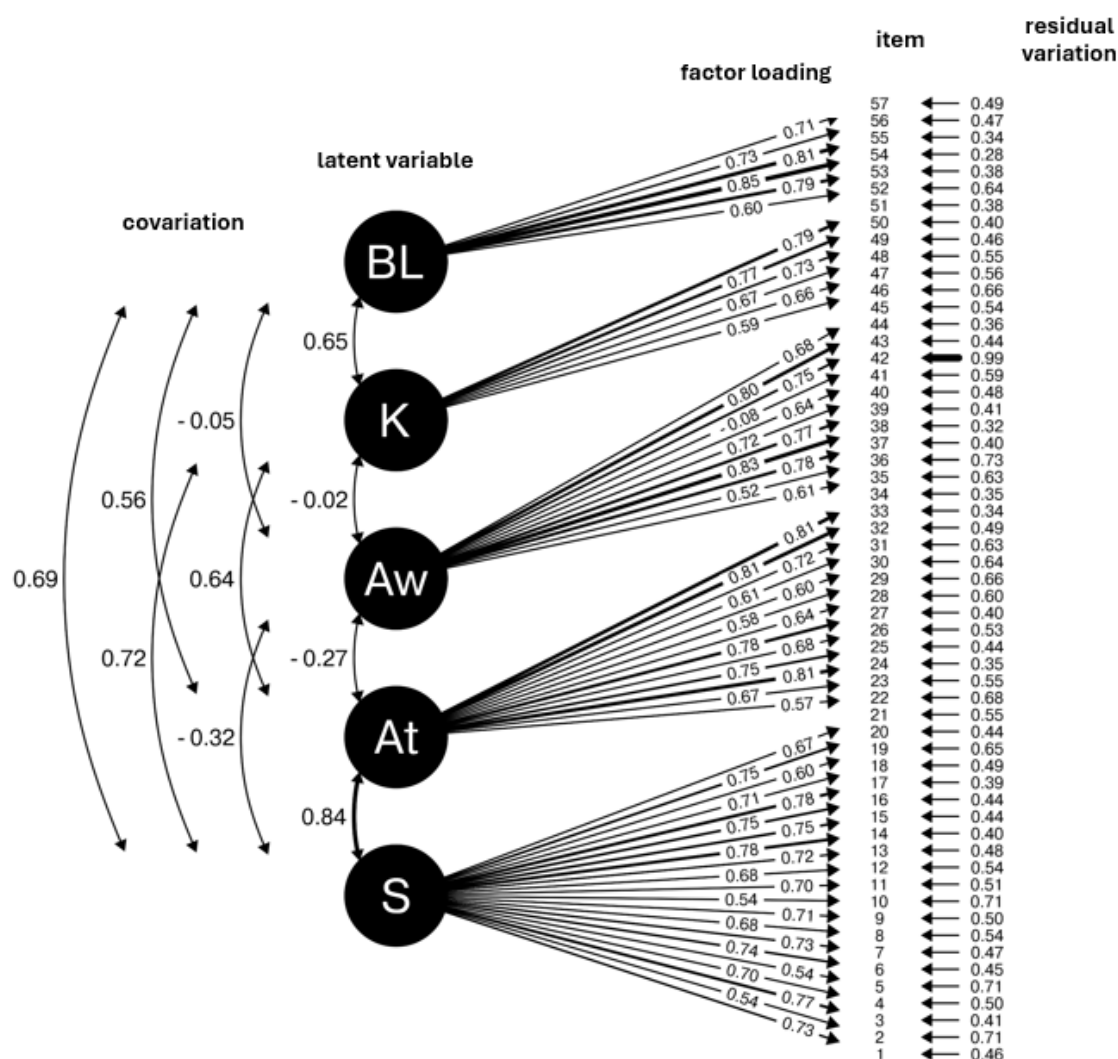


Figure 1 Graphical representation of the CFA and the five-factor ICC model

The CFA ICC results for the first measurement (T1) suggest several important findings. The overall model test using the chi-square statistic is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 3286.43$; $df =$

1529; $p < 0.001$), which means that the theoretical model differs significantly from the observed data and does not fully represent them. However, this result should be interpreted with caution, as χ^2 is sensitive to the size of the research sample and the number of variables. Other goodness-of-fit indices show significantly unsatisfactory values. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI = 0.509) and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI = 0.488) are well below the commonly recommended values (≥ 0.90 to ≥ 0.95). This indicates the model's weak ability to capture variability in the data compared to the baseline (null) model. Similarly, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA = 0.135) exceeds the recommended range (0.05–0.08), suggesting a poor model fit. At the same time, the RMSEA has a 90% confidence interval ranging from 0.129 to 0.141, which further supports the conclusion of poor model fit. Similarly, the value of the "Standardized Root Mean Square Residual" (SRMR = 0.117) exceeds the standard accepted threshold of 0.08, indicating large deviations between the data and the model.

Despite the model's poor overall fit, the individual items generally load well onto their respective factors. Based on the results of the statistical analysis, it can be observed that the *skills* (S) factor consists of items demonstrating moderate to high standardized factor loadings, with the majority of items ranging between 0.47 and 0.78. Similarly, the attitudes (At) factors exhibit high levels of item saturation, with an average of 0.75. The *body language* (BL) factor also reveals very strong item saturation (e.g. with item 54 achieving a loading of 0.58), indicating a substantial representation of the underlying latent construct. The *awareness* (Aw) factor displays acceptable to high loadings ranging from 0.61 to 0.83. The *knowledge* (K) factor shows satisfactory item loadings between 0.59 and 0.79, supporting the construct validity of this dimension.

A key finding concerns the covariance analysis among the examined factors, which revealed strong positive correlations between the skills and attitudes dimensions (0.84), as well as between skills and knowledge (0.72). These findings suggest a substantial interrelationship among the practical, cognitive, and affective components of ICC. In contrast, the *awareness* factor demonstrated a slightly negative correlation with both the *skills* and *attitudes* dimensions, which may indicate potential issues related to its conceptualisation or to the wording of the respective items that may have affected respondents' interpretations. Furthermore, a statistically significant and relatively strong correlation was defined between the *knowledge* and *body language* (non-verbal communication factors), implying that greater intercultural knowledge may contribute to a more effective understanding and interpretation of non-verbal communicative behaviour in an intercultural context.

5 Discussion and Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study provide a nuanced view of the multidimensional model of ICC. The pattern of factor loadings indicates that the individual dimensions of ICC are generally well represented at the item level. In particular, the intercultural skills, intercultural attitudes,

intercultural knowledge and the body language factors demonstrate acceptable to strong item loading, which reinforces the internal consistency of these constructs. The correlation structure further emphasises the interrelatedness of ICC dimensions. The strong associations between intercultural skills and intercultural attitudes, as well as those between the intercultural skills and intercultural knowledge, confirm the theoretical premise that intercultural competences are developed as an integrated system of cognitive, effective and behavioural components. Learners exhibiting a higher level of intercultural knowledge are also more likely to have developed interpretative and interactional skills, with more open and tolerant attitudes. Moreover, the significant correlation between intercultural knowledge and different expressions and meanings of body language among different cultures highlights the importance of nonverbal communication in intercultural contexts. Such findings emphasise the perspective that intercultural knowledge transcends mere factual cultural data and includes the capacity to interpret implicit communicative cues or signals.

The findings of the present study are consistent with the findings of Huang (2021), who found that intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes tend to develop in a mutually reinforcing manner. He claims that the dimensions should not be revised as isolated constructs but rather as interdependent elements of a broader ICC framework. The results also align with the findings of Kostková (2013), who reported that knowledge and skills-oriented dimensions often exhibit stronger internal consistency. In her study, the dimension of intercultural awareness demonstrated a slightly negative relationship with both skills and attitudes. The results also correspond with the study conducted by Gutiérrez-Santiuste & Ritacco-Real (2023). They found that especially behavioural dimensions of ICC were generally more strongly represented than cognitive dimensions.

It can be claimed that successful intercultural communication requires not only proficiency on the linguistic level but also the ability to understand, interpret, and appropriately respond to culturally conditioned meanings, behaviours, and communicative conventions. An important implication for the foreign language educational practice is that these dimensions cannot be taught in isolation. Activities that simultaneously foster all (or at least more) aspects of intercultural competences are therefore particularly beneficial. To provide an example, when addressing a widely discussed topic, stereotypes, learners should be encouraged to examine their origin and underlying causes of them. Equally important is the development of learners' ability to critically reflect on the stereotypes of their own culture and to be aware of the potential consequences of judgements about members of other cultures and their impact on intercultural interaction. In this context, learners should also develop the capacity to critically analyse and evaluate stereotypes and distinguish between facts and mediated or subjectively interpreted information.

