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Are YouTube and Netflix One-Way Stops to Learn a Language? Language Learners' Beliefs on Videos

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Abstract

Due to growing access to audiovisual material (e.g., online videos, movies, and television series) through websites such as YouTube and Netflix, audiovisual material has received notable interest recently within the field of second language acquisition (SLA). This interest is particularly due to the multiple affordances this content provides, specifically captions. Captions are the text-overlay that represents the audio input to assist viewers to understand the native language the video is produced in and conveys its message through (Robin, 2007). Scholarly literature focusing around this material and the use of captions to develop an additional language (L2) has primarily been beneficial (Montero Perez, Peters, & Desmet, 2018; Winke, Sydorenko, & Gass, 2013; Yeldham, 2018). However, there has been little investigation focusing on language learners' beliefs using videos and their supportive features to learn their L2. This lack in understanding is notable due to research indicating that beliefs can inform the varying aspects of learning a language, such as the strategies used to learn an L2 (see, Kalaja & Barcelos, 2013).

Therefore, this study aims to understand the language learning beliefs students have using audiovisual material with captions to learn their L2. The study consisted of 16 survey responses from students studying five different languages with 2 group interviews consisting of 4 foreign language learners at a Midwestern research university. The findings suggest that learners have mixed views toward using audiovisual material and captions within and outside of the classroom to learn their L2. Potential implications focus on how audiovisual material could be utilized effectively within and outside of the classroom.

Keywords: *learner beliefs; audiovisual material; captions*

Introduction

The internet has made accessing audiovisual materials (e.g., movies, television shows, and user-generated videos) available to everyone within and outside of the geopolitical borders this content was once locked behind. This is due to internet services and website repositories, such as YouTube and Netflix, becoming more prevalent than before. This has spurred notable interest recently within the field of second language acquisition (SLA) due to this audiovisual content having multiple accessible function features—specifically, captions (e.g., Gass, Winke, Isbell, & Ahn, 2019; Yeldham, 2018). *Captions* are the text-overlay that represents the audio input to assist viewers to understand the native language the video is produced in and conveys its message through (Bird, 2002; Robin, 2007). Scholars have found this function to be beneficial for developing students' listening comprehension and vocabulary in their second language (L2) (Montero Perez, Peters, & Desmet, 2018; Winke, Sydorenko, & Gass, 2013).

While audiovisual material is beneficial for L2 development and acquisition, there has been little focus on whether language learners consider this resource as advantageous or not. *Beliefs* are dynamic, socially situated and constructed, and paradoxical that mediate the actions, participation, and cognition of both students and teachers which becomes evident through discourse (Alanen, 2003; Barcelos & Kalaja, 2011; Navarro & Thornton, 2011). Thus far, belief-based research that has focused on language learners' perceptions and uses on computer-assisted language learning (CALL) resources, has mainly been to establish an initial and broad understanding (e.g., Lai & Gu, 2011; Sydorenko, Hsieh, Ahn, & Arnold, 2017). In closely examining language learners' beliefs of audiovisual material, it would offer a better understanding concerning how open students are to be using such a resource within and outside of the classroom. Moreover, investigating students' beliefs would offer an explanation as to these beliefs within higher education and how they go about, if at all, using audiovisual material while studying their L2.

Therefore, this qualitative study sets out to better understand learner's beliefs towards using audiovisual material and its captions as well as when, why, and how students use this resource to learn their additional language. This is achieved through the incorporation of both the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) survey (Horwitz, 1985, 1999) and group interviews. In the following sections, I review the benefits this CALL resource provides L2 learners in acquiring their target language. Moreover, I elaborate on the methods used to investigate language learner beliefs, such as the use of BALLI (e.g., Loewen et al., 2009) and group interviews (Prior, 2018; Talmy, 2010).

Audiovisual material, the learner and their beliefs

How does audiovisual material help with acquiring an L2?

The empirical literature on audiovisual material points towards ample findings that suggest this content along with using captions supports language learners' L2 development. A facet of this research has investigated whether providing assistance with the aural input improves learners' comprehension (e.g., Montero Perez, Peters, & Desmet, 2014; Montero Perez et al., 2018). Bird

and Williams' (2002) is the most notable experiment comparing three different audiovisual inputs: (1) video with sound and captions, (2) video with captions but no sound, and (3) video and sound without captions, for efficiency in supporting L2 development and acquisition. They found that the bimodal input of both the video's auditory input with the visual input from the caption's fostered language learners' vocabulary development. A claim further supported not only in other empirical findings (e.g., Baltova, 1999; Montero Perez et al., 2014; Sydorenko, 2010; Winke, Gass, & Sydrenko, 2010) but also by Montero Perez, Van Den Noortgate, and Desmet's (2013) meta-analysis. Montero Perez et al.'s (2013) meta-analysis found a strong statistical relationship with L2 listening and vocabulary development using this CALL resource and it's supporting feature.

While the use of audio and visual input has been characterized in assisting in the acquisition of an L2, many SLA researchers and language teachers have expressed concerns that this material may be a type of 'crutch' for learners (Yeldham, 2018). This fear was primarily investigated by examining how learners cognitively interacted with this resource. Winke, Sydrenko, and Gass' (2013) eye-tracking study found learners read captions about 68% due to them trying to attach meaning to unknown words or segmental chunks (p. 266). This is dependent on their first language (L1) background since, as Winke et al. (2013) found, learners with Arabic or Chinese as their L1 relied more on captions than students with Spanish or Russian. Another study by Gass, Winke, Isbell, and Ahn (2019) further supports that audiovisual material with captions are beneficial that allow learners to use captions as "a scaffold to figure out, reinforce, or confirm the aural input's meaning" (p. 29). This indicates that learners rely on captions based on their level of proficiency to acquire the general meaning which has been found in similar studies (Leveridge & Yang, 2014).

Therefore, these studies provide strong evidence that using captions with audiovisual material improves language learners' L2 acquisition through its bimodal input. However, these studies do not inform us about how or why language learners decide to use these types of resources once they are done with formal language education or even amid it. Additionally, they do not inform us of the belief(s) learners have surrounding audiovisual material or that of captions. There is little mention regarding the need for captions outside of classroom learning and whether they are motivated and invested to learn how to use captions to supplement their L2 learning. In answering these questions, researchers could consider how to tap into student interest with audiovisual material not only inside the classroom but also in the (digital) 'wilds' as well. Therefore, further examination and understanding of both questions are needed to guide future research as well as support previous research. The following section will establish what is meant by *language learning beliefs* and what prior research has done in investigating this developing and emerging individual difference.

Do students believe audiovisual material assist with their learning?

Language learning beliefs is a multifaceted term that has been investigated using different epistemologies. The most evident and earliest investigation into learners' belief is through normative measures that attempted to understand the metalinguistic beliefs students held. Horwitz (1985;

1988) considered beliefs as a fixed and stable trait composed of 'preconceived notions, myths, or misconceptions' (1985) regarding how to learn a language. In order to understand and capture learner beliefs, Horwitz introduced and used the BALLI survey. Through this survey, there appeared to be five general themes regarding the type of beliefs students held toward language learning and instruction:

1. Difficulty of language learning
2. Language Aptitude
3. Language learning process
4. Communication
5. Motivation and learner expectations

This provided a basis to account and generalize learners' beliefs which allowed for subsequent studies to investigate different perspectives around these beliefs using some form of this survey. Some areas, for example, have been concerned with examining the overall language beliefs learners hold (e.g., Diab, 2006; Horwitz, 1999), aspects concerning language instruction (e.g., Loewen et al., 2009), or how foreign languages should be learned (e.g., Jee, 2013).

BALLI has also been used to examine learners' beliefs towards the general use of CALL resources (e.g, Barr, 2004; Sydorenko, Hsieh, Ahn & Arnold, 2017; Winke, Goertler, & Amuzie, 2010). This has provided a useful understanding of how learners, for example, not only use technology in their daily life (Barr, 2004) but often were unaware of the potential these CALL resources had for supporting their target language development (Lai & Gu, 2011). A notable study comes from Sydorenko et al. (2017) who examined learners' beliefs surrounding the general CALL resources. They found that learners' beliefs regarding CALL resources are overwhelmingly positive but with four limiting factors:

1. Learners motivation in using CALL resources;
2. The amount of technology used in their language class;
3. Learners' lack of knowledge regarding the full implications of these resources; and,
4. Learners' technological literacy and ability to use technology (p. 210-211).

These four limiting aspects allow us to better understand the potential hinderances learners may face when attempting to use CALL resources to support themselves when studying a second language. Yet, the use of BALLI alone does not capture the voice of the learners as well as their rationale for their beliefs (Alanen, 2003).

Even though this cognitive understanding of beliefs has been the most prevalent in SLA's empirical understanding, scholars such as Alanen (2003) propose beliefs are socioculturally defined and developed through social interaction (Negueruel-Azarola, 2011) and within particular contexts (Navarro & Thornton, 2011). Kalaja and Barcelos (2013) further elaborates by saying, "Social in origin, and so emerging out of interaction with others, beliefs are eventually internalized and can later change or, as it is now expressed, *transform* when the learner is faced with new experiences of learning in other contexts" (p. 4). This constructivist view offers a new perspective concerning how someone's environment, available resources, and past learning experiences can inform their language learning beliefs as well as how the teacher and the classroom can further

shape these beliefs. For example, Peng's (2011) longitudinal study found that their focal participant's, Weitiao, beliefs changed when moving from high school to college. More specifically, Weitiao's beliefs were informed by the activities, topics, and support the teacher implement in the class which informed his participation in class and how he studied English outside of it. This constructivist perspective has received little consideration when investigating learner's beliefs around CALL resources, in general, let alone on audiovisual material and captions.

Studies such as Peng's (2011) and others (Mercer, 2011; Navarro & Thorton, 2011; Negueruel-Azarola, 2011) provide a different methodological perspective to investigating beliefs. These studies illustrate how interviews can be used to capture the dynamic, contextually, sociohistorically, and dialogically emergent considerations that can shape beliefs instead of just the metalinguistic notion that the BALLI survey offers (Barcelos & Kalaja, 2011; Kalaja & Barcelos, 2013). This is particularly due to proposing that interviews are not solely a research instrument but as a site of 'social practice' (Prior, 2018; Talmy, 2010). Furthermore, Talmy (2010) points out that interviews are sites of social interaction in which interviewer-interviewee(s) engage in the co-construction and negotiation of the identities, attitudes, and *beliefs* that may be the focus of the interview. While studies are beginning to examine language learners' beliefs concerning CALL resources, belief-based research has been either cognitivist or constructivist. These two methodologies have rarely been blended in order to see how the language learning community views the use of a singular CALL resource along with hearing the rationale for using (or not using) said resource.

Research Questions

In light of the above, this in-progress qualitative study aims to elucidate language learners' beliefs surrounding audiovisual material to support their acquisition in another language. Moreover, this study aims to understand when, why, and how students use captions to learn their additional language. The following research questions attempt to address these aims:

1. What are learner beliefs regarding using audiovisual material to learn their target language?
2. How do these beliefs impact their use of this resource in learning their target language?
3. How do learners (if at all) learn to use captions and audiovisual material as a resource?

In order to answer the above research questions, I used a mix research design to get a comprehensive understanding of students' beliefs by using semi-structured group interviews along with the adapted BALLI survey (Horwitz, 1999) and adapting some survey items from Sydorenko et al. (2017). This along with who the participants are and how the data was analyzed is discussed in the following section.

Methodology

Participants and Context

The study took place at Grand Lakes University—a large R1 university located in the Midwest of the United States of America (all locations and names are pseudonyms). At the time of the data

collection, the school had language learners studying English as well as other languages such as Spanish, Korean, and Russian. I visited these language classes in an attempt to recruit students studying any language at Grand Lakes University. Currently, 20 language learners responded anonymously to the survey; however, after examining the responses, I decided to eliminate four because the majority of the survey was not complete—a majority in this instance means at least 80% completion. The response rate was >5%.

Due to the low turnout for the survey, I visited classes again to recruit students to participate in a group interview. During this, I was able to recruit four volunteers who were Ariel, Nami, Aurora, and Robin (see Table 1). Three of the four participants were born and raised within the United States of America with Aurora being the only one who was born in South Korea and then moved to the USA during her childhood. Aurora is also the only heritage language learner of Korean in the group. Ariel and Robin studied Spanish and were at different levels in their Spanish proficiency and did not know each other. Ariel studied Spanish in high school and college. While Robin also studied Spanish in high school, she had additional experience studying abroad in Puerto Rico. Nami and Aurora, on the other hand, both studied Korean and were mutual acquaintances. They, however, were not in the same level of Korean with Aurora being further in her schooling.

Table 1
Participant Background Matrix

Participant name	Age	L2	Level of L2 class	L1 background
Ariel	20	Spanish	Second-year, second semester	English
Robin	23	Spanish	Fourth-year, second semester	English; studied abroad in Puerto Rico
Nami	19	Korean	First-year, second semester	English
Aurora	22	Korean	Fourth-year, second semester	English; heritage speaker of Korean

Data collection and Analysis

The data consisted of BALLI survey responses and two group interviews that were semi-structured, face-to-face and utilized stimulated response materials. The adapted BALLI survey focuses on four areas regarding audiovisual material and captions along with two sections that focused on acquiring demographic information and to recruit participants for the group interviews (see Appendix A). These sections were composed of 35 questions with the first section aimed at getting learners' demographic and language learning background (what language they are currently learning, how long they have been learning it, etc.). Sections 2 to 5 were composed of all Likert-scale questions adapted from Sydorenko et al.'s (2017) survey questions and from what is currently known within the scholarly literature to specifically investigate students' beliefs about audiovisual

material and using captions. The scale was from 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree). This scale was chosen since studies have found (Preston & Colman, 2000) the reliability and sensitivity of response scores improved with each additional point added with the 10-point scale being favored over others. I used a 10-point scale to eliminate the neutral opinion for participants resulting in them having to either disagree or agree (see, Chyung, Roberts, Swanson, & Hankinson, 2017) on using audiovisual material to learn an additional language.