Another significant contribution of the research is the confirmation of the effectiveness and the importance of active-learning methods in the process of foreign language acquisition. The most frequently used one in our series of interventions was a scenario-based roleplay. In addition to resolving the given situation, the participants were asked to evaluate the

appropriate distance when interacting with another or an unknown person and adapt their behaviour to that of the person they were communicating with.

6 Conclusion

This article examined the structure and relationships within a multidimensional model of ICC, which reflects the complex nature of intercultural communication. Strong connections were found especially among skills, attitudes, and knowledge. These findings suggest that teaching approaches should consider the intertwined roles of these core components to effectively develop intercultural competence.

From a pedagogical perspective, the study emphasises the necessity of an integrated and experimental approach to ICC development in EFL education.

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Translating Anglicisms and Internationalisms in EU Documents

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Abstract

This paper examines how anglicisms and internationalisms are treated in the translation of official EU documents from English into Slovak. Specifically, it addresses two questions: which form of translation equivalent – assimilated or native form – prevails in Slovak translations of EU documents, and whether the observed tendencies reflect a preference for formal precision and terminological consistency or for comprehensibility for the general reader. Based on the corpus, the research classifies translation solutions into assimilated forms, native forms, and other forms. Results show an overall preference for native forms at the level of occurrences, while a considerable number of items appear consistently in their assimilated forms. When individual items are considered, assimilated forms outnumber exclusively native forms. The findings extend current knowledge of translational norm formation in EU institutional contexts and provide empirical evidence on loanword translation in Slovak, with relevance for trainee translators, students of English language and culture in specialised communication, and professional practice.

Keywords: *anglicisms, internationalisms, EU documents, assimilated forms, native forms*

1 Introduction

The increasing presence of English as the dominant working language of European Union institutions has had a significant impact on the lexicon of all EU member-state languages, including Slovak. EU enlargement and the ongoing processes of globalisation and internationalisation have accelerated lexical borrowing, creating new challenges for translators who must balance fidelity to source terminology with the requirements of target-language norms, fluency, and comprehensibility. A recurring example of this challenge is the choice between an assimilated form and a native form – as in the case of the word *relevant*, which may be translated as *relevantný* (assimilated form) or *príslušný* (native form or Slovak equivalent). The translation of anglicisms and internationalisms represents one of the recurring lexical challenges in EU institutional translation into Slovak (Jesenská, 2007;

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Welnitzová, 2021a; Welnitzová et al., 2021b), particularly given the specific demands of legislative text translation (Gibová, 2008; Michelčíková, 2015).

Translation studies have increasingly recognised the significance of loanword translation as both a linguistic and a translational phenomenon. Decisions about whether to use an assimilated form or to use a native form are not merely lexical: they reflect broader orientations towards language purism, text function, and target reader needs (Baker, 2018; Venuti, 2017). In the context of EU translation, these decisions are further shaped by institutional guidelines, the principle of terminological consistency, and the multilingual co-origination of EU legislative texts (Šarčević, 2000; Wagner et al., 2014).

While studies on anglicisms and internationalisms in Slovak have examined their sociolinguistic reception and adaptation (Jesenská, 2007; Ološtiak, 2016) and their occurrence in newspaper texts (Welnitzová, 2021a; Welnitzová et al., 2021b), their treatment in EU legislative and policy documents remains underexplored. The present study aims to fill this gap by addressing two questions: which form – assimilated or native – prevails in the translations of EU legislative texts from English into Slovak and whether the observed tendencies reflect a preference for formal precision and terminological consistency or for comprehensibility for the general Slovak-speaking reader.

2 Theoretical Background

This chapter establishes the theoretical framework for examining the treatment of English-derived lexical items in Slovak translations of EU legislative documents. It first considers the relationship between the European Union's multilingual language policy and the institutional practices governing legal translation. It then discusses the distinction between anglicisms and internationalisms in Slovak, with particular attention to lexical borrowing, assimilation, and translators' choices between foreign and domestic forms.

2.1 Language Policy and Translation in the EU

The European Union currently operates with 24 official languages, each enjoying equal status under EU language policy (Wagner et al., 2014). This principle of linguistic equality is realised through an extensive translation infrastructure: the EU's translation services produce or coordinate translations of all legislation into every official language. The volume and legal force of these translations make EU translation a paradigm case for studying the interplay between language policy and translational practice (Šarčević, 2000; Wagner et al., 2014).

Slovak became an official EU language after Slovakia had joined the EU in 2004. Since then, Slovak translators working for EU institutions have been required to produce translations that are not only accurate renderings of the source texts but also legally valid instruments in their own right. As direct translation is not always possible across all 24 official languages, EU translation services rely on pivot languages – primarily English, French, and German – which sometimes makes the process even more demanding. This creates a dual pressure: conformity

with the source text ensures legal equivalence across language versions, while the demands of Slovak grammatical and stylistic norms – and sensitivity to language purism – may push translators towards more domesticating solutions (Michelčíková, 2015).

2.2 Anglicisms and Internationalisms in Slovak

Academic discussions on words of foreign origin in Slovak typically distinguish between anglicisms and internationalisms, though the boundary between the two has become increasingly difficult to draw in contemporary usage (Jesenská, 2007; Ološtiak, 2016). Internationalisms are generally understood as words – predominantly of Greek or Latin origin – that appear in parallel forms across multiple languages and are used to denote phenomena of an international, scientific, or technical character. Dolník (2007, p. 198) notes that the degree of internationality of a lexical unit increases proportionally with the number of languages in which it appears. Anglicisms, by contrast, are lexical items that have entered Slovak from English, whether as direct borrowings, assimilated forms, or words mediated through English from other source languages (Jesenská, 2007). Loan words typically enter a language in their original form and are gradually assimilated over time, adapting to the phonological and orthographic conventions of the target language (e.g., *management* → *manažment*; *gentleman* → *džentlmen*). In some cases, rather than assimilating the form of a word, languages opt for calques – literal translations that replicate the meaning and structure of the source expression using native elements (e.g., *počítačová sieť* for *computer network*). Welnitzová (2021a) and Welnitzová et al. (2021b) found that student and professional translators prefer assimilated forms of English loanwords in newspaper texts. The present study extends this research to EU legislative documents, where the translation context and norms differ considerably and also contribute to shaping the language.

2.3 Translation of EU Legislative Texts

EU legislative texts form a distinct genre defined by their normative character, terminological precision, high information density, and fixed structure (Šarčević, 2000; Michelčíková, 2015). The genre is also characterized by morphosyntactic and graphic features such as complex sentence structures including passive constructions and embedded clauses, the use of modal verbs, standardised expressions (e.g., *Having regard to... / So zreteľom na...*), and graphic conventions concerning capitalisation, abbreviations, and the numbering of articles and paragraphs (Gibová, 2008). Terminological consistency represents a core principle of EU translation practice, supported by institutional resources such as IATE (Interactive Terminology for Europe) and the Joint Practical Guide (a normative guide for drafting EU legislative texts), as deviation from established equivalents risks introducing legal ambiguity (Tomášek, 1998). However, these guidelines do not explicitly prescribe the use of assimilated forms over native forms; the selection of one form over another therefore depends on established institutional practice and individual translator preference (Biel, 2014).

3 Methodology

Based on the theoretical background presented above and on previous research conducted in the context of newspaper texts, we aimed to examine how anglicisms and internationalisms are translated in official EU documents from English into Slovak. Therefore, two research questions were addressed:

1) Which form of translation equivalent – assimilated form (e.g. *relevantný*) or native form (e.g. *príslušný*) – prevails in Slovak translations of EU legislative texts?

2) Do the observed tendencies prioritise formal precision and terminological consistency, as expected in institutional texts, or rather comprehensibility for the general Slovak-speaking reader?

The research corpus consisted of four official EU documents in English (a Council Regulation, a Council Decision, a European Parliament and Council Regulation, and an EU Implementation Decision) and their corresponding official Slovak translations, published in the Official Journal of the European Union. A total of 270 lexical items, anglicisms and internationalisms, were excerpted manually from the source texts (English versions) and each item was verified in a dictionary to confirm its status. All occurrences of each item across the sample were identified, and the corresponding Slovak translation equivalents were recorded from the target texts (Slovak versions). Both the source items and their translation equivalents were entered into a structured table for analysis. Each equivalent was then assigned a word class label, and the form of the translation equivalent was classified into one of three categories: (a) assimilated form – a graphologically, phonologically, or morphologically adapted form; (b) native form – a Slovak equivalent; and (c) other forms – including the cases of referential substitution, lexical variation, or omission. The frequency of each translation solution was subsequently counted and recorded in the table, providing the basis for the quantitative analysis.

4 Results

We found out, that the excerpted items covered four major word classes: nouns (166 items, 61.5%), adjectives (84 items, 31.1%), verbs (13 items, 4.8%), and adverbs (7 items, 2.6%).