After the BALLI survey was completed, I conducted two group interviews which lasted for about 40 to 45 minutes with each group being composed of two people (Prior, 2018). The first group interview was with Ariel and Robin while the second group interview that occurred later had Nami and Aurora. Accompanying the group questions (see Appendix B), I selected one video from YouTube—one that had the captions ability in the target language, in this case, Spanish due to it is one of the central languages learned within the USA and is the most prolific on the site. These materials were used to stimulate discussion as well as to familiarize students as to what it is meant by captions as well as ask them how they would learn Spanish from this video. While the focus groups were in session, I used a video camera to document the session to assist me in distinguishing who was speaking allowing me to moderate the discussion. This allowed for easier transcription and data analysis.

While I focus on the sociocultural notion of beliefs, the incorporation of the BALLI survey allows me to make, what Maxwell (2010) calls, *internal generalization.* Or, the ability to generalize the findings not to other settings or groups, but "within the setting or collection of individuals studied" (p. 478). This quantifiable score from the BALLI survey provides an internal validity check that assists me in "establishing that the themes or findings identified are in fact characteristic of this setting or set of individuals as a whole" rather than based on preconceived assumptions I may have (p. 478). Due to the relatively low sample size for the survey, I used the R program to run for basic descriptive statistics with confidence intervals. Based on the descriptives, I determine who strongly agrees or disagrees based on the mean. However, if the standard deviation score crossed 5, I concluded participants as having 'mixed' beliefs concerning the item. For example, if the mean score was 7 and the standard deviation was 2 it would be considered mixed due to it going into the disagreement category. Once these descriptives were analyzed, they provided assistance in the second phase of my analysis by initially "identifying and correctly characterize the *diversity* of actions, perceptions, or beliefs" in both the language community at Grand Lakes University as well as within the group interviews (Maxwell, 2010, p. 478).

After examining the quantitative results, I, using the MAXQDA software, conducted a content analysis on the group interviews. This entailed transcribing all the group interviews verbatim for analysis. Then through initial coding along with in-vivo coding, I used gerunds and verbs to identify learners' attitudes, beliefs, and values that my participants state or that was inferred from the data (Saladaña, 2015). Afterward, I reviewed my codes and grouped them into larger categories. Then, the second round of selective coding was conducted on another interview in order to refine my categories as well as referring back to the initial findings in the descriptive statistics of the BALLI survey. Codes developed in this second phase were again grouped into

existing or new categories. From these categories, I developed themes that addressed the above research questions.

Results and Discussion

What are Learner Beliefs Regarding Using Audiovisual Material?

Descriptive statistics of the 23 Likert scale survey items are shown in Table 1, and they are organized by theoretical grouping supported by Horwitz (1988, 1999). Within each group, it is situated from the highest mean to the lowest. In examining the preliminary results, students seem to consider audiovisual material to be beneficial for their L2 development (20a to 20e). However, the use of audiovisual material had a split consensus. Participants answered Question 26 with a mean of 8.06 (sd = 1.61) indicating a strong agreement to 'using videos with captions in [their L2] class is for fun and not for learning [their L2]' (See Appendix A, item 26). This was later contradicted by participants having the exact same mean score of 8.06 (sd = 1.61) when asked if they believed a 'video in [their L2] can facilitate [their] language learning' (see Appendix A, item 30). This indicates that participants held conflicting views considering the benefits of using audiovisual material to support their language development. This could also be supported when examining the range for each question with some starting at a minimum score of 7 (question 15) instead of 1.

Table 2
Likert Scale Results of BAALI Survey Items 8 to 31 (N = 16)

Group	Question #	Mean (SD)	Min	Max	CI
Difficult of using audiovisual material to learn a language	13	9.06 (1.73)	4	10	[9.98, 8.14]
	8	7.12 (2.41)	1	10	[8.4, 5.84]
	12	6.68 (2.24)	2	10	[7.87, 5.49]
	10	6.56 (2.65)	1	10	[7.97, 5.15]
	9	6.43 (2.36)	2	10	[7.69, 5.17]
	11	3.50 (2.25)	1	8	[4.69, 2.31]
Nature of language learning with audiovisual material	15	8.87 (1.14)	7	10	[9.48, 8.26]
	18	8.00 (2.30)	3	10	[9.23, 6.77]
	17	6.68 (2.70)	1	10	[8.11, 5.25]
	19	6.75 (2.23)	1	10	[7.94, 5.56]
	16	6.25 (2.51)	3	10	[7.59, 4.91]
	14	2.62 (1.40)	1	6	[3.37, 1.87]
Learning and comprehension strategies w/ audiovisual material	20c	8.93 (1.43)	5	10	[9.69, 8.17]
	20a	8.43 (1.31)	6	10	[9.13, 7.73]
	24	8.43 (1.82)	5	10	[9.40, 7.46]
	20b	8.37 (2.06)	4	10	[9.46, 7.28]
	22	8.31 (1.49)	5	10	[9.10, 7.52]
	20e	8.06 (2.43)	1	10	[9.35, 6.77]
	26	8.06 (1.61)	5	10	[8.91, 7.21]
	20d	7.56 (1.86)	3	10	[8.55, 6.57]
	25	7.50 (2.78)	1	10	[8.98, 6.02]
	27	6.25 (2.35)	3	10	[7.50, 5.00]

	21	5.31 (2.08)	1	8	[6.42, 4.20]
	23	4.12 (2.06)	1	7	[5.21, 3.03]
Motivation/expectations of using audiovisual material	30	8.06 (1.61)	5	10	[8.91, 7.21]
	31	7.18 (2.04)	4	10	[8.26, 6.10]
	29	5.87 (2.60)	1	10	[7.25, 4.49]
	28	4.25 (2.38)	1	10	[5.51, 2.99]

How Do Learners' Beliefs Impact Their Use of this Resource in Learning Their Target Language?

Throughout the group interview, all four participants mirrored the quantitative findings in which they had a wide range of beliefs. The four participants' beliefs were sociohistorically dependent and were further (re)constructed through social interaction (Barcelos & Kalaja, 2011). Moreover, their previous experiences within the language classroom greatly informed their use and perceived appeal in using videos within and outside of the classroom. The themes that raised from the coding process was on a spectrum from negative to positive: Edutainment in class isn't learning, bridging the classroom and language community, guide me to learn with videos, and exploring the CALL landscape, which I describe in detail below.

Edutainment in class isn't learning. All participants within the group interview considered learning a language should be done in a fun and entertaining way, as much as possible. This is particularly due to participants using language learning apps, such as Duolingo, Quizlet, and Mind snacks, that gamifies the learning process in short bursts throughout their day to feel "productive" and not guilty for using their phones. This is rather not surprising since current literature indicating that learners positively view edutainment language apps and resources as beneficial to their learning (Sydorenko, 2017). While the use of movies and television shows has been considered a form of edutainment, participants within the two focus group sessions were split regarding the benefits and practicality of using videos within the classroom.

Ariel and Robin, who participated together in the first group session, considered using videos either as a reward or something that should be done outside of class because it detracts them and others from learning the language. In the following excerpt, Ariel was discussing having to watch Finding Nemo in high school when Robin steers the conversation to highlight the differences between in and outside of the classroom. Ariel then aligns with Robin to further contextualize Robin's claim:

> Excerpt 1: *You can't teach every dialect*
>
> Robin (R): And then it's also interesting because, like, when you learn Spanish in school it's very formal.…because I know, like, you have to learn, you know, the formal way of speaking because you can't teach every, like, dialect or every way everyone speaks. So, it has to be, like, a universal way to learn. But it's just interesting because everything that I say they, they like, "oh no you can just say this like." And, it's like, "well I learn like this." So like, you know?
>
> Ariel (AE): Yeah. Yeah, I think videos were helpful for, like, the dialects. But, then also that can be really confusing because if you're not in on the slang; if you're not in on the jokes, then that can be really hard to, like, pick up on.

Both students in this instance consider language learning as needed to be standardized in some way. This positions audiovisual material geared towards entertainment purposes as difficult to

use if not barred from the classroom unless to practice understanding the various dialects they will encounter in everyday use. Moreover, this informs us that some students may view videos as having a certain language proficiency threshold that must be met before considering the resource viable to their L2 acquisition.

Additionally, students like Robin and Ariel may consider using audiovisual material as too difficult to use for learning. This is because they may feel they must, as Ariel mentions, "understand everything" with little to no support. This can cause them to feel overwhelmed and, in turn, hinder their ability to comprehend the audiovisual material even if they have the linguistic ability as found in other studies (e.g., Chen, 2016; Winke, Goertler, & Amuzie, 2010). Therefore, students may feel more educational videos as beneficial to their L2 acquisition as Robin explains in Excerpt 2:

> Excerpt 2: *Learn in order to watch*
> R: While I don't think we did it right, right away, but like we definitely learned like vocabulary first, you know, and all of that stuff. But. Maybe like two months we started watching videos and they're interesting because we never really had to answer questions. But like, here taking Spanish and having to watch videos or like listen to audio that was difficult. I actually kinda had to use my phone to Google translate the audio because I just did not understand.

The above highlights Gass et al.'s (2019) suggestion of selecting videos that are level appropriate to be an essential part of creating any task which uses audiovisual materials. This is to avoid students feeling overwhelmed and resulting in them to use external supporting resources such as Google Translate. This supports the notion that beliefs learners' have regarding themselves and their emotions can inform their actions (Aragao, 2011; Mercer, 2011). This can be seen in excerpt 2 where Robin resorts to using Google translate to assist her with understanding the content of the video due to her feeling overwhelmed and frustrated in not comprehending everything.

Bridging the classroom and language community. While Robin and Ariel considered beliefs as a type of award ever so often in the classroom, some students, such as Nami and Aurora, view watching audiovisual material as an essential and edutaining way to keep themselves interested in learning the language:

> Excerpt 3: *A one-way station*
> *Aurora (AU)*: I watched a lot of Korean movies and put subtitles on, and I would read and listen at the same time. So that helped me with writing it essentially like knowing how it's written out or like, like the lyric videos. Like, looking at it does help and I would also hear how they see it. So, the pronunciation would help and maybe like the tone. So, I think the movies really helped because it's like someone's talking to you. So, it was like a one-way station but I kind of learned it really well.

The conversation above highlights how there were no preconceived L2 proficiency benchmark students needed to hit before the video contributed to their learning development. Rather, Aurora considered audiovisual material to be a one-way stop to develop her Korean from listening to

speaking which allowed her to receive linguistic benefits. This supports the idea that beliefs are "conceptual tools" to assist language learners to orient themselves to do an activity by themselves or with others (Negueruela-Azarola, 2011). This is particularly why Aurora and Nami, as we will see, are able to get benefits from learning from videos compared to Ariel and Robin did not.

Nami, for example, also considered audiovisual material as beneficial. She considered audiovisual materials as "organic resources" that allowed her to be authentically exposed to the Korean language and culture. This allowed her to believe in watching K-pop YouTube videos as a source of motivation and a way to further develop her vocabulary and listening. Therefore, all participants considered videos as a form of edutainment; however, there were mixed views concerning the benefits of using videos to learn a language. These beliefs were dependent on how students viewed their responsibilities as learners. Additionally, it also depended on the scope in which students considered the resources are able to be used to supplement learning within and outside of the classroom.

How Do Learners (if at all) Learn to Use Captions and Audiovisual Material as a Resource?

Guide me to learn with videos. While there are mixed views concerning the validity of using audiovisual material to learn their L2, these beliefs are informed by participants' initial language education/experience. A central way students' belief regarding audiovisual material was formed was through the initial instruction they had in their primary education:

Excerpt 4: using videos in middle and high school

> AE: My middle school teacher would give us, like, target vocabulary. So, say it would be on like food, and then the whole telenovela would be in Spanish but, like, we were looking for vocabulary that was on food. It didn't matter if we picked up any of the plot or grammar or slang as long as we found, like, five words that were about food which was really helpful. Whereas in high school, we are like watching Finding Nemo. I felt like I had to understand everything and it was, like. I got like three words out of that.

In the above excerpt, Ariel's beliefs adapt and change to the affordances the teacher provided her within the language classroom. This resembles Peng's (2011) findings that beliefs change based on the context learners find themselves in and they type of interaction they have with the teacher. Therefore, the positive experience Ariel had in her middle school teacher provided shaped her view of using audiovisual to learn a language to be a good thing if there was adequate scaffolding to make the audiovisual material entertaining and accessible. Moreover, her negative experience with trying to "understand everything" and failing due to feeling overwhelmed (Arago, 2011; Mercer, 2011) in turned reinforced this belief.

Exploring the CALL landscape. Emotions and affordances also played a strong role for Nami who considered audiovisual material as "always [having] a part [in her] learning a language":

Excerpt 6: *Googling everything*

> How I started, like, learning Korean was googling everything because I couldn't find any, like, textbooks and there were no, like, classes offered. I started, like, in high school. So, I downloaded a bunch of apps and tried things out and saw what I liked and what I didn't. But like, I listened to K-pop music in the language. So like, that's what helps me the most. And then I found out that lyric videos were a thing. So that ended up being really helpful for [learning] Korean.

This was also the same rationale with Nami whose experience shaped her to take on a more agentive role.

These two experiences played an essential role in developing how both went about using audiovisual material to study a language. Ariel was introduced to these resources through a classroom context in which the teacher shaped her initial beliefs. On the other hand, Nami was introduced to this resource through active exploration for CALL resources in general and found videos from YouTube with the use of Google Translate as a notable way to learn Korean on her own. This in turn also shaped both of their own roles as learners. Ariel being more passive whereas Nami active. Therefore, both participants socio-historical context played a large role in how they learned to use audiovisual material with or without the use of captions in accordance with their language learning.

Overall, Ariel, Robin, Aurora, and Nami provide some initial insight as to why the language learning community at Grand Lakes University has conflicting views regarding using audiovisual material to learn a language. This conflict could be influenced by participants' sociocultural and sociohistorical context in using the CALL resource to learn the target language as we have seen within the two group interviews. It is through Ariel, Robin, Aurora, and Nami's primary education that they begin or attempted to learn to use audiovisual material as a resource which later informed their language learning preferences and practices concerning this CALL resource.

Limitations

One of the main limitations of this study is how all four participants who took part in the group session were all training to be a language teacher. This is problematic in two ways. The first is that these participants have at least an initial understanding of SLA and are able to apply this to their own learning of a foreign language which could affect the findings. The second reason this is problematic is that there were no individuals who were actively studying or have previously studied English or another second language. In noting these limitations, the preliminary findings provide unique insight regarding how there are currently opposing beliefs concerning the use of audiovisual material within and outside of the language classroom. Additionally, these findings also hint at why (not) learners want to use videos within the classroom which in turn can provide teachers an initial understanding of how their learners may perceive having to do an activity that uses audiovisual material.

Pedagogical implications and Future Directions

In learning that learners' have conflicting beliefs regarding the use of audiovisual material to study the language in the classroom and that learner's sociohistorical background plays a large role regarding the use of audiovisual material to learn in the classroom (Gass et al, 2019). This study supports the recommendations that material needs to be interesting, tailored to learner's proficiency level, and linguistic and learning background, as well as challenging in order for students to actively use captions to connect the gaps in their knowledge (Gass et al., 2019; Sydorenko et al., 2017; Winke et al., 2013). There are four potential ways teachers can assist students in understanding the affordances using videos have within the classroom as well as how to use such material for their L2 development outside of the classroom. The following four are based on both the scholarly literature and the findings of this study:

1. Explicit instruction on how to study with audiovisual material
2. Recurrent activities that use audiovisual material
3. Use audiovisual material with captions for comprehension activities (Danan, 1992; Sydorenko, 2010)
4. Select linguistically and age-appropriate audiovisual material (Chen, 2016; Gass et al., 2019; Leveridge & Yang, 2014)

In adopting one or all of these recommendations, students would potentially be able to see the validity of audiovisual material in the classroom as well as how to develop their autonomous language learning skills through means that perceive as entertaining.

Future research could conduct a longitudinal-based study to consider whether or not explicit instruction on how to use audiovisual material benefits the learners' language learning. In addition, empirical studies that are based more within 'wild' contexts, outside of the classroom, can contextualize and refine our understanding regarding practicalities and limitations of using audiovisual material along with general CALL resources in these contexts.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Survey participant information and consent section

CONSENT

In participating in this survey, you consent to be part of this research study that aims to better understand how language learners' beliefs about using videos with captions to study an additional language in and outside of the classroom. You will be asked to fill out the following survey questions that include questions concerning your background information as well as your opinion concerning using videos in language learning. In participating in this survey, you acknowledge that 1) you are 18 years old or older, and 2) you voluntarily allow the researchers to use your unidentifiable (confidential) answers. You indicate your voluntary agreement to participate in this research study by completing and submitting this survey.

a. I agree and understand the purpose of my involvement in this study.
b. I disagree to be part of this research study.

Background survey

1. What language are you currently learning?
2. Which level of [language studying] are you in now?
3. How long have you studied [language]?
4. What is your gender?
5. What is your home country?
6. How many hours per week do you study [language] outside of class?
7. Check the tools that you use to learn [language] online.
    a. Mobile language learning apps (i.e., Duolingo)
    b. Videos (i.e., Youtube)
    c. Mobile reference apps (i.e., [language] dictionary)
    d. [language] online learning communities (i.e., on Reddit)
    e. Language exchange sites (i.e., Lang-8)
    f. Social Media (i.e., Facebook and/or WeChat)
    g. [language] online classes
    h. other

The difficulty of language learning with audiovisual material

Please mark how much you agree or disagree with the following statements (1 = strongly disagree, 10 = strongly agree)

8. I replay the video multiple times to understand the content.
9. I know how to learn [language] from watching videos.
10. I like to watch short videos (e.g., 2 to 5 minutes) instead of long videos (e.g., 20 to 30 minutes) to learn [language].
11. I think watching videos in [language] is hard.

12. The use of video in [language] class helps me better learn [language].
13. I feel satisfied when I understand a video in [language].

The nature of language learning with audiovisual material

Please mark the level of agreement on the following statements about learning [language]

14. I believe learning [language] online is better than learning in a classroom.
15. I believe learning [language] inside the classroom is different than learning a language on my own online.
16. I am happy with the number of videos used in my [language] class.
17. I believe watching videos in [language] class makes me want to study the language more.
18. I believe watching videos in [language] is important for learning [language]
19. I wish I learned how to use videos to study [language]

Learning and comprehension strategies

20. Videos that use captions in [language] help with my…
    a. Vocabulary learning
    b. Listening in [language]
    c. Video content comprehension
    d. Reading comprehension
    e. Pronunciation in [language]

Captions are the words underneath the video that assist learners to comprehend it in the language used in the video. For example, [language] video will get [language] captions instead of your first language. For the following questions, please mark your level of agreement towards using captions.

21. I feel uncomfortable watching a video in [language] without captions.
22. I believe seeing the [language] words on the screen with captions helps me distinguish words from one another in the [language] video.
23. The captions distract me from understanding the video I am watching.
24. I feel comfortable watching a video in [language] with captions.
25. I am interested to learn how to use videos with captions to study [language].
26. I believe using videos with captions in a [language] class is for fun and not for learning [language].
27. If I watch a video in [language], I am able to understand it in the first viewing.

Motivations and expectations of using audiovisual material

Please mark your level of agreement regarding video use in your [language] class.

28. If my [language] teacher has me watch a video in class, I feel stressed trying to understand it.
29. A video in [language] has to be interesting to me in order for me to invest time to try to comprehend what it is saying.

30. I believe video in [language] can facilitate my language learning.
31. I believe using video in [language] class helps me understand how to use the vocabulary and grammar in [language].

End of the survey response: Thank you so much for helping me with this research study by participating! Have a great day and [School Spirit slogan]!

Appendix B: Focus group semi-structured interview questions

1. Can you please tell us about your experience learning your current language (with technology)?
2. With your range of language learning experiences, can you tell us about your experiences watching videos in the target language?
3. Has anyone ever tried using videos to learn a language? Where you successful?
4. What is your opinion watching a video in the language you are learning with the use of captions?
5. As you know, websites like Youtube and Netflix provide access to video in a variety of languages. Think back on your experiences and our discussion today, do you think teachers should support future language learners in using videos to learn a language?
6. Is there anything else that anyone feels that we should have talked about but didn't?

Appendix C: Group procedure

Group Procedure[1]

Preparation

In a couple of days in advance, the researcher reserved a room in a familiar location for any potential participants. Moreover, he made sure that food (pizza) and drink (tea and soda) were prepared and ready before participants arrived.

On the day of the session, the researcher sent a reminder email to participants to remind them of the focus group session. He also made sure all technology was functional and ready to be used. This was along with setting up the room to be conducive of peer to peer interaction instead of peer to moderator interaction. A close to circle layout was used.

On Arrival and Pre-Discussion

When participants arrive, the researcher invited participants to have food, write a fake first name on a piece of paper, as well as quickly fill out the BALLI survey which has a consent section participant must answer before filling out the rest of the survey. Once they were noticeably done, the researcher/moderator introduces himself and who he is along with what language he is studying.

[1] The following procedure is adapted from Liamputtong (2011)

Moreover, he introduces the study and requests verbal (Yes/No) consent from the participants again on whether he can video and/or audio record the conversation. While this occurs, he provides participants a copy of the consent for their personal record. After consent is attained, he prompted participants to introduce themselves (major, the language they are or have studied, how long they have studied that language, and why they decided to participate in the focus group).

Once repour was established, the researcher/moderator explains the purpose of the focus group is to "encourage individuals to speak to each other instead of addressing themselves to the moderator" (Liamputtong, 2011, p. 73). It is for this reason that the moderator encourages participants that there is no correct answer and their views are valued, and that "it is acceptable for them to disagree on issues" (p. 73).

Discussion

This introduction of captions is then followed up with the following interview question to start an open discussion:

> *Can you please tell us about your experience learning your current language (with technology)?*

While this question does not address my immediate research question it is meant to get participants to use to a group discussion. The moderator then uses the following transitioning question:

> *With your range of language learning experiences, can you tell us about your experiences watching videos in the target language?*

This is then (potentially) followed up by explaining the benefits of using videos to learn a language as researchers have found. Then introduces what video captions are with an example of video—a type of language the video uses depends on whether participants are learning a second language (e.g., English) or a foreign language (e.g., Spanish).

Video 1 for English learners: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a9ottUEiIm8

Video 2 for Foreign language learners: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uuRK-cHwAStA

This is followed up with the following question:

> *Has anyone ever tried using videos to learn a language? Where you successful?*
> *What is your opinion watching a video in the language you are learning with the use of captions?*

The researcher then tries to prompt the following summarizing question:

> *As you know, websites like YouTube and Netflix provide access to videos in a variety of languages. Think back on your experiences and our discussion today, do you think teachers should support future language learners in using videos to learn a language?*

Ending the Discussion

Lastly, the researcher asks the concluding question to make sure there is an opportunity for participants to share something they might have not been able to.

Is there anything else that anyone feels that we should have talked about but didn't?

This last question is also meant as a debriefing. If there are no other questions/comments the researcher reviewed the highlights of the session. Then, he thanked the participants and invited them to continue eating while also asking them to sign a payment sheet with their initials and provided them five dollars as an additional sign of gratitude.

Corpus-based evidence of article omissions by Russian speaking English learners: A new pedagogical list

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Abstract

In line with recent multifactorial work by Gries and Deshors (Deshors, 2016; Gries & Deshors, 2014), we investigated the effects of various semantic and syntactic factors and their interactions on article misuse in the Russian sub-corpus of the International Corpus of Learner English (ICLE). In this paper, we report the results of a pilot study of article omissions that is a common problem for English learners coming from article-less backgrounds. We identified 153 instances of correct use of the zero article and 93 instances of article omissions, annotated them based on the factors from previous research, and analyzed the data using multilevel logistic modeling. The results of univariate logistic mixed effects modelling showed that adjectival pre-modification (OR = 0.31, 95% CIs [0.13, 0.75], p = .009), animacy (OR = 17.61, 95% CIs [2.27, 136.75], p = .006), and number (OR = 0.05, 95% CIs [0.02, 0.17], p < .001) affected omissions in the Russian sub-corpus of ICLE. Much like the results of Garnier and Schmitt (2015), we used these results to develop a pedagogical list.

Key words: SLA, learner corpus, Russian, article omissions, multilevel logistic modeling, pedagogical list

Second language acquisition (SLA) of the English article system has drawn the attention of many researchers over the years (Crompton, 2011; Jarvis, 2002; Liu & Gleason, 2002; Robertson, 2000; Shin, Cortes, & Yoo, 2018; Tarone & Parrish, 1988; Trenkic & Pongpairoj, 2013; Umeda, Snape, Yusa, & Wiltshier, 2019). The article system is considered one of the most challenging aspects of English to acquire (Liu & Gleason, 2002), specifically for those second language (L2) learners who come from article-less first language (L1) backgrounds (Chrabaszcz & Jiang, 2014; DeKeyser 2005; Huebner, 1983; Snape, Mayo, & Gürel, 2013; Thomas, 1989). Instruction often fails in the long term and many advanced

learners still struggle with English articles (Trenkic & Pongpairoj, 2013; Umeda et al., 2019). Various researchers have investigated the role of linguistic context in explaining this issue: some researchers emphasized a lack of consistency in article misuse in identical noun phrases (Robertson, 2000), whereas others suggested that factors such as adjectival pre-modification of nouns (Trenkic, 2007, 2008) and definiteness/specificity (Ionin, Ko, & Wexler, 2004; Ionin, Zubizarreta, & Maldonado, 2008) affect article misuse.

The development of English learner corpora has made it possible for researchers to take a broader perspective on usage patterns in a L2 (Granger, 2003). In line with recent multifactorial work by Gries and Deshors (Deshors, 2016; Gries & Deshors, 2014), we investigated whether different semantic and syntactic factors and their interactions can predict article misuse by Russian-speaking English learners. This pilot study focused on article omissions, one of the most common mistakes made by Russian-speaking learners of English (Chrabaszcz & Jiang, 2014; Pavlenko & Jarvis, 2002; Rozovskaya & Roth, 2010). In line with the work by Garnier and Schmitt (2015), these findings were used in the development of a pedagogical list.

Literature Review

SLA of Articles: Common Problems

The English article system functions at the interface of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics (Crosthwaite, 2016); it is highly complex and ubiquitous, which makes it even more challenging for L2 learners (Liu & Gleason, 2002). Articles along with classifiers, grammatical gender, and verbal aspect have been considered some of the most challenging aspects to acquire for speakers of L1s that do not include these grammatical categories (DeKeyser, 2005). When learners acquire articles in a L2, they adopt different strategies that often result in errors and inconsistencies in article use (Moore, 2004). These strategies include overgeneralization of articles such as '*the*-flooding' (Huebner 1983; Thomas 1989); 'determiner drop,' 'recoverability,' and 'lexical transfer' (Robertson 2000); and fluctuation in parameter setting (Ionin et al., 2004; Ionin et al., 2008). We will discuss these strategies in detail in the next section.