The first level of analysis examined all 270 excerpted items and calculated the overall occurrences translated by an assimilated form and a native form. Across all items and all their occurrences in the source texts, native forms were employed in 65.20% of cases, while the assimilated forms were preserved in 31.26% of cases. The remaining approximately 3.5% of cases fell into the category of other forms, comprising translated forms involving pronoun substitution, lexical variation, or, in very rare cases, omission of the source item.

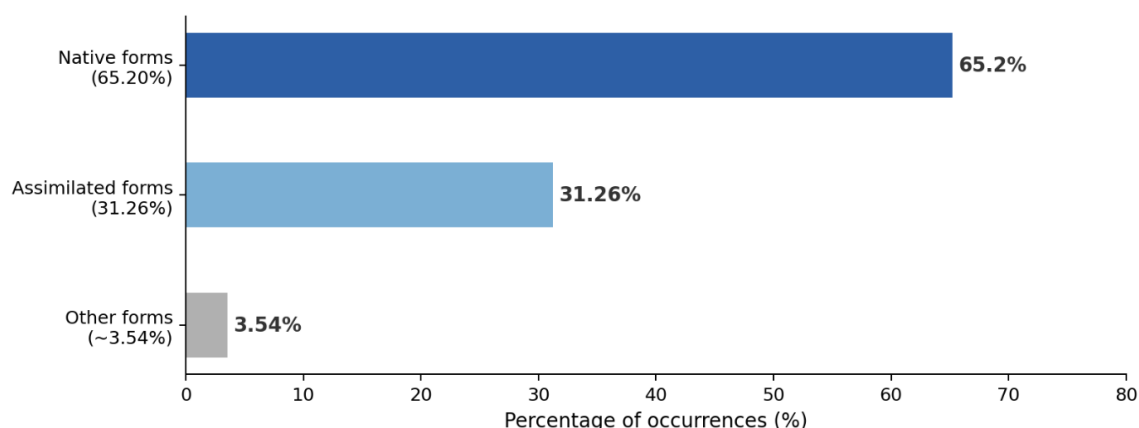


Figure 1 Overall occurrences of native, assimilated and other forms in percentage ($N =$ all occurrences of 270 items).

These figures indicate a clear overall preference for native forms in the translation of the analysed items. This tendency aligns with the prescriptive orientation of Slovak linguistic tradition, which has historically favoured native over borrowed forms, and with the general norm of terminological clarity in institutional Slovak.

A second level of analysis examined items for which a single, consistent form was used across all occurrences – that is, items translated exclusively by a native form or exclusively by an assimilated form, with no alternation. This helped separate consistent translation patterns from context-dependent choices. Of the 270 items, 49.26% were rendered exclusively by the assimilated form — the largest single category at the item level — indicating that for approximately half of the analysed vocabulary, the assimilated form was the only form used. By contrast, 27.78% of items were rendered exclusively by a native form. The remaining 22.96% showed mixed approaches, appearing in both assimilated and native forms across different contexts in the corpus.

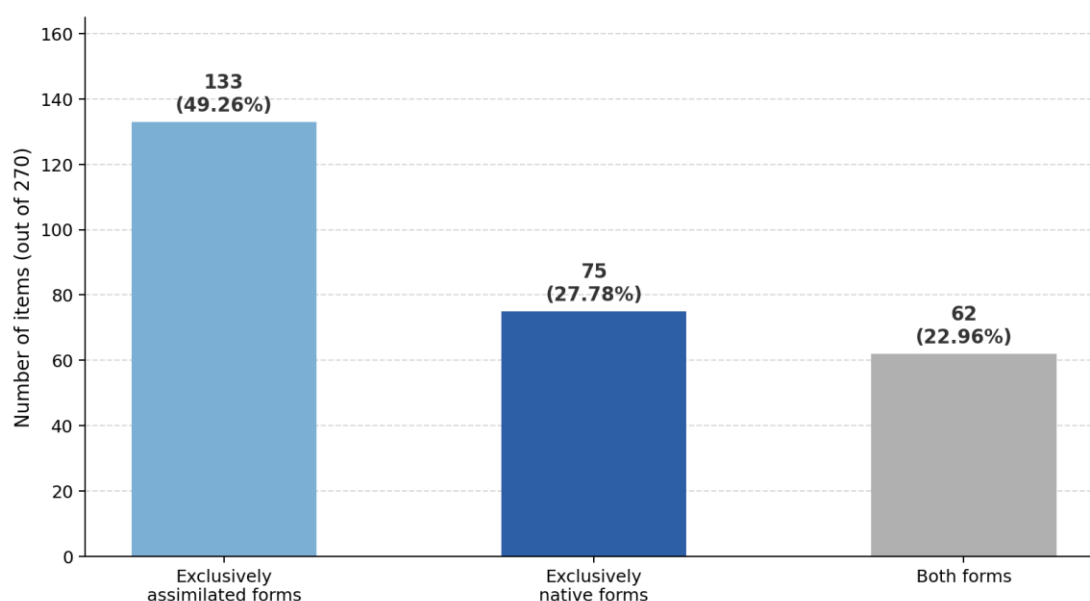


Figure 2 Distribution of consistent forms.

The following examples from the corpus can help illustrate the quantitative findings. In several frequently occurring items, translator preferences were consistent. The noun *contract* was translated exclusively as *zmluva* or *zákazka* (237 occurrences), never as *kontrakt*. Similarly, *management* was consistently translated as *riadenie* or *správa* (31 occurrences) rather than *manažment*, and *directive* invariably appeared as *smernica* (40 occurrences) rather than *direktíva*. In these cases, established Slovak equivalents consistently prevail over the available assimilated forms.

The converse pattern is equally evident. The noun *criteria* was translated exclusively as *kritériá* (66 occurrences), with the potential native form *meradlá* never appearing. *Sanction* was consistently translated as *sankcia* (27 occurrences) rather than *trest* or *opatrenie*; and *programme* was uniformly rendered as *program* (47 occurrences), with no native form (e.g. *plán*).

The most linguistically interesting cases were those displaying mixed forms. The noun *information* (93 occurrences) alternated between *správa* (25 occurrences) and *informácie* (68 occurrences); *expert* (10 occurrences) appeared as both *odborník* (4 occurrences) and *expert* (6 occurrences); and *relevant* (32 occurrences) was rendered as both *príslušný* (21 occurrences) and *relevantný* (11 occurrences). These items suggest contextual sensitivity in translator decision-making: the preferred form seems to vary according to discourse, register, and the semantic proximity of the Slovak and assimilated equivalents in context.

Table 1 Selected examples of translation solutions for anglicisms and internationalisms in the corpus.

Source item and its occurrence (EN)	Native form	Assimilated form	Native form (n)	Assimilated form (n)
<i>contract</i> (237×)	<i>zmluva / zákazka</i>	<i>kontrakt</i>	237	0
<i>directive</i> (40×)	<i>smernica</i>	<i>direktíva</i>	40	0
<i>management</i> (31×)	<i>riadenie / správa</i>	<i>manažment</i>	31	0
<i>criteria</i> (66×)	<i>meradlá</i>	<i>kritériá</i>	0	66
<i>programme</i> (47×)	<i>plán / osnova</i>	<i>program</i>	0	47
<i>sanction</i> (27×)	<i>trest / opatrenie</i>	<i>sankcia</i>	0	27
<i>economic</i> (122×)	<i>hospodársky</i>	<i>ekonomický</i>	114	8
<i>expert</i> (10×)	<i>odborník</i>	<i>expert</i>	4	6
<i>information</i> (93×)	<i>správa</i>	<i>informácia (/e)</i>	25	68
<i>relevant</i> (32×)	<i>príslušný</i>	<i>relevantný</i>	21	11

5 Discussion

The results of the present research reveal a clear overall preference for native forms (65.20%), which is perhaps unexpected in the context of EU legislative texts, where a higher frequency of assimilated forms might be anticipated due to the character of the texts. This suggests that Slovak EU translators are guided by a norm that prioritises established native terminology where such terminology exists and is unambiguous. This finding supports earlier observations by Michelčíková (2015) on the preference for native forms in Slovak legal language norms and aligns with the broader translational norm described by Toury (2012) as the tendency towards adequacy to target-language conventions.

The analysis shows, however, a more complex picture. Although 65.20% of occurrences involve native forms, 49.26% of all items are translated exclusively by the assimilated forms, compared to only 27.78% translated exclusively by a native form. This indicates that for a large number of EU terms, the assimilated form is the only established option in institutional Slovak, particularly in the domains of EU institutional structure, financial and monetary policy, and legal process where no native equivalent has become widely accepted (e.g., inflation = *inflácia*; recapitalisation = *rekapitalizácia*). In these areas, the assimilated form has become the standard, and translators do not replace it with a native form even where one exists. This is consistent with Ološtiak's (2016) observation that assimilated forms in technical registers tend to resist replacement once they are sufficiently established.