Among the most common mistakes that English learners coming from article-less languages make is the overuse of *the* with indefinites and/or overuse of *a* with definites (Cho & Slabakova, 2014; Huebner, 1983; Thomas, 1989). Article errors can also be grouped together as omission, addition, and misinformation (Shin et al., 2018). Omissions are considered one of the most common problems for both child and adult L2 learners of English coming from article-less backgrounds, including Russian speakers

who tend to omit the definite article *the* more often than the indefinite article *a* (Shin et al., 2018; Rozovskaya & Roth, 2010). Even though English learners from article-less L1 backgrounds omit more articles than speakers of languages that do feature articles, the difficulty of article use often depends on the semantic and syntactic properties of the context (Chrabaszcz & Jiang, 2014; Trenkic, 2007, 2008), which should also be considered in teaching articles (e.g., teachers can use lexical bundles such *the absence of a* or *in addition to the*; see Shin et al., 2018).

Factors Affecting Article Misuse

Various SLA researchers have collected written and oral corpora to investigate article misuse (e.g., Robertson, 2000; Thomas, 1989; Zdorenko & Paradis, 2008). For example, Thomas (1989) used a referential picture description task to create a corpus of 2,265 article environments comprised of oral production samples by learners from various L1 backgrounds. The researcher found that English learners tend to misuse *the* when *a* is required and suggested the impact of L1 transfer in this process. Another notable study was conducted by Robertson (2000) who built a corpus of 18 English dialogues produced by nine pairs of native speakers of Mandarin Chinese. The instances of article misuse found in this corpus can be explained by three principles: 'determiner drop,' 'recoverability' and 'lexical transfer,' or as Moore (2004) put it "one syntactic, one pragmatic, and one that maps pragmatic functions in LI [interlanguage] to syntactic categories" (p. 131). As for the omissions, Roberson (2000) suggested that "not only are articles omitted, but, more strikingly, there is a lack of consistency in whether articles are used with NPs [noun phrases] which are identical in form and in their semantic and pragmatic properties" (p. 137).

Article misuse can also be explained by fluctuation in parameter setting, as was suggested by Ionin and colleagues (e.g., Cho & Slabakova, 2014; Ionin et al., 2004; Ionin et al., 2008; Snape et al., 2013). This semantic explanation of article misuse is based on the idea of settings: specificity (knowledge belonging to the speaker) and definiteness (knowledge shared by the speaker and hearer). According to the Fluctuation Hypothesis, L2 learners tend to overgeneralize *the* in indefinite specific situations (e.g., "I went to the movie theater yesterday" instead of "I went to a movie theater yesterday") and *a* in definite non-specific situations (e.g., "A bear is a mammal" instead of "The bear is a mammal") (Ionin et al., 2004). Interestingly, Ionin et al. (2004) found that the number of article omissions produced by L1 Russian and Korean speakers was low and rarely exceeded 15%. Another important finding was that L2 learners coming from very different L1 backgrounds appeared to adopt similar strategies such as the overgeneralization of *the*, which is surprising, considering that English textbooks tend not to include a detailed explanation of articles (Ionin et al., 2004).

Zdorenko and Paradis (2008) compared how children from various L1 backgrounds that do not have article systems acquired English articles. Using a longitudinal corpus of narratives, the researchers suggested that L1 played a limited role in the children's article acquisition. However, the learners coming from article-less backgrounds omitted articles in oral production more often than the learners coming from L1 backgrounds that have articles. Zdorenko and Paradis (2008) found that child L2 learners from various L1 backgrounds used *a* in indefinite specific contexts and were more accurate with *the* in definite contexts than with *a* in indefinite contexts. The researchers pointed out that all learners showed a fluctuation pattern in article use with little L1 transfer. In 'Ionin et al.'s' (2008) terms, for L2 learners with [+article] L1s, fluctuation overruled L1 transfer and not the other way around. However, Zdorenko and Paradis (2008) suggested that these findings may be primarily related to the fundamental differences between child and adult L2 acquisition.

Other researchers have also emphasized the role of context in explaining article omissions (e.g., Chrabaszcz & Jiang, 2014; Shin et al., 2018; Trenkic, 2007, 2008). For example, Trenkic (2007) investigated the acquisition of English articles by native speakers of Serbian and Turkish. According to Trenkic (2007), L2 learners coming from these article-less backgrounds tend to omit articles more in adjectivally pre-modified contexts (Article + Adjective + Noun) than in non-modified contexts (Article + Noun) both in spoken and written production, including at higher proficiency levels. Trenkic (2008) suggested that article omissions may be related to general cognitive mechanisms including syntactic misanalyses of articles as adjectives. According to the researcher, omission patterns may be predicted at all proficiency levels with more articles omitted in more demanding contexts (e.g., adjectivally pre-modified contexts). Another potential problem is that advanced English learners from article-less L1 backgrounds may understand syntactic aspects of articles, but struggle with their semantic properties (Chrabaszcz & Jiang, 2014, p. 374). Therefore, both syntactic and semantic factors should be considered in a study of article misuse.

Demystifying Linguistic Phenomena Using Learner Corpora

The development of learner corpora allowed researchers to bring a new fine-grained perspective to L2 learner data and cross-linguistic influences (Granger, 2003). As Gries and Deshors (2014) pointed out, the domain of SLA has become one of the most important areas of corpus linguistics research. With regards to cross-linguistic influences, various corpus linguists have also emphasized the role of context (Deshors, 2016; Gries & Deshors, 2014). An important question that corpus researchers address is 'what would a native speaker do?' Gries and Deshors (2014) investigated the use of the modal verbs *may* and *can* in native and learner English. The researchers analyzed the data from native speakers of English as

well as speakers of French and Chinese Mandarin, for whom the data were extracted from the French and Chinese Mandarin sub-corpora of ICLE. The data extraction was completed using R and then the data were annotated based on the following variables: verb type (achievement/accomplishment, process, and state), verb semantics (abstract, general action, action incurring transformation, action incurring movement, perception, etc.), and animacy of the subject. The regression analyses revealed fundamental differences between the native and non-native speakers in terms of how they use *may* and *can*. The factors included in the model predicted 94% of variance between the native and non-native speaker data (R^2 = 0.94; F = 359.6; df = 64, 1,432, $p < .001$). According to the researchers, "this level of precision is impossible to come by without the kind of multifactorial regression with interactions" (p. 124).

The results of corpus research can also be used in the development of teaching materials. For example, Garnier and Schmitt (2015) developed a pedagogical list of the most used phrasal verbs and their meanings. According to the researchers, corpus-based frequency studies can provide deep insights into language use and inform the decisions regarding what content should be taught. Making pedagogical decisions in this case is specifically challenging as phrasal verbs are ubiquitous and highly polysemous. Articles are also considered one of the most frequent words in English; the article rule system is complex. Unsurprisingly, article instruction often fails, including in the long term (Umeda et al., 2019). Therefore, the development of new corpus-based article teaching materials would be beneficial.

Demystifying Article Misuse Using Learner Corpora

In line with previous research, specifically the work by Spoelman (2013), Osborne (2015) in his overview paper on transfer research using corpora stated that linguistic questions at the interface of morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics depend on various contextual factors. To address these questions, a large number of observations is needed. Considering that English articles function at the interface of syntax, semantics and pragmatics (Crosthwaite, 2016), learner corpora may provide a more fine-grained view of article misuse in a larger sample (e.g., Chuang & Nesi, 2006; Crosthwaite, 2016; Diez-Bedmar, 2015; Rozovskaya & Roth, 2010). According to Crosthwaite (2016), "the difficulties (and success) of L2 English article use by speakers of article-less languages can now be quantifiably determined" (p. 94). For example, the researcher found evidence that L2 learners struggle with article use more in generic contexts (e.g., "Elephants have trunks"). Crosthwaite (2016) also suggested that the extent to which learners from article-less backgrounds struggle with *a*, *the*, and zero articles may vary as he found that Mandarin L2 English learners had less article errors than native speakers of Korean and Thai. Another variable that needs to be considered is L2 learners' proficiency. Diez-Bedmar (2015) analyzed article use at various proficiency levels and how it was affected by context. One of the findings

was that the upper intermediate learners tend to use zero articles correctly in non-referential contexts (e.g., "Foreigners would come up with a better solution."). Considering these deep insights into the problem of article misuse, further research in this area is needed, including a study of multiple syntactic and semantic factors and their interactions (Gries & Deshors, 2014).

Present study

Building from several works from SLA and corpus linguistics research, we explored the role of different syntactic and semantic factors, their combinations, and interactions in article omissions by Russian-speaking English learners. Our goal was to use a large corpus (i.e., ICLE), go beyond frequencies, and build a model including multiple factors and interactions (see Gries & Deshors, 2014; Deshors, 2016). In this pilot study, we tested the findings of Trenkic (2007, 2008) and investigated the effects of adjectival pre-modification on article omissions. Moreover, we explored the effects of two semantic factors (animacy and number), which were adopted from the work by Gries and Deshors (e.g., Gries & Deshors, 2014; Deshors, 2016). Much like the results of Garnier and Schmitt (2015), the results of this pilot study were used to develop a pedagogical list. The list is based on significant main effects and interactions rather than frequencies. In this pilot study, we addressed the following research questions (RQs):

RQ 1. To what extent does adjectival pre-modification affect article omissions by Russian speaking learners of English in written production?

RQ 2. To what extent do semantic factors (animacy and number) affect article omissions by Russian speaking learners of English in written production?

Methodology

International Corpus of Learner English

ICLE is comprised of "argumentative essays written by higher intermediate to advanced learners of English from several mother tongue backgrounds," including Bulgarian, Chinese, Czech, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Norwegian, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, Tswana, and Turkish (The International Corpus of Learner English, 2019). The data for the Russian sub-corpus of ICLE were collected at Moscow State University (Russia). We contacted a professor from Moscow State University to learn more about the collection of data for the sub-corpus. She mentioned that the topics were suggested by the coordinators of the entire project: Sylviane Granger and her colleagues. The list included 15-20 topics and the members of the national teams were able to choose their own topics from

that list, which was an important differentiating factor for the sub-corpora. The topics used in the Russian sub-corpus included attitudes towards military service, the prison system, and the media. The essays were written by third-year university students who had already passed several important exams, including in English. All of them were majoring in English (literature, linguistic theory, etc.). However, no grading thresholds were used to restrict inclusion in the Russian sub-corpus.

The Phases of the Study

Our research methodology included five phases: (1) identification of the factors affecting language misuse within the existing literature; (2) isolation of correct and incorrect instances in a learner corpus; (3) annotation of correct and incorrect instances; (4) mixed effects modelling; and (5) building pedagogical materials based on the significant main effects and interactions. The five stages for the present study are shown in Figure 1. Because native speakers of English tend not to misuse articles, we did not compare native and non-native speaker data, which was done previously by various corpus linguists (e.g., Gries & Deshors, 2014). For the purposes of our study, we used correct and incorrect uses of articles produced by native speakers of Russian. Examples of correct and incorrect instances of article use are shown in Table 1.

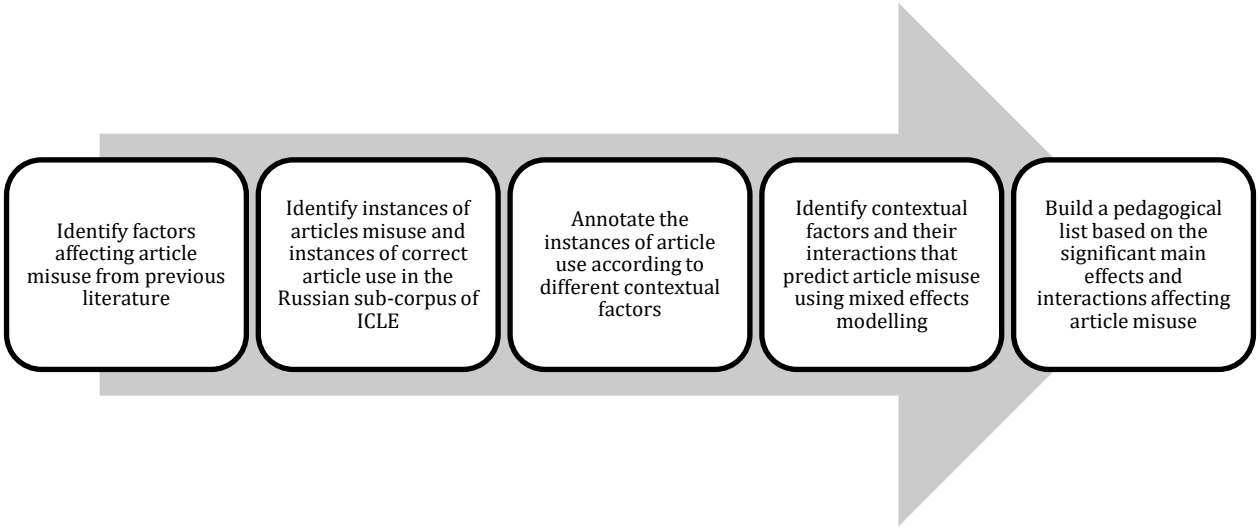

Figure 1. Phases of the study.

Table 1.

Examples of correct and incorrect article use

Pre-context	**Article used**	**Post-context**	**Correctness**
One must remember	Zero	fantastic novels, further development science and technology is not good at all.	Yes
I believe it is impossible to imagine	A	state without prisons or any other organs of punishment.	Yes
What missions should	The	prison system fulfill?	Yes
This is what takes place in the case with	Zero	human psyche.	No (omission)
In such	A	conditions people can be rehabilitated.	No (incorrect use of *a*)
He is glorified on	The	screen; he is pursued by the press and paid vast sums of money for his "memories".	No (incorrect use of *the*)

After we identified correct and incorrect instances of article use, we started the annotation process based on multiple semantic and syntactic factors that were previously used by SLA researchers and corpus linguists. We analyzed the data in R using multilevel logistic modeling (for review, see Sommet & Morselli, 2017). The significant effects were used in the development of a pedagogical list. These phases are discussed in detail in the next sections of the paper.