Anglicisms and internationalisms rendered by both a native form and an assimilated form across different occurrences are theoretically the most revealing. They suggest that translators make active contextual decisions, choosing between the two forms depending on register, context, the need for terminological precision, or the risk of ambiguity. The same pattern has been observed in other research on Slovak translation practice (Welnitzová, 2021a; Welnitzová et al., 2021b) and is consistent with what Baker (2018) calls the normalisation tendency: translators tend towards conventional solutions while remaining flexible where the source text allows for more than one interpretation.

The data also show that not all translation forms behave in the same way: some have become fully established in Slovak institutional discourse, while others remain variable. Some items, such as criteria = *kritériá* and programme = *program*, have completed the process of lexical integration: they are consistently translated by a single form and used without variation. Others, such as information = *informácie/údaje* and relevant = *relevantný/príslušný*, remain variable. This suggests that translators still actively choose between competing forms depending on the context.

These findings have implications for EU translator training. As Welnitzová (2021a) and Welnitzová et al. (2021b) show, translation students need both linguistic knowledge and strategic awareness when dealing with loanwords. The present data suggest that the EU translation context adds a further constraint – terminological consistency – which shapes

translation choices in ways that may differ from those of translators working in other contexts

6 Conclusion

This study has examined the translation of anglicisms and internationalisms in selected EU documents from English into Slovak, with a focus on two questions: which form – assimilated or native – prevails, and whether the observed tendencies prioritise formal precision or reader comprehensibility. Analysis of 270 excerpted lexical items reveals a clear overall preference for native forms at the level of individual occurrences (65.20%). At the same time, when individual items are considered, a larger proportion appears exclusively in its assimilated form (49.26%) than exclusively in a native form (27.78%). The apparent contradiction can be explained by frequency: although fewer items are rendered exclusively by the assimilated form, these items tend to occur repeatedly across the documents, whereas items rendered by native forms are more varied and less frequent.

The results point to two coexisting tendencies in Slovak EU translation. On the one hand, translators consistently use established native Slovak equivalents where these are available. On the other hand, assimilated forms dominate in core EU institutional and financial vocabulary, where no native alternative has become established. Where both forms exist, the choice between them appears to depend on context, suggesting that this part of the lexicon remains subject to individual translator choice.

The findings have practical implications for translator training and for programmes in specialised communication. A better understanding of how loanwords are translated in EU documents can help prepare students for institutional translation, where lexical choices are shaped by terminological consistency, institutional conventions, and the needs of the target reader.

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Exploring Language Barriers in Speaking English Language at Professional Level

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore the language barriers in speaking English at a professional level. The aim of the present research is to identify the barriers to speaking English among graduates in the workplace, including fear, anxiety, hesitation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and pronunciation. The sample selected for the study was 06 professionals who were enrolled in different Domino English language learning center campuses in Karachi. The data were collected through the semi-structured interview questionnaire and then analyzed through thematic analysis. The findings revealed that fear, language anxiety, hesitation, limited vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, and inadequate fluency were the major barriers affecting English-speaking performance in professional settings, while grammar was considered comparatively less significant for oral communication. The study also highlights the importance of confidence, regular speaking practice, and workplace-oriented language training in overcoming these barriers. These findings may help language educators and training institutions develop more effective strategies to enhance professionals' English communication skills.

Keywords: *English-speaking barriers; professional communication; language anxiety; speaking fluency; pronunciation difficulties; workplace language training*

1 Introduction

This research is based on exploring the language barriers in speaking the English language. The significance of learning the English language has increased as a result of English's standing as a global language (Chand, 2005). Only an individual's fear, reluctance, anxiety, lack of self-esteem, lack of self-motivation, and lack of self-confidence in their thoughts are barriers. They will be able to speak English fluently once they can overcome these obstacles (Oleksandr, 2017). When we talk about English language learning the factors of language barriers for the learners arise in it. Thus, the present study identified and explored the specific language

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barriers and the reasons for language barriers among English language professionals and learners.

Speaking is one of the crucial English skills that learners need to develop because it plays such an important part in communication. According to Kohonen (1992), referenced in Cook (2013), there is a very important factor to consider when learning a second language, which is developing speaking skills and acquiring the ability to conduct a conference in a language that can be used to gauge the success of speaking skill development efforts. Learning to speak well in a second language can be challenging for learners. English is an important tool for professional communication across other cultures, especially in a multilingual setting. People who speak English well typically have better chances of securing lucrative employment offers all over the world.

1.1 Overview

Communication skills are the most essential skills to learn as they play a pivotal role in an individual's professional life. The world is currently a technologically advanced environment full of challenges, fresh requirements, improved working methods, and high productivity requirements. The results of Rahman (2010), indicate that English communication skills, along with other crucial professional skills at work, are necessary for every organization to succeed in today's globalized workplace. Based on the ideas and concepts presented in the introduction, it can be deduced that there are numerous challenges that learners face when learning and using the English language, particularly when doing so as a second language, or when it is used by professionals in their line of work, or when it is used in the classroom by students because it is used in a variety of situations and by specific people who are not involved in daily activities. Language barriers are a topic that scholars, academics, and educators are becoming increasingly interested in (Abedini, & Chalak, 2017).

1.2 Research Objectives

The research was conducted specifically to achieve the following goals:

- To identify the specific language barriers in Speaking English Language by professionals.
- To suggest ways to improve the English language competency of non-native speakers of the English language.

1.3 Research Questions

- What are the specific language barriers to speaking English by professionals?
- What are the ways to improve English language competency of non-native speakers of the English language?

The number of students who are interested in learning a language has increased as a result of globalization and advancement in all fields. Since English is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world, communication is made easier. As a result, the English language attracts researchers with deep knowledge (Ardiyansah, 2019).

2 Literature Review

This literature review provides a body of relevant studies, examinations, themes, and theories for identifying the reasons for language barriers among English language learners and highlighting language barriers in speaking English by professionals. Speaking is a productive skill. It involves the creation of words or spoken sentences. People can express their thoughts, ideas, and opinions about the world with this skill. Speaking is defined as an interactive process of creating meaning that includes information production, reception, and processing.

2.1 Language Barriers

There is growing interest worldwide in the issue of language barriers. The process of learning English poses a variety of difficulties, according to Blume & Board (2013). This situation, resulting from diverse languages, vocabulary, accents, and dialects, indicates national or regional barriers, semantic gaps where words like "round" have multiple meanings despite having a similar pronunciation, poorly communicated messages, and unsupported assumptions. Confusion can also come through the use of ambiguous or improper language and from messages that are poorly communicated or misinterpreted.

Speaking is one of the four English skills that is essential for language acquisition. According to recent studies on foreign language anxiety (Woodrow, 2006; Soomro et al., 2019), it can interfere with students' ability to learn new languages and perform well academically.

Language anxiety, according to Woodrow (2006), is linked to students' self-consciousness and a fundamental internal stimulation, such as how each person views others (peers, teachers, etc.). Foreign language learners who have communication anxiety struggle to understand others' messages as well as their own (Horwitz, 2010). Horwitz (2010) asserted that foreign language anxiety is a significant barrier to language learning on its own and is not related to difficulties learning a native language.

One sort of speech error that has garnered the majority of experimental attention is hesitation. Speaking slowly or stammering is hesitant. When speakers are struggling to find the right words to say, they pause for varied lengths of time.

Grammar is a set of rules for language that you use, since it takes a lot of time and effort to construct words and phrases that make sense. Moreover, Azaryad (2018) believed that grammar controlled how language should be utilized in both speech and writing. In the modern era, digital literacy is an important aspect (Haque, 2022; Yamoah & Haque, 2022; Imran et al., 2025).

The foundational language skill that must be mastered before mastering English skills is vocabulary (Rahmat & Mohandas, 2020). Vocabulary, in the opinion of Brassell & Furtado (2008), is extremely important for language learners and is essential to language. The learners are required to master four English skills, speaking, listening, writing, and reading, by having a large vocabulary.

Speaking is an oral action that involves reciting words to communicate ideas. In this situation, the speaker must communicate clearly and fluently so that the listener can understand the meaning of the messages. Fluency is the capacity to speak or write a language with ease when performing an action or delivering a message fluently and appropriately. One of the most important aspects of speaking is pronouncing words effectively since it affects the listener's ability to understand and accept the aim of communication. According to Gilakjani (2016), using emphasis and intonation incorrectly can result in problems. Correct

pronunciation is necessary to develop speaking ability and to provide clear communication that prevents misunderstandings.

2.2 Role of English Language Academies

The teaching and learning of speaking are an important component of any language education classroom. In this situation, the teacher is expected to provide comprehensive instruction; as a result, the teacher should be knowledgeable about the different components of speaking competence and how they work together to produce spoken language in a fluid, accurate, and socially appropriate manner. According to Harmer (2007), these elements of second language speaking competency encompass knowledge of language and discourse, core speaking ability, and communicative discourse tactics.