Factors under Investigation

After exploring various studies on the L2 acquisition of articles and learner corpus research, we identified two main categories used for annotation: syntactic and semantic factors. Each category included multiple variables with two to three levels each (see Table 1). The definiteness/specificity variables were adopted from the work by Ionin and colleagues (e.g., Cho & Slabakova, 2014; Ionin et al., 2004, 2008). The adjectival pre-modification variable was adopted from the work by Trenkic (2007, 2008). Considering that nouns can also function as adjectives, we added the pre-modification part of speech variable. The other syntactic and semantic factors (animacy, number, negation, sentence type, and clause type) were adopted from the work by Gries and Deshors (Gries & Deshors, 2014; Deshors, 2016). In this

pilot study, we focused on two syntactic factors (adjectival pre-modification and pre-modification part of speech) and two semantic factors (animacy and number).

Table 2.

Factors under investigation

Category	**Variable**	**Level**
Semantic factors	Definiteness	Definite
		Indefinite
	Specificity	Specific
		Non-specific
	Animacy	Animate
		Inanimate
	Number	Singular
		Plural
Syntactic factors	Adjectival pre-modification	Pre-modified
		Non-modified
	Pre-modification part of speech	Noun
		Adjective
	Negation	Affirmative
		Negative
	Sentence type	Declarative
		Interrogative
	Clause type	Main
		Subordinate
		Coordinate

Annotation

We populated our data table with 250 examples of correct article use and 250 of incorrect use in raw data (the essays) from ICLE. We input the immediate pre-context and post-context. It is important to note that with predictors like definiteness and specificity, more than just the immediate context (i.e., the sentence) is informative, but because the essays were short, we were able to easily revisit and reference the essay itself for additional context when required. The size of the pilot data (40 short essays) afforded us the opportunity to check each other's work in entirety. In cases of disagreement between the coders,

we discussed to consensus (which occasionally involved deferring to the second author who is a native speaker of English). In the case of incorrect uses, we noted what article type *should* have been used (according to the "what would a native speaker do?" benchmark). We were careful not to leave any blank spaces and aimed for consistency in our coding (e.g., y v. yes). We encountered an expected amount of challenge in our coding. For example, it took more time to identify and annotate 250 instances of *incorrect* article use than *correct* uses because it required verification of the nature of the misuse. Additionally, the Russian style of writing within this sub-corpus tended to be abstract and cyclical, featuring very long sentences. We thought this particular writing style might lend itself to certain types of learner errors. The variable specificity is much less straightforward than it first seems in the literature, and we were forced to revisit and annotate additional instances to ensure accuracy. Finally, there were also cases that we classified as "ambiguous." In these cases, we were not sure whether the instance reflected correct or incorrect use because there was not enough context given in learners' essays (these instances were not includes in the 250 correct and 250 incorrect cases).

Analyses

The syntactic and semantic factors were used as the independent variables or predictors. The predictors used in the pilot study were categorical and mostly included two levels (e.g., animacy→animate and inanimate, with one of the levels used as the baseline). For the only categorical variable with more than two levels (clause type), we created "dummy" variables (*n*-1 dummy variables for each variable with *n* categories). The dependent variables were the types of correct/incorrect article use: correct/incorrect use of the zero article, correct/incorrect use of the definite article *the*, and correct/incorrect use of the indefinite article use *a*. This pilot study focused on the correct and incorrect uses of the zero article (correct uses and omissions). Considering that each dependent variable was dichotomous (incorrect/correct), using linear regression analysis was not an option. We consulted Michigan State University Center for Statistical Training and Consulting (CSTAT) who suggested that using logistic regression would violate the independent observations assumption as each essay was written by one author (40 essays by 40 authors and not 40 essays by one author). Therefore, we performed generalized linear mixed modelling using the logit link function "to estimate the odds that an event will occur (the yes/no outcome) while taking the dependency of data into account" (Sommet & Morselli, 2017, p. 203). The goal was to identify significant main effects and interactions (see Gries & Deshors, 2014), which we used in the development of a pedagogical list. The R code and data used in the analysis are available through the website of Author 1 (http://pastushe.msu.domains/data-r-scripts/).

Results

Among the 250 instances of incorrect article use, we identified 93 omissions, 134 incorrect uses of the definite article, and 23 incorrect uses of the indefinite article. In this pilot study, we focused on the correct uses of the zero article (153 instances) and the omissions (93 instances). The number of observations based on the four predictors is shown in Table 3. We performed generalized linear mixed modelling using the logit link function to analyze the relationship between the four predictors (number, animacy, adjectival pre-modification, and adjectival pre-modification part of speech) and the dichotomous outcome variable that has two possible values depending on whether the instance was correct or not (correct use/omission). We used these predictors as fixed effects and considered a random intercept for each essay.

Table 3.

Correct and incorrect uses of the zero-article based on the syntactic and semantic factors

Correctness	**Adjectival pre-modification**		**Pre-modification part of speech**		**Animacy**		**Number**	
	Non-modified	Pre-modified	Adjective	Noun	Inanimate	Animate	Plural	Singular
No (93)	38	55	29	12	86	7	10	76
Yes (153)	79	74	54	13	119	34	84	55

Tables 4-7 present univariate logistic mixed effects model analyses for each predictor. Table 8 shows an example of a model with an interaction term (adjectival pre-modification*pre-modification part of speech). The final model, adjusted logistic mixed effects model, is shown in Table 9. A key statistic in the analyses, the odds ratio (OR), is a "multiplicative factor by which the predicted probability of an event occurring rather than not occurring (i.e., "$P(Yi = 1)/1 – P(Yi = 1)$") changes when the predictor variable Xi increases by one unit" (Sommet & Morselli, 2017, p. 205). When an OR is higher than 1, it indicates an increased chance of the occurrence of an event. When an OR is lower than 1, it indicates a decreased chance of the occurrence of an event. Another key statistic, the intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) "quantifies the degree of homogeneity of the outcome within clusters" (Sommet & Morselli, 2017, p. 212). In our case, ICC indicates how much of the variance can be explained by between-essay structures, which is crucial considering that our sample consists of essays written by multiple authors: "ICC = 0 indicates perfect independence of residuals: the observations do not depend on cluster membership" and "ICC = 1 indicates perfect interdependence of residuals: the observations only vary between clusters" (p.

212). In our case, ICC = 1 would indicate that there is strong between-essay variation. Finally, we reported 95% CIs and *p*-values to check whether the ORs were statistically significant.

Table 4.

Results of univariate logistic mixed effects modelling (adjectival pre-modification)

Predictors	***Odds Ratios***	***95% CIs***	***p***
(Intercept)	0.16	0.01 – 2.33	.180
Adj. pre-mod.	0.31	0.13 – 0.75	**.009**
Random effects			
σ^2	3.29		
$\tau_{00Essay}$	12.78		
ICC	0.80		
N_{Essay}	40		
Observations	246		
Deviance	240.493		
AIC	246.493		

Table 5.

Results of univariate logistic mixed effects modelling (pre-modification part of speech)

Predictors	***Odds Ratios***	***95% CIs***	***p***
(Intercept)	0.32	0.02 – 5.91	.440
Pre-mod. POS	0.97	0.25 – 3.84	.967
Random effects			
σ^2	3.29		
$\tau_{00Essay}$	7.46		
ICC	0.69		
N_{Essay}	31		
Observations	109		
Deviance	126.041		
AIC	132.041		

We conducted univariate logistic mixed effects model analyses for each predictor (see Tables 4-7). With regards to the adjectival pre-modification *OR* = 0.31, indicating that the odds of using the zero

article correctly in an adjectivally pre-modified context were approximately three times less than in non-modified contexts. The odds are statistically significant (p = .009); however, the 95% CIs were relatively broad (0.13 – 0.75), even though they were below 1 (see Table 4). This indicates that the results should be interpreted with caution. Considering that nouns can function as adjectives and modify other nouns, we investigated whether the pre-modification part of speech variable (noun/adjective) affected article omissions. The results (see Table 5) indicated that this factor did not affect omissions (*OR* = 0.97, *95% CIs* [0.25, 3.84], p = .967).

Table 6.

Results of univariate logistic mixed effects modelling (animacy)

Predictors	***Odds Ratios***	***95% CIs***	***p***
(Intercept)	0.03	0.00 – 1.36	.072
Animacy	17.61	2.27 – 136.75	**.006**
Random effects			
σ^2	3.29		
$\tau_{00Essay}$	17.79		
ICC	0.84		
N_{Essay}	40		
Observations	246		
Deviance	232.55		
AIC	238.55		

Table 7.

Results of univariate logistic mixed effects modelling (number)

Predictors	***Odds Ratios***	***95% CIs***	***p***
(Intercept)	1.41	0.21 – 9.72	.724
Number	0.05	0.02 – 0.17	**< .001**
Random effects			
σ^2	3.29		
$\tau_{00Essay}$	8.89		
ICC	0.73		
N_{Essay}	39		
Observations	225		

Deviance	192.182
AIC	198.182

We also investigated the effects of semantic factors (animacy and number). Based on the results of univariate logistic mixed effects modelling (see Tables 6 and 7), both factors significantly affected article omissions. As for animacy, the odds of making an error when the noun was inanimate were approximately 18 times higher than with animate nouns (*OR* = 17.61, *95% CIs* [2.27, 136.75], $p = .006$). Moreover, the odds of using the correct article when the noun was singular were approximately 20 times less than with singular nouns (*OR* = 0.05, *95% CIs* [0.02, 0.17], $p < .001$). In other words, the learners were more like to make an article error with singular nouns. The *p*-values and 95% CIs indicated that these predictors were statistically significant.

Table 8.

*Example of multivariate logistic mixed effects modelling with an interaction term (animacy*number interaction)*

Predictors	***Odds Ratios***	***95% CIs***	***p***
(Intercept)	0.54	0.03 – 9.24	.672
Animacy	8.43	0.25 – 289.84	.234
Number	0.08	0.02 – 0.29	**< .001**
Animacy*Number	0.47	0.01 – 39.03	.738
Random effects			
σ^2	3.29		
$\tau_{00Essay}$	12.12		
ICC	0.79		
N_{Essay}	39		
Observations	225		
Deviance	189.153		
AIC	199.153		

We also explored all possible interactions of the syntactic and semantic factors (e.g., adjectival pre-modification*pre-modification part of speech, adjectival pre-modification*animacy, adjectival pre-modification*number, etc.). None of these interactions were statistically significant. To illustrate this pattern, we included a table showing one of the interactions (animacy*number, see Table 8). These

findings indicated that the outcome variable (correct use of the zero article) was not affected by additive effects of any combinations of two independent variables (syntactic and semantic factors).

Table 9.

Results of multivariate logistic mixed effects modelling

Predictors	***Odds Ratios***	***95% CIs***	***p***
(Intercept)	0.87	0.04 – 21.50	.933
Adj. pre-mod.	0.22	0.07 – 0.72	**.012**
Animacy	6.93	0.51 – 93.24	.144
Number	0.07	0.02 – 0.25	< **.001**
Random effects			
σ^2	3.29		
$\tau_{00Essay}$	16.65		
ICC	0.84		
N_{Essay}	39		
Observations	225		
Deviance	181.904		
AIC	191.904		

After adjusting the other predictors (see Table 9), the predictor adjectival pre-modification was statistically significant at the 5% level of significance (*OR* = 0.22, *95% CIs* [0.07, 0.72], *p* = .012). The OR for the adjectival pre-modification predictor contributing to the outcome can be interpreted as follows: an instance that is adjectivally pre-modified was approximately five times less likely to be correct than an instance that is non-modified. With 95% confidence interval, the OR for the predictor adjectival pre-modification was greater than 0.07 but less than 0.72, which is still relatively broad, but less than 1. Even though the odds were still statistically significant, these results should be interpreted with caution. Likewise, the semantic factor of number was also statistically significant at the 5% level of significance after controlling the other predictors. However, animacy was not statistically significant at 5% level of significance. In our final model, ICC was 0.84, almost reaching 1, suggesting that 84% of the total variance can be explained by between-essay structures. Similar patterns were observed in the univariate models.

Discussion

General Notes

The results of this pilot study once again showed that English articles are challenging for L2 speakers, specifically for learners coming from article-less backgrounds such as Russian. These findings remain consistent with previous research (e.g., Chrabaszcz & Jiang, 2014; Pavlenko & Jarvis, 2002; Rozovskaya & Roth, 2010). The most common mistakes that we identified in ICLE were incorrect uses of the definite article the (134 instances) and omissions (93 instances). Only 23 out of 250 instances of incorrect instances we indefinite article errors. However, as it was pointed out various researchers (e.g., Chrabaszcz & Jiang, 2014; Trenkic, 2007, 2008), not all contexts presented equal difficulty for learners. As was shown in this pilot study, various semantic and syntactic factors may affect article misuse and difficulties and success in article use can be quantifiably determined (see Crosthwaite, 2016). In line with the work of Gries and Deshors (Deshors, 2016; Gries & Deshors, 2014), we also explored all possible interactions between the factors. However, none of the interactions were statistically significant (see Table 8 for an example). Interestingly, the intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC), a measure of homogeneity of the outcome within clusters (see Sommet & Morselli, 2017), was relatively high for all the models in our analyses, with all of them almost reaching 1. These findings suggest that the total variance can be mostly explained by between-essay structures, which indicates that some learners struggle with articles more than others. Also, language proficiency may be an issue as ICLE is comprised of essays written by intermediate-high and advanced learners. Despite this issue, we still found some common patterns in article omissions.

The Effects of Adjectival Pre-Modification on Article Omissions

In line with Trenkic (2007, 2008), we investigated whether adjectival pre-modification (Article + Adjective + Noun) can affect article misuse. The results of univariate logistic mixed effects modelling revealed that Russian-speaking learners of English tent to omit articles more in adjectivally pre-modified contexts (*OR* = 0.31, *95% CIs* [0.13, 0.75], $p = .009$), remaining consistent with the findings of Trenkic. After adjusting the other predictors (see Table 9), adjectival pre-modification was still statistically significant (*OR* = 0.22, *95% CIs* [0.07, 0.72], $p = .012$). These results indicate that Russian speakers are approximately five times more likely to make an error when the noun is adjectivally pre-modified (Article + Adjective + Noun). We also investigated whether omissions were affected by the pre-modification part of speech variable (noun or adjective). However, it was not the case (*OR* = 0.97, *95% CIs* [0.25, 3.84], $p = .967$). Based on these findings, we decided to consider adjectival pre-modification in the development of the pedagogical list (see Appendix A).