To help students improve their skills and potential for learning and speaking English, language academies were specifically developed. According to Al Hosni (2014), numerous Approaches and Tactics for EFL Class Building students' confidence and help them become more adept at oral communication, which is a skill that EFL instructors should help them develop. Since they are aware that the teaching strategies employed there are substantially different from those utilized in schools, pupils frequently turn to language centers as a result.

2.3 English Language in Pakistan

With the advent of English schooling during colonial times, the English language came to dominate (Evans, 2002). As they believed it would distance the elite from the populace, some Englishmen opposed English education in India (Rahman, 2010). English education in India was opposed by certain Englishmen who thought it would alienate the native population from the elite. There was opposition to Urdu's hegemony because people in different provinces speak different languages (Rehman, 2010). English, along with Urdu and other regional languages, remained a significant component of language policy due to internal linguistic instability.

Pakistan is a multilingual country. Urdu, the most widely used language among the masses, is the national language. But its native speakers are only 7.57% of the total population. There are many indigenized languages besides Urdu, with a very huge percentage of their speakers. English is the official language. Since Pakistan's independence, English has been used in official and unofficial contexts (Ahmed, 2016).

Since the world has become more interconnected and the English-speaking nations control the majority of resources, including language, globalization is another factor contributing to the dominance of the English language in Pakistan. To compete in the global society, it is now important for residents of emerging nations like Pakistan to acquire English. The idea that English is the language of development has been contested by several studies (e.g., Coleman, 2010), which contend that literacy in regional languages is more crucial for people's economic and social development. However, proficiency in the English language is now seen as being essential for a Pakistani person's development and social mobility.

English plays the function of a second language rather than a foreign language in Pakistan. The teaching of English as a second language in Pakistan's schools, colleges, and universities is a result of political decisions or official policy. Television, newspapers, mass media, and radio now all use it. English is a key component of providing a decent education in elite universities. Additionally, it serves as the industry standard language. This minor point illustrates the fact that English-speaking citizens of emerging nations like Pakistan may be granted permission to enjoy socio-economic prosperity. The demand for this language has grown along with it, as needs for qualified students. The proficiency in this language of Pakistani students is of utmost importance. Students who had a solid command of the English language had a better

likelihood of excelling in their academic careers. Students with a strong background in the English language may also have an opportunity to achieve a respectable social status (Shamim, 2008).

In Pakistan, the majority of professional employment requires proficiency in English. In actuality, English is the primary language used for the majority of competitive tests and interviews used to choose candidates for public employment. The Central Superior Service Examination (CSS) and the Provincial Management Service (PMS) are two competitive entrance exams that must be passed to be admitted to the civil service. English is used to conduct CSS and PMS. In addition to being administered in English, the language is a required subject that carries a significant amount of weight in these exams. Although civil servants hardly use English during day-to-day activities, especially in rural areas, English has a gatekeeping role (Coleman, 2010). Speaking fluent English is not the only requirement for obtaining a prestigious career, according to various research (e.g. Coleman, 2010; Kirkpatrick, 2007).

3 Research Methodology

This research study is purely qualitative in nature. Qualitative research is a method of collecting, interpreting, and analyzing non-numerical data to understand and elaborate ideas, concepts, experiences, opinions, and others. This research type deals with the study of in-depth research to find out the roots of any problem (Bhandari, 2022). However, in the entire process of qualitative research, the focus of the study is on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the problem for which the study takes place rather than on the meaning that the researcher wants to bring to the study or that scholars express in the literature (Creswell, 2014).

A research design refers to the research strategy or a plan to answer a set of questions (Cohen et al., 2007). In this study, a semi-structured interview questionnaire was used. A questionnaire is answered by the participants and then recorded by the researcher. The participants answer the questions and provide basic information (Creswell, 2014). In a qualitative study, an investigator asks open-ended questions, and the participants provide the information (Creswell, 2014). The present study aimed to identify the specific language barriers in speaking English by professionals. Hence, for professional viewpoints, an open-ended interview questionnaire was used as it allowed the respondent to give free-form answers to the questions (Farrell, 2016).

The target population of this research study was the professionals who are currently enrolled in different Domino English language learning center campuses in Karachi. The population is defined as a complete or entire group on which a researcher wants to generalize his/her research (Bhandari, 2022). Purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling, in which the researcher approaches the sample which best suits the needs and requirements of the research. It deals with respondents or participants' best falls on the criteria of the research study (Crossman, 2020).

A semi-structured interview questionnaire was used to gather data from the research study's target sample or respondents. The data was analyzed with the help of the thematic analysis method of qualitative research. The thematic analysis divides the data into themes, concepts, and ideas to identify the meaning that is revealed from the data repeatedly (Caulfield, 2022).

The researcher was bound to follow all the research ethics that are defined by BERA 2018. All the necessary measures were followed properly; the researcher did not violate any of its rules.

4 Results and Findings

The data gathered through the research tool identified seven major themes: English speaking fear, language anxiety triggers, English speaking hesitation, English grammar, effects of pronunciation, vocabulary usage, and English language fluency level.

First interviewee is a college teacher. He said the reason for his English-speaking fear is how people will perceive him and how people think of him when they communicate in their surroundings. This fear leads him to the concept of losing social face. Face is a sociological concept that refers to an individual's public self-image, which is constantly progressing and developing within social interactions (Valentine et al., 2011). He highlighted that his educational background, name, and tag he carries in social settings, and the phenomenon of losing face hinder his English speaking. Further, he outlined that hesitation affects the flow of conversation and, as a consequence, it decreases the confidence level of speaking. According to him, low confidence increases the level of anxiety of learners, which becomes a barrier for the learners to communicate in the English language. Next, he counts English grammar as a less significant barrier to English speaking. Moreover, he summarized that when it comes to English speaking, we can clearly see the influence of L1 on it, which makes the barriers for learners as your articulation in the target language has a greater impact on it. He suggested that one should have a good knowledge of vocabulary, such as practicing it well, how and where to use it, its meaning and all background knowledge associated with it. Besides that, he pointed out that in a professional setting, a person should have at least an intermediate or upper intermediate level of spoken fluency (Table 1).

Table 1 Theme & Code 1

	Illustration Words from Original Transcript		Subcategory		Code
1	Yes, I very very time I mostly even now too I feel very fear when I speak English in my professional life	1	English Speaking Fear	1	People's Perception
2	At times that became very embarrassing as well because I was representing that	2	English Speaking Fear	2	Social face

3	institute, which is a very renowned university in Pakistan. So it was very important to learn the English language	3	English Speaking Hesitation	1	Affects flow of conversation
4	hesitation affected the flow of my conversation and my overall confidence when I spoke English	4	Language Anxiety Triggers	1	Low confidence
5	And it was very obvious from the body language as well, people used to say this, that, yeah, you weren't feeling confident. And I know that a person knows that he is not very confident. But when the confidence level was high, when the fluency was there and obviously that confidence thing came in and the whole scenario became different so I think it's my personal point of view, I might be wrong. I think the grammar is not very important. Not very important in communication in the professional environment	5	English Grammar	1	Less significant
6	Pronunciation is very important, but it depends on your background. For example, a person who is from Karachi or from Islamabad or Lahore, it's very easy for that person to be good in pronunciation, but it's very difficult for a person who is from interior background. So pronunciation is important, I think, but it depends on the scenarios as well. Also if a person's pronunciation was not good. But I think it's important to be right.	6	Effects of pronunciation	1	L1 influence on speaking English
7	I prepared for the IBA test, So I found out that those words are not used in the professional environment	7	Vocabulary Usage	1	Vocabulary knowledge
8	if fluency is missing, a person feels like a lack of confidence or he feels belittled about himself	8	English Language Fluency Level	1	Intermediate
9	it's important to be fluent and it's important to be very confident	9	English Language Fluency Level	2	Upper intermediate

The next interviewee is a lawyer and is currently working in a renowned firm. She said that for the use of the oral English language in the workplace, we do not have the knowledge of it or how to study it. Further, in Pakistan, schools, colleges and universities are not preparing learners to be language-speaking competent, so when students enter the line of professional work, they lack speaking skills of language and have no awareness of how to study it in line

with the workspace. Further, language jargon and terminology make the learners hesitant, which is a barrier to their English-speaking skills. According to her, comprehension skills trigger the learner's anxiety level. When the communicative surroundings are not understood by the learners, it makes the learners anxious. According to her, in a professional setting, while using the English language, the usage of grammar or perfect use of grammar is not really significant while speaking. However, English grammar is more significant when writing up for a workspace. She pointed out that people perceive your language proficiency mostly based on your language pronunciation, like how you produce the words and phrases in the target language. So, most of the learners try to fix their pronunciation in different settings so that people can better perceive their language proficiency, which is a time-consuming process or it hinders their learning. She said that when it comes to vocabulary usage, the environment of the workspace plays a crucial part. So, the person should have an awareness of how to use his or her vocabulary knowledge. However, a person might face other consequences in professional interactions. According to her, a proficient level of spoken fluency in a professional setting makes a great impact on the person among the workers and other professional tasks and assignments (Table 2).