The Effects of Animacy and Number on Article Omissions

In this pilot study, we also investigated the effects of two semantic factors (animacy and number). These variables have been previously used by various corpus linguists (Deshors, 2016; Gries & Deshors, 2014), but to the best of our knowledge have not yet been investigated in article misuse research using a learner corpus. Our assumption was that these two variables would help us better understand article omissions. Indeed, univariate logistic mixed effects modelling revealed that both factors significantly affected omissions: animacy (*OR* = 17.61, *95% CIs* [2.27, 136.75], $p = .006$) and number (*OR* = 0.05, *95% CIs* [0.02, 0.17], $p < .001$). The odds of making mistakes when the noun was singular were much higher than when it was plural; likewise, the odds of making an error when the noun was inanimate were much higher than when the noun was animate. Even though the animacy factor was not statistically significant after adjusting the other predictors (see Table 9), we decided to consider this predictor along with number in the development of the pedagogical list (see Appendix A).

Limitations and Future Directions

Sample size is often an issue in SLA research, including this pilot study (153 instances of correct use of the zero article and 93 omissions). Due to this limitation, the results should be interpreted with caution. Considering that our ultimate goal is to build a model with multiple predictors and interactions, we will need to identify many more instances and potentially consider adding other L1 sub-corpora. Also, the number of individual observations should be approximately equal (e.g., the number of adjectivally pre-modified and non-modified contexts). This pilot study focused on only four factors (two syntactic and two semantic factors). Future research should consider more variables, including definiteness and specificity investigated by Ionin and colleagues (e.g., Cho & Slabakova, 2014; Ionin et al., 2004; Ionin et al., 2008; Snape et al., 2013). However, the number of factors that can be included in future models will still heavily depend on the sample size.

The essays on the very specific topics of attitudes towards military, prison system, and the media in the Russian sub-corpus of ICLE were written by higher-intermediate to advanced learners from Moscow State University. As we also learned from one of the professors responsible for the data collection, no grading threshold was used in the collection of the sub-corpus. As we read the essays, we noticed that they were clearly written by students at different proficiency levels, which was also indicated by the high ICCs. Even though many advanced learners of English still struggle with English articles (Umeda et al., 2019), proficiency still plays a role in article use and should be considered in future research (Diez-Bedmar, 2015). For example, researchers may rate the essays and include the proficiency variable as a predictor in the analyses.

Conclusion

In this pilot study, we tested the following methodology: (1) identification of factors affecting article misuse based on prior research; (2) isolation of correct and incorrect instances of article use in a learner corpus (in this case, ICLE); (3) annotation of these instances based on the factors affecting article misuse; (4) mixed effects modelling; and (5) building pedagogical materials on the significant main effects and interactions. Using this methodology helped us better understand article omissions, one of the most common errors made by Russian-speaking English learners. We found evidence that article omissions can be affected by both syntactic (adjectival pre-modification) and semantic factors (animacy and number), which were used in the development of a pedagogical list. Finally, we outlined potential limitations and future directions for learner corpus research on article misuse, including the next steps of our study.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Pedagogical List

This pedagogical list focuses on article omissions and was generated from a large collection of essays written by Russian-speaking English learners. When teaching articles, specifically to those learners coming from article-less L1 backgrounds such as Russian, it may be beneficial to pay special attention to nouns modified by adjectives. English learners tend omit articles when there is an adjective in front of the noun: *remote control, better world, world market, better future, human mind, professional army, nervous system, present time, successful business, ancient times, country cottage, social feature, death penalty, prison system, committed crime, draft board, higher position, military career, real world, ecological situation, high salary, most fundamental one, greatest progress, new level, better way, expensive type, good school, last years,* and *combined system*.

Here are some examples in context:

*Could you pass me **the remote control**?*

*We need to build **a better world** for the next generations. Let's hope for **a better future**.*

*There is still so much that we need to learn about **the human mind**.*

*What was the music like in **the ancient times**?*

Teachers should also consider semantic factors such as animacy and number as they may also affect article omissions. Based on our findings, Russian learners of English often omit articles before inanimate and singular nouns. Here are some examples of nouns that were particularly challenging for this group of learners: *opportunity, time, imagination, sphere, system, draft, years, offence, type, way, salary, level, progress, service, climate, ton, problem, TV set, reality, situation, shortage, threat, law, environment, tribe, career, position, draft, board, army, state, protection, penalty, crime, punishment, feature, society, prisoner, mind, education, place, weekend, cottage, and time*.

Here are some examples in context:

*This research project gave me **the opportunity** to be a better scholar.*

*Do you remember **the time** when you did not have to worry about reviewers' comments?*

*Directors should use **the imagination** more in their movies.*

***The sphere** of Russian second language acquisition remains understudied.*

Interview with Nick C. Ellis

Ryo Maie
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Nick C. Ellis is Professor of Psychology and Linguistics and a Research Scientist in the English Language Institute at University of Michigan. His research interests include usage-based and cognitive linguistic approaches to second language acquisition, emergentism, and dynamic systems and complex systems approaches to language. His influence has been particularly prominent in advocating usage-based accounts of language acquisition and in explaining explicit and implicit learning/knowledge and their interface. He is the recipient of the Distinguished Scholarship and Service Award of 2019 American Association for Applied Linguistics.

Dr. Ellis kindly agreeed to this interview as he was giving a lecture on April 19th, 2019 for the Coffee and Cognition Reading Group.

Could you first tell us about how you became interested in SLA and usage-based approaches?

N: I did my PhD on developmental dyslexia. It was the time when cognitive psychology was beginning to prove itself by applying notions of information processing to investigate how reading involves recoding orthography into phonology or orthography into semantics. There were models of learning to read and skilled reading, and also of people who used to be able to read, who, as a result of strokes or other brain damage, became disabled readers. The study of

these acquired dyslexias showed fascinating examples of modularity and double dissociation. I wanted to know why otherwise intelligent children were having difficulty in reading, and to apply cognitive psychology to these individuals with developmental dyslexia. The results of my PhD led me to think that it made sense to think about reading as a skill that developed over considerable time on the task of reading – from interacting with many books and texts over years of experience. So, I was already a usage-based scholar then. When later, I became interested in learning a second language, it was therefore natural for me to adopt the same sort of approach, to think of learning a language using general cognitive mechanisms, that is, usage-based approaches.

Do you have any current projects or initiatives you are excited about?

N: The thing I'm most excited by at the moment is work with my PhD student, Wendy Guo, where we have been looking at L2 acquisition of morphology using elicited imitation tests. We are specifically focusing on statistical language learning and the nature of verbs carrying the morphology, to look for examples of things like the Aspect Hypothesis as it affects acquisition of verb tense. So, it's not just looking at the morpheme itself, but at the verb the morpheme is bound to, and which verbs show a particular morphological marking first. So far, we have done that in small populations, and I am now very excited to be working with Akira Murakami at the University of Birmingham, trying to replicate/ triangulate the findings Wendy and I got in two experiments with thirty or forty Chinese learners of ESL, but now using a learner corpus of a hundred and fifteen thousand learners or more! We will be talking about this at the upcoming SLRF here at MSU – it's going to be in the symposium on corpus-based approaches. Suffice it to say that I think it's really exciting now that the big data is starting to come in, where you can

look for phenomena across hundreds of thousands of learners from a wide variety of different language backgrounds, sometimes longitudinally. I am particularly happy that some of the findings that we found in the elicitation study are turning out to be robust in the corpus data. This type of triangulation research both strengthens our belief in the findings and broadens our investigations across disciplines.

Wow. I'm very much looking forward to hearing about it at the SLRF then.

N: Yes. The really exciting thing about this study is that it really makes you think, for example, of things like how you define "formulaicity". There are many ways to do it, on the basis of frequency, or mutual information, or…. There are many possible operational definitions. When you are faced with big datasets, they really make you think because you now have natural language going on in a wide variety of learners. You are not sitting and saying, "I've got to control my stimuli, my 36 stimuli!" So, it faces you with all sorts of questions which you haven't had to address before. It is hard, but also exciting, to be able to triangulate studies of twenty well-controlled learners with well-controlled stimuli across to hundreds of millions of words of learner language. That's quite good fun.

Thank you. I actually went to Wendy's talk at the last AAAL, on the elicited imitation study.[1] I thought that was just fantastic. Next, may we ask who the person is in academia you have been or were most inspired or influenced by?

[1] The annual conference of the American Association for Applied Linguistics in Atlanta, Georgia, on March 9-12th, 2019.

N: Oh, there are so many of them. You saw my list of important influences when I received the DSSA award at this last AAAL. So many of them, such good work. If I have to come up with one in particular though, it would have to be Brian MacWhinney. I think Brian has had a huge effect in the field, just astounding. I used to think Carnegie Mellon was the place to be – think of the people who were there: Herb Simon, Allan Newell, John Anderson, Jay McClelland, and then Brian. I learned later that many of them worked independently rather than together. But somehow if you have got enough people thinking on the edge, then the institution thinks on the edge too. Overall, so many people, so much innovation. They fundamentally changed to way we think about cognition.

Thank you. So many people. As with Brain MacWhinney, you are a proponent of cognitive linguistics model of language and language learning, which I think is something still new to the field of applied linguistics. What part of it do you think has a particularly novel contribution, something new, to our field?

N: 'Cognitive linguistics' and 'usage-based approaches' are two names for the same thing as far as I'm concerned. Cognitive linguistics emphasizes that every aspect of language is meaningful and has a functional intent. It is also an approach to language which allows us to put language alongside the rest of cognition. So, language essentially conjures meanings, and it is learned using the same cognitive mechanisms we use to learn everything else. From my perspective, cognitive linguistics and usage-based approaches are great because they bring 'learning' back into second language acquisition. For a long time before, probably due to a historical accident, learning had been denied from second language acquisition. After behaviorist approaches to language learning had had their day, learning was relegated to somewhere else. There was no

concern for learning in generative linguistics. But when I first went to a cognitive linguistics conference, there I saw people happy to talk about learning language. Nowadays, more and more people are adding learning into the pot, and it is going to be usage-based approaches / cognitive linguistics approaches which bring together language experience, meaningful social interaction, cognition, and emergence.

Thank you. At the end, could you tell us about some research gaps or future directions usage-based approaches should address?

N: There is so much to do. First of all, we need some decent learner corpora. I mean, wouldn't it be lovely to have some rich, dense, longitudinal corpora of L2 learner language? Wouldn't it be wonderful to have a large corpus of learners, tracking them from their earliest experiences of the language right the way through to proficiency in the language? We already have thin longitudinal SLA corpora like the ESF project of Klein and Perdue. That was a huge amount of work, and the study really broke new ground, but it's not dense enough. It influenced more recent studies by researchers such as Marianne Gulberg, Marzena Watorek, Rebekah Rast, and other 'learner varieties' researchers in Europe looking at the very early stages of language acquisition where they are trying to record everything. They are looking at acquisition of Polish from standardized lessons in Italian, Dutch, English, and French L1 speakers, but they're doing it for the first *fifteen hours* of exposure to Polish, not the first *one and half years* or more of exposure to Polish that we really need. We have lots of good models of dense corpora of L1 acquisition from researchers like Elena Lieven, Mike Tomasello, Heike Behrens, and Deb Roy, and now we need to extend that to L2A. That could be really exiting. I think the future lies in this type of big data project analyzing people's language exposure and their uptake, alongside parallel detailed

psycholinguistic experimentation. It is really exciting now that all sorts of disciplines are coming together to solve the problem of language acquisition; Natural Language Processing allowing us large analyses of language; Deep learning programs speed up things like automatic transcription or automatic language analysis; Computing power and storage becomes cheaper and cheaper. My first PhD experiment had 36 stimuli and 20 students. Now suddenly we're looking at potentially a learner's whole history of exposure and their productions over time. It seems quite dauting, but I believe it can come about through the language sciences with linguists, psychologists and computer scientists all coming together.

Interviews with SLRF Mentors

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Foreword

What does it mean to be human in a profession that requires you to innovate by listening, contemplating, and transforming contemporary and past ideas? How does one define and strive for success in such a demanding profession while maintaining a sense of self? Those new to academia – either as students or emerging professionals – will inevitably encounter these questions in some form. While some have a support system to answer such questions, many others struggle to navigate the labyrinth of academia. Having a mentor to provide advice and support is crucial in helping us avoid this labyrinth's dead ends and pitfalls, so that the goals we aspire to can be achieved.

The 2019 Second Language Research Forum (SLRF) was hosted by Michigan State University (MSU). With the support of the co-chairs of the event, Caitlin Cornell and Matt Kessler, we inaugurated the mentor lunch session, in which 17 faculty members and 17 students participated. The goal of the program was twofold: 1) to connect mentors and mentees with similar research interests, and 2) to strongly encourage mentors and mentees to not only discuss research but also to help foster the growth of the SLA community by assisting students in their integration into it. The second part entailed mentoring individuals with regard to such things as the development of their professional identities, as well as advising them on ways to support, grow and care for their personal self. In essence, our goal was to acknowledge, support, celebrate and develop emerging members of the community by focusing not only on the scholarly but on their human side, as well. The event was a success, even though only 17 of the 40-plus students were able to participate in this session. As such, we asked a few mentors to answer questions on topics ranging from searching for a job to finding a work-life balance to having a family while maintaining an academic career. We hope this compilation will unveil at least some of the mysteries of academia for those who are currently, or will soon, navigate the labyrinth.

We would like to warmly express our gratitude to the mentors who took the time to meet and share their valuable insights with us and our readers.

Mentors

Charles Nagle is an Assistant Professor of Spanish and the Director of the Spanish Language Program at Iowa State University. He studies second language pronunciation and individual differences, as well as beliefs about pronunciation learning and teaching, and enjoys conducting statistical analysis (particularly mixed-effects modeling).

Jeffrey Maloney is a recent alumnus of MSU's Second Language Studies program who is currently both an assistant professor of English and director of the ESL Academy at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. Apart from doing research in the areas of computer-assisted language learning, learner identity, World Englishes, and implicit and explicit language learning, Jeffrey enjoys spending time with his wife and two daughters.

Luke Plonsky is an alumnus of MSU's Second Language Studies program who is currently an associate professor of Applied Linguistics at Northern Arizona University, a senior associate editor of *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, managing editor of *Foreign Language Annals*, and co-director of the IRIS repository. In addition to trailblazing quantitative methodological reform in applied linguistics, he halts the academic world around him to spend time with his wife and three children.

Natasha Tokowicz is an Associate Professor in the Departments of Psychology and Linguistics and a Research Scientist at the Learning Research and Development Center at the University of Pittsburgh. Her research interests include adult second language acquisition, bilingualism, within and cross-language lexical ambiguity, and semantic representation within and across languages.

Pavel Trofimovich is a professor in the Department of Education's Applied Linguistics Program at Concordia University in Montréal, Canada, and former Associate Editor (2012-2015) and Journal Editor (2015-2019) at *Language Learning*. Pavel's interests include cognitive aspects of second language processing and second language phonology, and he is balancing an active research agenda with family life and raising a daughter.

Navigating the job market

Pavel Trofimovich

I graduated in 2003 with a Ph.D. in second language education and applied linguistics from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. I applied for about 10 jobs. All over the world, about 10 jobs, and went for a job talk at Concordia University in Montréal. Montréal was my first onsite job interview, my first offer. I accepted the job and stayed there, and I have been there for 16 years now, since 2003. So I stayed in one place and I'm happy there and I went through all the stages: pre-tenure, tenure and then on to full professor.

It was a regular-to-worse type of situation [on the market that year]. A typical lack of jobs, too many applicants and very few opportunities. I think it's the problem that continues that these jobs come up at different points over the year. So sometimes, when you're ready to apply, only two or three jobs are available, and then suddenly, when interview requests or callbacks come in, there is another opportunity coming up, so you don't know how to structure your job application process very efficiently, because all these things come up at different points in the year. Maybe now it's becoming a little bit more regular. Most of the jobs are coming up in the fall for next year's starting position.

Natasha Tokowicz

It took several years. I should say that my husband and I were both postdocs for several years. I had two postdoc positions. My first was with Brian MacWhinney at Carnegie Mellon University. And then I spent two years on postdoc with Chuck Perfetti at the University of Pittsburgh. And one of those years I was on my own funding, on an F32 NRSA from the National Institute of Health. Basically, I applied several times before I got the right job, before I got a job offer. I came close a number of times, but “close” is not a job. And I applied very broadly every time that I applied for a job.

I would always fight for any job that I thought I could make any case for. I could teach developmental psychology. I don't really know anything about developmental psychology, but I could learn it. I applied very, very broadly. I applied to teach in schools as well as research institutions. I applied for lots of stuff. And I applied to cognitive neuroscience positions and cognitive psychology positions. The market was not bad, but it wasn't great, either. There were maybe 20 to 30 positions every year, which is healthy. But they weren't all the right fit at all, and a lot of teaching schools just thought I was ridiculous because, coming from Penn State, they were like: “You’re not going to come here to this little tiny teaching institution.”

And I had interviews, and one year my husband got an offer but I didn't get an offer. He had an offer on Long Island and I had an interview in the City in Manhattan, but I didn't get that job. And then we both interviewed in Tampa, Florida. And that didn't work out for both of us. And so

we thought: “Well, a pair will work out at some point.” That was very tricky. And then the year that we ultimately took our jobs, our pair of jobs, we also had a pair of job offers at a regional campus somewhere, tenure-track positions, same department. My husband had a K01 award at the time, which is the National Institutes of Health Career Development Award where you have your own money and you're a faculty member but you're paying your own salary. There is a mentor for you, you have a committee that kind of guides you because you’re early in your career, but you ultimately have to keep paying your own salary.

And I had the job that year in Pittsburgh, in the psychology department. Mine was tenure-track, hard money, and we were like: “Well, do we take this position where we both will have hard money or do we stay here where we will have the better fit in terms of research and a better brain scanning situation?” Because my husband does brain imaging, and his K01 award involved this research. Financially it was very, very difficult to pay for research setup at this other institution, not because they didn't want to fund us but just because it wasn't a research-focused institution. The Dean was so great. She was like: “I really, really want to give you all the money you want for your startup package, I just legitimately don't have it in my budget.” So, we just decided to stay, because it was a better fit for our research agendas. We stayed, but it meant for him to be on the soft money track for a while.

Jeffrey Maloney

The one thing that was running through my mind was, "Boy I hope I get a job!" I can share a little bit about just how it started. I checked the job boards every day, sometimes more than once a day. *ChronicleVitae, HigherEdJobs, LinguistList*. I also did a little searching on *Monster.com*, and, surprisingly, there were a few jobs that were there that weren't posted elsewhere. I ended up with a job that I found on *ChronicleVitae*.

I applied to 50+ jobs, I got 11 or 12 interviews, and then two campus visits. Then, just the one job offer. I think we all, in my graduation year, wanted tenure-track jobs, and I was very fortunate to get one right out the gate. My job at Northeastern State University is in a location that I never had expected before. It has been an adjustment because I have never set foot in Oklahoma in my lifetime. And it has been really interesting to kind of transition to being in a place that I've never been to before and to being at a place where my area of expertise isn't quite as well known.

I got my job really late, actually. I was offered my job on June 20th, which is, you know, when I had already graduated. I was already starting to make plans of just trying to find something else. The back half of my search, I would fill out the application and then just try not to think about it anymore and focus on other things. I applied for it, but it wasn't something that I really thought much else about because it was a place I didn't know, a university I didn't know. So, [it helps] if you can kind of go in with the mindset of just, you know, “I'll put my application in and try not to think about it again.” I know that's impossible to do a lot of times when there's a job that you really want, or you think would be perfect. But there's that, and then also something that my

advisor, Senta Goertler, told me. She said, “If it's a job that you think you might not like, apply for it anyway because it might end up actually being something that you really want. Because what they put on the job description, sometimes it isn't exactly what you'll end up doing or what they really have in mind. Sometimes the person that writes it doesn't have clear communication with the people that are actually who you will be working with.” That helped too, because I thought I wanted one job but the job I ended up with was different in a lot of ways. But it turned out to be really, really great.

Charles Nagle

I got my Ph.D. in Spanish linguistics at Georgetown in 2014 and I went on the market twice. I applied to about 20-30 jobs each year. My first year, I had some phone interviews and two campus interviews but no offers. I was in the throes of the dissertation at that point. In the second year, I was more experienced and had finished the dissertation. I had many phone interviews and then multiple campus visits. I ended up receiving four offers. The situation in Spanish linguistics is a bit different because the demands of that job are different. So I was very lucky, but the job market, from my perspective, is a bit better now. There are more jobs now in Spanish linguistics, because in linguistics, they're saying that they want someone who does pronunciation, or corpus, or something. In Spanish, they say they want a linguist, period, a lot of the time. And a lot of the time it's, “We want someone who can help coordinate or direct a language program.” And so there's a wider pool of jobs that you can potentially apply to. That was my experience.

Luke Plonsky

For me, it was very nerve-wracking. I didn’t know what was going to happen. All I knew was I’m graduating and after I graduate, I don’t have a job. So my strategy was to cast the net wide, and I applied to probably 40-some jobs because I needed something to stick. And I happened to land in a place that was great.

My advice is to cast a wide net by searching very extensively for jobs, and then applying to jobs that might not be ideal. So I applied, even out of the Ph.D., for ESL teaching jobs. I applied for Spanish teaching jobs because I used to teach Spanish. I applied for, you know, language program coordinator jobs that I didn't necessarily want. I wanted to be in a research position, a research and teaching position, but I was open to other possibilities. But, I think, beyond the search itself, the biggest impact is going to come from what you do in the years leading up to the search. From figuring out who you are as a researcher, as a scholar… your professional identity. And, you know, from being active in conferences. Of course, trying to get manuscripts submitted before you graduate makes a huge difference, I think, in a successful job search as well.

I'd say, keep an open mind to different types of positions. And remember that your first position doesn't have to be your last.

The transition from student to professor, and finding balance

Jeffrey Maloney

In some ways I really am [still in the transition phase]. I feel like I started transitioning once I was on the job market and finishing up my dissertation, but there's still a lot of things to get used to. Like, there's nobody, no adviser that's emailing and telling me, "Hey, you need to get this paper done or that paper done." And I do kind of miss having a cohort, being able to go to class and everything. I miss having a group of people to discuss things with, because now, where I am, I'm the only person that does what I do. So if I want to speak to somebody about maybe a project that I want to do, I need to set up a Skype or Zoom interview with them.

It has been really interesting to transition to being at a place where my expertise in my area isn't quite as well known. I think if you're doing second language acquisition or even applied linguistics, it's easy to forget sometimes that we are a relatively small field. And when you're in grad school, you're surrounded by people that are interested in the same thing a lot of times. I mean, depending on the program, obviously, but that's been an adjustment as well, to be always mindful of needing to kind of explain and clarify exactly what it is that I do. And that's a change from being a graduate student to being a professional in the broader academic realm.

I think the most difficult thing was the uncertainty. Even though I had a job, I didn't know if I would like the job, on top of the fact that I was moving to an entirely new place. I mean, I've had some experience moving to grad school, but, you know, [this time] I had a family. For me personally, one of the biggest things was the desire to find a good place for our family to be. And what helped me get through that kind of uncertainty was reaching out to people at the university. Just contacting them and saying, you know, "I'm gonna be new. Can you share anything about X, Y, or Z?" Some people might shy away from that because they feel like they don't want to bother people. But for me, it worked out really well. The department chair went out and actually took pictures of possible places to rent, and I talked to a few of my potential colleagues about those kinds of things via email, and it helped to… what's the word? To assuage some of my fears and concerns, because I learned more about what was coming up.

I also emailed some of the people who had been teaching some of the courses that I was going to teach, and just asked them if they'd be willing to share maybe some of their syllabi or lesson plan materials and things. And it helped me get a better sense and understanding of what's being taught and how it's being taught.

Pavel Trofimovich

I think, the most difficult part was managing multiple demands of the job. As a graduate student, you have practically a one-track job, especially in the last stages of your dissertation: to finish

your thesis and successfully defend it. And if you apply for a job a little bit earlier, to go on the job market and be successful at that. But once you get a job, you suddenly have multiple responsibilities. You have to start preparing your courses, you have to start participating in administrative activities in your department, and, of course, the pressure to publish and perform in terms of research was pretty high. So managing all of that was difficult, and you sacrifice many parts of your life for work. You basically work six days a week, sometimes seven days a week, sometimes over the holidays.

It has become better [over time], and I'm actively working on it. It's work in progress, and, I think, for a lot of academics I know it is sort of a constant struggle to adjust your workload to your priorities, to things that are going on outside of work. But for me, having a family put quite a bit of a stop on extra compulsive work outside regular working hours, and then my daughter was born and that was a wonderful distraction. My tenure appointment was already processed when my daughter was born. So that put a natural stop to certain kinds of over and overwork activities that I had engaged in before.

Natasha Tokowicz

I remember distinctly the day this one more senior colleague of mine said, "It's going to be very important that it's clear what your independent work is, that you distinguish yourself with from other colleagues. What is your independent contribution?" And I think that's true for anyone. When you're going up for tenure, you have to really make sure what your clear contribution is, even if you collaborate with junior colleagues. What are you, as one of my senior colleagues puts, the world's leader in? What is your "X"? There have been instances where people go up for tenure and there's a question about whether other folks they collaborated with were carrying the load. Were they the masterminds behind the work? And no matter who was the first author, or who was senior author, or even if the collaborators were peers, were they the ones behind the work, or was the person who is up for tenure? And I think it's a real risk when you're coming up for tenure and the people don't know if it's your work or their work. So if you have a line of work at least, that is just you with your students, that makes it very clear. That's not to say you can't collaborate with anybody, but as long as you have stuff that's really yours, then people know, "Oh, that's hers." And I think that that's some of the best advice I got because nobody ever questioned that with me before.

I think the hardest part [of becoming a professor] was finding the right balance because I do think that there is a tendency for women to get saddled with a lot more service than men, and there's research... I do think it's hard to say "no" when you're asked when you are very junior, no matter your age. So, when you are a junior person, saying "no" is very difficult, and you may not always have someone on your side to help you say "no". Some departments are very good at protecting people's time early on. Some are less good about it, and I think some people, and I count myself in this group, care about certain causes and then want to get involved and want to help out. And so, I think that finding the right balance for yourself of helping with things and in saying "no" and saying "yes" can be challenging. And not doing too much at the expense of

getting your work done. And, I think, that is very tricky, and until very recently, I did too much at the expense of getting real work done.

Luke Plonsky

I've got three kids right now. Two of them were born during my Ph.D. studies. One was born, I guess, in year two of the Ph.D., and the second one was born about a month before I defended my dissertation. It was a crazy time. I kind of had the trifecta of a new baby, finishing the Ph.D.… No, four things: baby, finish a Ph.D., get a new job, and move across the country all within like two months of each other. *It was crazy*. So, yes, they were born during my studies and that introduced a whole new set of challenges.