Table 2 Theme & Code 2

	Illustration Words from Original Transcript		Subcategory		Code
1	We don't know how to study basic English, how to learn, how to speak, how to pronounce. We don't know. We never know. No one gave us awareness about that. So we feel very difficult when we are in front of anyone to speak we can't do because we don't know from beginning to end	1	English Speaking fear	1	Lack of awareness of language learning
2	I switched my career field and for me, the new environment of the organization makes me hesitant because the jargon is different. Terminologies are different, work environments and work ethics are different	2	English Speaking Hesitation	1	Language jargon
3	When speaking English in professional interaction, I don't even know what is going through my mind. I can't understand that I can't even understand myself. I face so many difficulties in front of my fellows, they are mostly from internationally studied countries. So they are very well off from this universal language. So I feel very low in front of them. And most of the time I felt lacking	3	Language anxiety triggers	1	Comprehension skills

	in comprehending their long talks in English Not very important in communication in the professional environment I think most of the time in my professional interaction I make a pronunciation differently so that my fellow students can have a good perception of me about my second language I would say it's good if you can use those words, but I think it's not necessary. It's good to be like that if you want to impress somebody and you want to use some high words. So it is like another case. But in the professional environment, people see that in a negative term, if it is obvious from your speaking that you know those words, the meaning of those words and those words are coming naturally from your mouth, from your side, then it's okay. But if you want to be different from others and try to show off, then it becomes an embarrassing thing				
4		4	English Grammar	1	Less significant for speaking Language proficiency
5		5	Effects of pronunciation	1	
6		6	Vocabulary usage	1	
7	I can say upper intermediate as different levels of fluency affect the confidence and communication flow in professional interactions	7	English Language fluency level	1	Proficient

The third interviewee is a banker. According to her, the mother tongue causes hindrance for English language learning and speaking. Further, she outlined that psychological barriers of the learners hindered English language learning and caused the anxiety level of the learners to speak in professional interactions. She said, "Most of the time I was afraid to speak in front of strangers, and a pep talk doesn't help me because the fear of making mistakes makes me hesitant". Further, she said, "For me, grammar plays a secondary role while speaking". Besides that, she said students with a positive attitude towards learning the target language learn faster. Thus, learners' attitudes can become a barrier to pronunciation. Further, she suggested that learners who do not have enough vocabulary should expand their expressions. Next, she emphasized on the learners out for the target language in accordance with a professional setting should be at the upper intermediate level of fluency (Table 3).

Table 3 Theme & Code 3

Illustration Words from Original Transcript	Subcategory	Code
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1	I have noted that there I had a fear of my mother tongue also. Basically, we try to translate into English. Therefore we cannot speak and we have the hindrances in between	1	English Speaking fear	1	Mother tongue influence
2	I think that is a major fear. The fear of being wrong. The fear of making mistakes	2	English Speaking Hesitation	1	Fear of Mistakes
3	It's important to have speaking skills in the English language. And if I was lacking in that, obviously because of that, the dizziness, stress, the sweating of the palms and the sweating of the forehead, it was a normal feeling of incompetent and feeling shaky	3	Language anxiety triggers	1	Psychological barriers
4	Grammar as a supportive thing. It's important to know about the grammar, But I think in a professional environment, it's more important to know about your field and to be confident and to have that fluency level	4	English Grammar	1	Plays secondary role
5	I firmly believe that emotions are a crucial component of language learning either positively or negatively impact learners proficiency in the production of a targeted language	5	Effects of pronunciation	1	Learners Attitude
6	vocabulary and range of expressions is not big enough	6	Vocabulary usage	1	Vocabulary range
7	output of the language is fluency level	7	English Language fluency level	1	Upper intermediate

The interviewee is a Marketing Manager in a firm. According to him, lack of confidence hinders him from speaking. Besides, he said he often experiences a lack of confidence when he realizes that the conversation partners do not understand him or when he is unable to comprehend other speakers. He would rather remain mute in this circumstance while others speak, demonstrating his lack of communication confidence. Further, he said that unawareness of the topic and discussion or what it means, causes hesitation. Lack of knowledge causes confidence issues and holds us back from speaking. Moreover, he said fear of being evaluated by others is also another factor affecting learners' anxiety. He claims that there are grammatical differences between English and first languages. This aspect could make it difficult for learners to understand the target language's grammatical structures. Learning a target language with tenses is typically more challenging for language learners whose mother tongue lacks them. He highlighted that differences in phonology might make it difficult to combine sounds and produce sounds in the target language. He highlighted that vocabulary usage involves comprehension of the foundational concepts of target language words or phrases. Thus, understanding of meanings can be a hindrance for learners.

Furthermore, he outlined that a person should have an upper-intermediate level of English fluency for the workspace. This level contributes greatly in the workplace, though you may exhibit an obvious accent and need help with advanced terminology (Table 4).

Table 4 Theme & Code 4

	Illustration Words from Original Transcript		Subcategory		Code
1	So fear was mainly that people will laugh at me	1	English Speaking fear	1	Lack of confidence
2	unaware of the topic and discussion hold back from the conversation	2	English Speaking Hesitation	1	Lack of Knowledge
3	fear of being evaluated by their other differences between English and first language	3	Language anxiety triggers	1	Fear of negative evaluation
4	grammar challenging the language learning	4	English Grammar	1	Differences in grammar
5	phonology can also lead to difficulties in creating sounds				
5	learning vocabulary items of English involved comprehensions of the meaning and associated definition	5	Effects of pronunciation	1	Differences in phonology
6	This level contribute greatly in the workplace, though you may exhibit an obvious accent and need help with advanced terminology	6	Vocabulary usage	1	Understanding meaning
7		7	English Language fluency level	1	Upper Intermediate

The following interviewee is a chartered accountant. He highlighted the fear of being humiliated by the other while hindering his English speaking. Moreover, when in a situation we start to compare ourselves with others, we make ourselves inferior as a consequence, our motivation for a target language decreases. Also, he outlined that when we are not getting a cooperative environment from the audience or workspace we face a lack of learning. Further, he said that he found grammatical structure complex when starting English learning in his schooling. On English speaking pronunciation, he highlighted that people would be judging him on his pronunciation. He highlighted that the complex nature of word knowledge, knowing the word and using it in speech, sometimes makes difficulties for learners. Next, on English speaking fluency level, he outlined that, in the domain of workspace, a person should have an upper-intermediate level. This person can participate actively in conversations in their comfort zone and add relevant justifications and arguments (Table 5).

Table 5 Theme & Code 5

	Illustration Words from Original Transcript		Subcategory		Code
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1	I say something wrong they will make fun of me	1	English Speaking fear	1	Fear of Being Humiliated
2	we comparing yourself to other and start thinking ourselves inferior	2	English Speaking Hesitation	1	Feeling yourself inferior
3	Sometimes when audience is not cooperating makes me anxious	3	Language anxiety triggers	1	Peer pressure
4	In my schooling times I found the tenses formula and grammar quite complex	4	English Grammar	1	Grammatical structure
5	People will judge me on my speech	5	Effects of pronunciation	1	People's Judgment
6	Knowing the word and then using in the speech	6	Vocabulary usage	1	Complexity of word knowledge
7	Participate actively in conversations in your comfort zone and add relevant justifications and arguments	7	English Language fluency level	1	Upper Intermediate level

The last interviewee is a lawyer. He said that the reason for the fear of English is that people think of facing failure while speaking. Next, facing a lot of people makes the person hesitant. Besides, a lack of preparation for a speech in a particular scenario makes the person anxious and causes hindrance to the learners. Further, he highlighted the usage of grammar in speech. If a learner thinks that he might make mistakes, such as grammatical mistakes while speaking English or not remembering the correct usage of tense while speaking. Next, he highlighted that the reason for not having fluent pronunciation might be not given the clear instructions by the instructor. Lastly, on speaking fluency, he outlines the upper intermediate level as understanding standard speech spoken at a normal speed, provided the topic is reasonably familiar to the learner (Table 6).

Table 6 Theme & Code 6

	Illustration Words from Original Transcript		Subcategory		Code
1	Looking into the result of language fluency acquisition learners have affair of making failure	1	English Speaking fear	1	Fear of failure
2	The major is that people are looking and listening to me	2	English Speaking Hesitation	1	Facing a lot of People
3	Feels uncomfortable when speak English which is not prepared	3	Language anxiety triggers	1	Lack of preparation
4	not being proficient in the rules of grammar	4	English Grammar	1	Use of grammar
5	affecting students' ability to acquire proper pronunciation is quite simply that it is not being explicitly taught	5	Effects of pronunciation	1	No explicit instruction

6	The process of learning a new word and its implication takes time.	6	Vocabulary usage	1	Extension of meanings
7	Understand standard speech spoken at a normal speed, provided the topic is reasonably familiar	7	English Language fluency level	1	Upper intermediate

5 Conclusion and Recommendations

This section summarizes the principal findings concerning the language barriers that affect professionals' spoken English. It presents the overall conclusions drawn from the participants' experiences of fear, anxiety, hesitation, limited vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, and inadequate fluency. It also provides practical recommendations for teachers, learners, and language-training institutions. Finally, it identifies possible directions for future research in professional English communication.

5.1 Overall conclusion

The English language is the most widely spoken means of communication worldwide. Professionals emphasize English-speaking skills. A common link language like English is needed for efficient and effective communication purposes. In most cases, people express themselves orally, and therefore, speaking is considered the principal and productive language skill. Youngsters who are fluent in using the English language usually have better opportunities to secure attractive job offers across the globe. Employers focus not only on academic and technical expertise when selecting graduate employees. Along with technological know-how, employers also focus on the much-needed soft skills of the employees before hiring them. Another important thing is that most of the interviews are being dealt with in English. Therefore, proficiency in communicating in English is inevitable for candidates to impress the interview board. Therefore, it is crucial to adopt suitable measures to increase and optimize the mastery level and acquisition rate of speaking skills in English among professionals. It will ultimately bring a hike in the employability rate.

Thus, it is significant to highlight the language barriers faced by the learners of the English language. Therefore, to examine the reasons for language barriers among English language learners, the data were collected from professionals and then analyzed by thematic analysis. The major themes identified included English-speaking fear, language anxiety triggers, English-speaking hesitation, English grammar, effects of pronunciation, vocabulary usage, and English language fluency level.

The first theme identified from the responses of professionals of different fields was English-speaking fear. Most of the participants in the study outlined that the reason for their English-speaking fear is how people think of them when they communicate in their surroundings. Such thoughts prevent them from being able to speak among themselves and present their thoughts and ideas in a setting. Another reason for the English language fear is the social face of individuals caring in society. Most of the professionals highlighted that their educational background, name, and tag they carry in social settings, and the phenomenon of losing face, make hindrance for their English speaking. Besides, some of the professionals in the study pointed out that the lack of awareness of how to learn the English language for professional settings caused fear of the English language while speaking and learning.

Furthermore, some of the participants outlined that their mother tongue causes hindrances to English language learning and speaking.

The participants outlined the triggers that cause their English-speaking anxiety. One of the English language barriers highlighted by the participants is the comprehension skills that trigger the learner's anxiety level. When the communicative environment is not understandable by the learners it makes the learners anxious. Besides that, according to most of the participants, low confidence increases the level of anxiety of learners, which becomes a barrier for the learners to communicate in the English language. Most of the participants outlined those psychological barriers of the learners hindered the English language learning and caused the learners' anxiety level to increase when speaking in professional interactions. Another barrier identified by the professionals of the study is English-speaking hesitation. According to the participants of the study, English-speaking hesitation affects the flow of conversation, and as a consequence, it decreases the confidence level in speaking. Besides that, the participants of the study, language jargon, and terminology make the learners hesitant which is barriers to their English-speaking skills.

The participants of the study shared their opinions on English grammar. According to most of the participants of the study, in a professional setting, while using the English language, the usage of grammar or perfect use of grammar is not really significant while speaking. However, English grammar is more significant when writing for a workspace. Some of the participants outlined that differences in grammar from the first language also make the learning process difficult,

According to the participants of the study, pronunciation of English words, terms, and phrases in professional interactions creates different perceptions of the individuals. According to the participants of the study, people perceive your language proficiency mostly on your language pronunciation, like how you produce the words and phrases in the target language. So, most of the learners try to fix their pronunciation in different settings so that people can better perceive their language proficiency, which is a time-consuming process. Most of the participants of the study summarized that when it comes to English speaking, we can clearly see the influence of L1 on it, which creates barriers for the learners, as your articulation in the target language has a greater impact on it.

Most of the participants highlighted that the usage of vocabulary in professional interaction is crucial and if a person is lacking in vocabulary, then it becomes a barrier for the person. According to one of the respondents, one should have a good knowledge of vocabulary, such as practicing it well, how and where to use it, its meaning and all background knowledge associated with it. Most of the participants highlighted that when it comes to vocabulary usage, the environment of the workspace plays a crucial part. So, the person should have an awareness of how to use his or her vocabulary knowledge.

The participants of the study highlighted that different levels of fluency affect the confidence and communication flow in professional interactions. The respondent of this research pointed out that in a professional setting, a person should have at least the intermediate level of spoken fluency. The respondent of the study highlighted that in a professional setting, a person should have the upper intermediate level of spoken fluency. According to the participants of the study, the proficient level of spoken fluency in a professional setting makes a great impact on the person among the workers and other professional tasks and assignments.

The following guidelines for teachers, students, and future researchers were made based on the results of the current report.

5.2 Recommendations for Students

- Students should be aware of and be able to identify what causes their barriers in speaking English, whether it came from internal or external factors, to minimize the effects of those barriers.
- Learners should build a strong and diverse vocabulary.
- Encourage consistent speaking practice.
- Advise learners to participate in mock interviews or role-playing exercises.
- Depending on the learners' professions, suggest acquiring industry-specific vocabulary and terminology.
- Encourage learners to seek constructive feedback from native English speakers or language instructors.

5.3 Recommendations for Teachers

- The teacher should be able to identify the issues that the students are having and identify the factors that are preventing them from using English in the classroom.
- By giving them encouragement and additional time to prepare what they need to perform in front of the class, the instructor should assist the learners in overcoming these hurdles and boosting their self-confidence.
- Learners should receive training in language learning techniques, particularly in grammar and vocabulary.
- Given the significance of affective variables in language learning (Krashen, 1985), educators should create classroom activities that will improve students' motivation, attitudes, and self-assurance.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research Study

- Authors would like to advise future researchers to look into students' factor obstacles with other factors in speaking English.
- Encourage future scholars to investigate language barriers in a range of business settings, including specialized markets, occupations, and geographical areas.
- Encourage researchers to examine cross-cultural factors that influence language barriers.
- Advocate for a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods.
- Suggest exploring the role of technology, such as language-learning apps, virtual reality, and online courses, in addressing language barriers among professionals.
- Encourage researchers to assess the effectiveness of language training programs in improving professional English-speaking skills.

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Book Review

“Slovenský národný korpus pre prekladateľskú prax / Slovak National Corpus for Translation Practice”

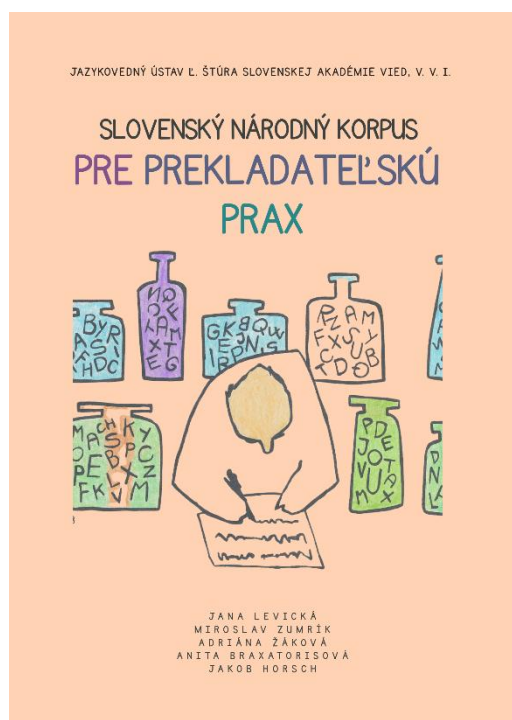
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https://korpus.sk/wp-content/uploads/uploaded/documents/publications/SNK_pre_prekladatelsku_prax.pdf



The title of the publication accurately reflects its content. The book is divided into three main chapters: (1) Theoretical, Historical, and Methodological Context of the Workbook; (2) Practical Part; and (3) Conclusion. The chapters are of comparable length and are logically structured. The publication begins with a presentation of the theoretical foundations and subsequently proceeds to practical exercises. The methods of text analysis employed in the book are both standard and engaging. The publication presents insights familiar to translation scholars while also offering a novel perspective by integrating them with corpus linguistics.

The theoretical section draws on key authors in linguistics (Dolník), translation studies (Popovič, Gromová, Hochel, among others), phraseology (Kvetko, Mlacek, Ďurčo, Jarošová, Ološtiak, Čermák, and others), and corpus linguistics (Garabík, Šimková, Gajdošová, and others). The authors aim to present current findings in corpus linguistics and translation studies by

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exploring the intersection of corpus technology and the translation process from theoretical, methodological, and practical perspectives. In doing so, they rely on essential publications in both disciplines.

Particularly valuable is the historical overview of approaches in translation studies, in which the authors highlight major trends, perspectives, and themes. Each period has contributed a distinct view of translation, broadened the scope of inquiry, or focused attention on specific aspects of the translation process. The workbook concentrates on work with parallel Slovak-English and Slovak-German corpora.

The publication represents the first textbook in the Slovak Republic specifically designed for translation scholars that systematically bridges corpus linguistics and translation studies. While most existing publications focus on these disciplines separately, this workbook demonstrates their practical interconnection. The use of corpora in translation studies is highly beneficial for both students of translation and related disciplines and professional translators in their later practice. It is worth noting that the Department of Corpus Linguistics at the Ľudovít Štúr Institute of Linguistics has previously published several works devoted to corpus-based research.

The distinctive character of the workbook lies in its exclusive focus on parallel corpora, which also defines its more specialised target audience. A particularly innovative aspect of the publication is the practical integration of corpus linguistics and translation studies through work with specific parallel corpora. The authors systematically explain and demonstrate corpus-based approaches to translation and the search for translation equivalents of various linguistic units.

The theoretical section provides a concise and accessible introduction to parallel corpora and corpus functions, making it suitable even for novice users. Both the theoretical and practical sections are supplemented with illustrations and screenshots from parallel corpora. Furthermore, QR codes direct readers to additional information on the topics discussed. The translation strategies presented in connection with corpus tools, association measures, frequency data, and related concepts are likely to be especially useful for beginning translators.

The exercises focus primarily, though not exclusively, on issues related to literary translation. They include tasks involving the identification and translation of idioms, similes, technical terms, and collocations that also occur in everyday communication. The exercises follow a consistent structure: an introductory section outlines the theoretical background of the selected linguistic unit (e.g., idiom, collocation, term, expressive unit), followed by an exercise divided into several subtasks. Subsequently, multiple solutions are presented, supported by parallel corpus data and corpus-based evidence.

The workbook successfully combines quantitative corpus findings with qualitative textual and translational analysis, thereby fulfilling its stated objective. Its scope corresponds well to its significance and intended purpose. The linguistic and stylistic quality of the text is

appropriate throughout. The conclusion is suitably formulated, and the bibliography is complete and adequate for the publication's needs.

The authors have accomplished the challenging task of connecting, explaining, and demonstrating the benefits of corpus linguistics and corpus tools for translators and translation practice. As such, the workbook constitutes a valuable contribution to both translation studies and corpus linguistics and will be of practical benefit to students, researchers, and professional translators alike.

Marianna Hudcovičová

Book Review

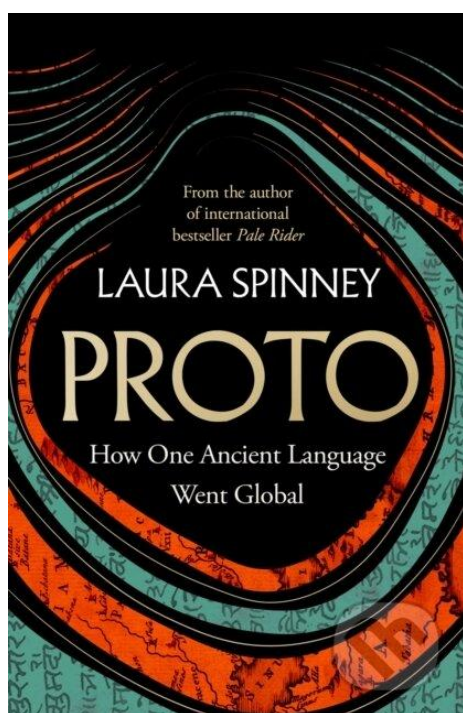
“Proto: How One Ancient Language Went Global.”

by Laura Spinney

Reviewed by **Jakub Absolon**²¹

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SPINNEY, Laura. *Proto: How One Ancient Language Went Global.* London: William Collins, 2025. 352 pp. ISBN 978-0-00-862652-5.



Laura Spinney's *Proto: How One Ancient Language Went Global* offers an ambitious and engaging account of one of the most fascinating questions in historical linguistics: how a single prehistoric language, Proto-Indo-European (PIE), gave rise to a linguistic family now spoken by nearly half of the world's population. Best known for her acclaimed works of popular science and history, Spinney brings her journalistic expertise to a field that has transformed in recent decades, thanks to advances in archaeogenetics, computational linguistics, and archaeological research. The result is a highly readable narrative that seeks to reconstruct not merely the history of a language, but also the movements, encounters, and cultural exchanges of the peoples who spoke it.

The book's central premise is straightforward yet far-reaching. Spinney traces the emergence and expansion of Proto-Indo-European, the hypothetical ancestor of languages as diverse as English, Spanish, Russian, Persian, Hindi, and Greek. Because PIE predates writing, its reconstruction depends upon the comparative method developed by historical linguists during the nineteenth century and subsequently refined through interdisciplinary research. Spinney deftly introduces readers to these methodological foundations while avoiding excessive technicality, thereby making a complex subject accessible to a broad audience.

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One of the book's principal strengths lies in its interdisciplinary scope. Rather than presenting linguistic evidence in isolation, Spinney integrates findings from archaeology and ancient DNA studies to illuminate the demographic processes behind language dispersal. Particular attention is devoted to the Yamnaya pastoralists of the Pontic-Caspian steppe, whose migrations during the fourth and third millennia BCE have become central to contemporary explanations of Indo-European expansion. Recent genetic evidence has strengthened the argument that these populations played a decisive role in spreading Indo-European languages across Europe and parts of Asia, and Spinney effectively conveys both the excitement and the uncertainty surrounding these discoveries.

The narrative is organised geographically and chronologically, following the routes by which Indo-European languages spread across Eurasia. Readers encounter a succession of migrations, trade networks, technological innovations, and cultural transformations that collectively contributed to the extraordinary reach of the language family. Particularly compelling are Spinney's descriptions of the Eurasian steppe not as a peripheral frontier but as a dynamic zone of interaction linking distant communities. In this respect, the book contributes to a growing body of scholarship that challenges older, Eurocentric narratives of civilisation and cultural development.

Equally noteworthy is Spinney's attention to the scholars whose work has shaped modern Indo-European studies. Linguists, archaeologists, and geneticists emerge as protagonists in an ongoing intellectual quest, transforming what could have been a dry exposition into a lively history of scientific discovery. The book thus succeeds not only as a history of language but also as a history of ideas, demonstrating how competing hypotheses have evolved in response to new evidence and technological innovations.

Nevertheless, the book is not without limitations. While its broad synthesis is admirable, specialists may occasionally find the treatment of linguistic issues somewhat superficial. Several reviewers have noted that Spinney's emphasis falls more heavily on migration narratives and anthropological storytelling than on detailed explanations of linguistic reconstruction. Consequently, some of the most intricate debates concerning phonology, morphology, and language change receive relatively limited discussion.

A related issue concerns the book's reliance on speculative reconstruction. Given the prehistoric nature of its subject, a degree of conjecture is unavoidable. However, Spinney sometimes blurs the distinction between well-supported conclusions and more tentative hypotheses. The narrative occasionally privileges dramatic storytelling over analytical precision, a tendency that may leave academic readers wishing for clearer differentiation between established evidence and informed speculation. Indeed, some linguists have criticised the work for oversimplifying complex scholarly debates and for placing disproportionate emphasis on peripheral topics at the expense of linguistic analysis.

These criticisms, however, should not obscure the book's considerable achievements. As a work of public scholarship, Proto succeeds admirably in communicating the significance of

Indo-European studies to a non-specialist readership. Spinney writes with clarity, narrative flair, and evident enthusiasm for her subject. Her ability to weave together disparate strands of evidence, linguistic, archaeological, genetic, and historical, creates a compelling account of human mobility and cultural interaction across millennia. Particularly effective is her demonstration that language history is inseparable from broader questions of identity, migration, and globalisation. The parallels she draws between ancient linguistic expansions and contemporary debates about language dominance, especially the global role of English, give the book striking contemporary relevance.

From the perspective of English studies, Proto offers valuable insights into the deep historical roots of the English language. By situating English within the wider Indo-European family, Spinney encourages readers to reconsider familiar linguistic boundaries and to appreciate the extensive historical connections linking English to languages across Europe and Asia. The book, therefore, has particular appeal for students and scholars interested in historical linguistics, language contact, and the cultural history of English.

In conclusion, Proto: How One Ancient Language Went Global is an impressive and thought-provoking contribution to the growing literature on language origins and dispersal. While specialists may question certain interpretative choices and desire greater linguistic rigour, the book's interdisciplinary breadth, narrative accessibility, and intellectual ambition make it a significant achievement. Spinney succeeds in bringing to life a linguistic past that is both remote and surprisingly relevant, demonstrating how the story of one reconstructed language can illuminate fundamental aspects of human history. As such, Proto deserves a wide readership among scholars, students, and general readers alike.

Jakub Absolon

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