Part of the thing for me is that, in terms of productivity, having kids kind of forces you to be more efficient. Because for me, it's not an option to not hang out with my kids. That's not negotiable. So it forced me to be done with work at a reasonable time. And I'm not saying that I did that doing my Ph.D., because I didn't have a lot of balance then, and I'm not saying that I necessarily have balance now, but I do enforce rules on myself. You know, I go home every day at five or five-thirty, and I don't work on the weekends. That shouldn't be anything worth mentioning, although I feel like in our academic culture that might be a little bit unusual, because it's normal to work at all hours.

There's never an end to the things that I want to do as an academic. And as somebody told me years ago, the "reward" for success in academia is more work. More things come your way, which is nice, but it does create tension with who you are as an individual, outside of work, and then the demands that come and the pressures from your professional life.

Finding a niche

Natasha Tokowicz

I really sort of fell into what I was doing. I, as an undergraduate, did not know what I wanted, did not know that I wanted to do what I'm doing now. It was by accident. I thought I wanted to do something related to clothing design or marketing. And that was what I was in school for, I was in an apparel marketing program.

It's very far [from linguistics]. It was a small school at the University of Massachusetts that no longer exists, actually. I went there and I was a double major in psychology. But when I took cognitive psychology from David Rosenbaum, I really loved it. It was at the same time that I was taking a class in my major, contemporary fashion analysis, which I really hated. It was very underwhelming. David was married to Judy Kroll, and when Judy needed a research assistant, she got my name from David, and Judy called me in my dorm one day, out of the blue, and asked me to be her research assistant, and the rest is history. So, she hired me and I started working

with her, which really meshed well with my Spanish minor that I was getting excited about (I studied abroad in Mexico and so on), and so then the rest is really history. Then I went to work with her for graduate school, and I really kind of just fell into what I do, because I didn't realize you could study this as a career, psycholinguistics, and bilingualism. When I found that out, I was like, "Wow, yeah, that's what I want to do!" So I dropped my other major and just went into psychology. And then Judy moved to Penn State, and I followed her for graduate school and then went from there. So that's how I ended up doing what I'm doing.

Luke Plonsky

I've sort of made research methods the bulk of my agenda, and I feel like that has, in some ways, allowed me to do work that's relevant to a lot of different people because everybody uses and needs research methods.

What I've also found is that there are a great need and a great interest in developing and advancing research methods in applied linguistics. We don't have a really strong history of research methodology. Very few people… actually, maybe nobody in the field would have called themselves a research methodologist, unlike [researchers in] sister disciplines, such as psychology and education that have entire journals and conferences [dedicated to research methods] every year, have doctoral programs in methods, etc. We don't have so much of that. And I think that's one aspect of my agenda that's perhaps somewhat unique.

I kind of came into it. I came into it via meta-analysis, because by applying meta-analytic techniques to a particular body of literature, I gained a kind of bird's eye view on that domain. And then, along with that, I started asking and coding the primary studies for methodological features. Then I sort of moved away from the substantive stuff towards more methodological, and then that got me asking what happens if I look at this feature across primary studies. And that's a big part of what I've been doing now for a number of years.

That is, I've been trying to analyze systematically almost everything. Trying to analyze a lot of what we do, looking at design elements as well as looking at instrumentation. My [SLRF plenary] talk tomorrow is going to be on instrumentation and measurement in SLA, looking at data analyses, looking at reporting practices, looking at sampling all these features systematically, and looking at everything as a way not to necessarily criticize what people have done, but rather to try to describe and evaluate. Then, to provide empirically grounded recommendations for how we can improve our research practices. And that I found exciting and interesting because I think there's a need for that greater level of awareness of our methods. And also, there are definitely certain areas that could benefit from improvement as well.

Mental health in academia, Impostor Syndrome, and the value of mentorship

Luke Plonsky

My experience is that pretty much everybody, I think, feels [like an impostor], or has felt it at some point because we are surrounded by really intelligent and skilled people. Nobody is in a Ph.D. program that isn't. Everybody here is smart. Everybody here, and there's always somebody who is better at something than you. And what feeds into it is that this all feels very high stakes, and it feels sometimes competitive. So all these conditions come together and push people to feel really insecure.

I still feel it sometimes, probably everybody does. I mean, in my case, in terms of my interest, which is quantitative research methods, there's no shortage of people who know way more than I do about a lot of the things that I care about. That can make you feel like you don't know as much as you should know. Or that you don't know the right things. One thing that helps is recognizing your successes along the way. So, if you're a Ph.D. student and you got here [Michigan State University], or you go into another Ph.D. program, you certainly were part of a really competitive pool. I know that's the case here [Michigan State University and] at Northern Arizona, my university, which is super competitive to get into as well.

So, if you made it through, then you should already know there are people here who believe in you. So that's one, and then yeah, enjoy the accomplishments along the way. If you made it, enjoy and recognize those accomplishments. If you made it through year one of a Ph.D. program, be proud of that. I remember, actually really clearly, thinking after year one that now I can do this. And that gave me the confidence to continue. I had also completed a study that I eventually published. All of that gave me the feeling that I really can do this. And yes, there are people who know more than I do, and they have some skills that I don't have—many skills that I don't have. But I still felt that I could do this by recognizing even the small accomplishments along the way.

Natasha Tokowicz

I think we all have [the Impostor Syndrome], to an extent. I actually was lucky enough in my work with the Women in Cognitive Science group. I headed that group for several years and I'm still an officer for the group. We had a speaker give a virtual presentation about the impostor phenomenon. But I also met her in person when she came to speak for another group that I'm part of the steering committee for (Women in Medicine and Science). Her name is Valerie Young and she wrote a book called "The Secret Thoughts of Successful Women: Why Capable People Suffer from the Impostor Syndrome and How to Thrive in Spite of It". The book talks about why people have these impostor feelings, and it very nicely takes you through the idea that, first of all, it's not just everyday people. Very successful people, actors, actresses, poets,

Nobel laureates. Everyone, people in business, not just people in academia, suffer from this, and that there are ways around it, and that there are certain steps you can take to help you get out of this feeling. I feel like I've learned a lot about it because we wrote it into some of our funding for Women in Cognitive Science. I guess, as much as I have had personal feelings about being an impostor, I also learned a lot by reading her book and hearing her speak and meeting her in person, and also meeting students who've talked about it with me, and presentations I've given about it and stuff like that. I ran a summer internship program for students from underrepresented groups and hearing them talk, too, about their issues surrounding that and thinking about it from these different groups, like women in academia, black women in academia, who have trouble. Or people from the LGBTQ+ community. Any groups like this, just think about how, if you belong to these marginalized groups, how much harder it might be, and how impostor feelings might come through, and reading Sonia Sotomayor's autobiography, how she had impostor feelings, as well.

Jeffrey Maloney

Prior to ever even considering grad school, I was suffering through a lot of depression, severe anxiety disorder, and other issues when I was an undergrad. I think it was connected to my upbringing, my background, but really the biggest part of it was struggling with feeling that I'm an actual competent human being. Thankfully, I was able to move past a lot of the depression and things, but I still have this anxiety that's always been with me.

When I started my Ph.D. program, I've been talking to my advisors after the fact, and kind of looking back and realizing that my biggest struggle was just grappling with overcoming my fears, of thinking that I am not competent in what I'm trying to do. And that led to a lot of anxiety. That led to a lot of almost panic attacks, and, you know, there were a few times when big papers were coming up and I felt like I was failing, where I would kind of feel myself slipping back into a depression. For a lot of students, I think, we feel like we have to shoulder these things alone. That, you know, is a problem with us.

And that's not true. What I have learned is, if you are not currently surrounded by people that you feel like you could share what you're struggling with, I would highly suggest that you find somebody, or some people, that you feel like you could. And I know that's a lot easier said than done. But I think the first place to start, even if you're not sure, even if you just think you might be having a bad weekend or something, would be to see what resources are available

So, for instance, when I was an undergrad, I went to the counseling center. When I was a Ph.D. student, I had very supportive advisors, I would say. And sometimes, I would just email and say, “Hey, can we talk?” And I would just sit down and say, look, this is what's going on. And oftentimes it had nothing to do with the quality of my work or the fact that I'm teaching. It would be things like, you know, I don't know how I'm going to do this. I don't know how I'm going to make it. I don't know if I'm capable. And I think that went a long way for me. But again, that can be a major hurdle for some people to open up about that. I think there's a big value in just finding

at least either a professional or someone who, you know, *cares about you*, or you think might care about you.

On "having it all together"

Jeffrey Maloney

For me, a big help was learning of, or seeing, other people who have had struggles in the past and recognizing that you're not alone in terms of support. But also, you're not alone in terms of your struggles. They may be unique to you, but they are not really unique to you, because a lot of people struggle, a lot of people have difficulties. Some of my best conversations have come from talking to somebody who I think has it all together, and then having them sharing a story about how they themselves went through [something difficult]. And now they're OK. It helps take the edge off a little bit.

Also, communicating that you are of worth and that you have a definite value [helps]. When I do a crap job, or I feel like I've done a crap job, it's very easy for me to equate that with "I'm crap", right? But this isn't the end of the world. This is normal. This is a learning process. And, I think, especially in graduate school, it's very easy to get this all-or-nothing kind of mentality. Like, I'm either *really* good at this, or I'm terrible and I need to quit. And I think that's where a lot of anxiety can come from. Because we're in such a high stakes environment, everybody around you seems to be doing amazing things. It's easy to forget that, and it's very easy to feel very lost too. It's very easy to feel like, oh, I should have this all figured out.

I'm here to say that I still don't have it figured out. I was interviewed for a podcast, and they asked me, "So, when did you know that you wanted to be a professor?" And I said, "The jury's still out". I am one now, thankfully, I'm very happy with it, but I am kind of just striving to embrace the fact that you may never really know. You'll never know if you're good or bad at it, but try to just do what you want to do, and that's worked out for me so far. I'm a huge fan of saying that.

Another big thing was being given permission to fail. I was ready to quit the Ph.D. once. I was ready to quit. I said, you know, "I'm never going to find a job. I can't do this dissertation. I'm not capable of it." I even had a discussion with my wife, and I said, "Look, I want to *die.* I can't do this anymore!" And, you know, thankfully, my lovely wife looked at me and said, "If that's really how you feel, quit. I will support you in that." And that meant the world to me, because I was just like, wow. It's really not the end of the world if I fail at this. Then I was like, oh, okay. You know, she gave me permission to fail, and, I think, sometimes we need to give ourselves that.

I think that would be very helpful [to have a more explicit conversation about that]. Many times, when you're with somebody who is so wrapped up in like "I have to get this right!", just say, "Yeah. Eventually. But it's OK right now if you mess up." Or even, "It's OK if this is not for you." Right? Because I think that's a much healthier outlook. And I think for me, that's actually

what made me finish. I had the permission to realize that if this isn't for me, I can *not* do it. And it's very easy to lose sight of that.

Pavel Trofimovich

What really bothers me is that sometimes I get an expectation from… Maybe it comes from me sometimes, but I see it as wrong, maybe from colleagues about students needing to be at the top of their game all the time. Proving themselves to be excellent students all the time. I think it's sort of a wrong message to send to students because everybody is allowed to have a downtime. Everybody is allowed to have a bad day. Everybody's allowed to have something happening in their lives around their academic work. So, just realizing that there is life outside and people may have just a bad day, or bad mood, or a bad encounter outside of the academic context that makes them underperform in a class or underperform in certain situations, we just should be very aware of that. So now, as professors and students, as colleagues and reviewers and editors, we should be aware that people are trying their best and people are allowed accommodations in certain situations. Nobody is perfect. People make mistakes and especially students. "I have an idea of what you can do, but it's ok that you didn't do it the way maybe you expected that you'd be doing or maybe you thought that I expected you to be doing. So, let's just keep talking and adjust our expectations, just keep communication lines going." There's a lot of pressure from all sides on students, in particular, younger individuals, younger faculty members to be absolutely on top of their game all the time and a little slip is unforgivable. And I think everything is forgivable because there are all kinds of things happening. Yeah, everybody is allowed to have a bad talk. Everybody is allowed to have a bad first draft of a paper. Everybody is allowed to not submit something on time but ask for an extension. That's normal, life happens in between. And what we're doing can wait.

Charles Nagle

We tend to catastrophize… I do this and I think probably a lot of people, grad students especially, are like, "Oh gosh, that was terrible!" But I see many talks and at the end of the day it's like, "That was an interesting talk." We're not thinking, people aren't thinking, "Oh my gosh what a disaster!" But you just think, "Oh, OK, I've seen that person give a better talk". It's not a big deal and we don't have to catastrophize all the time. Although I'm a catastrophizer.

On the "Publish or perish" culture

Do you think that the "publish or perish" statement that we see so often when we read Inside Higher Ed *advice, or the comments section on* Shit Academics Say*, is it real or is it some kind of a monster made up to scare graduate students?*

Charles Nagle & Pavel Trofimovich

CN: I don't think it's real. Or, rather, it's overstated. We don't have to look at publishing as this Mount Everest that we have to climb all the time. Check with the expectations of your institution and if research is a significant part of your job, then yes, you do need to publish for your job. But this "publish or perish" phrase that we bat about is scary and unnecessary, and there are wonderful people in the field that are going to help you be successful if you reach out to them. I have been fortunate to have many mentors, Pavel being one of them. That goes back to self-advocacy. Make those connections, reach out to people because, yeah, it's daunting if you're just thinking: "I'm in my vacuum and I've just got to publish and I'm not getting any feedback or have any interaction with my colleagues", which can be a reality for some people. That's going to stink. But if you reach out and advocate for yourself and make connections, I think you'll have a wonderful experience, frankly.

PT: I completely agree with you, Charlie. I think there is an expectation that you would be productive in your academic career early on in tenure, say, before the third-year review, and then going up to the tenure, but the amount of that productivity, the degree to which you are engaging in publication, can be all negotiated, first by checking the requirements from your unit specifically and then in conversations with colleagues, because there are many ways of becoming successful on your job. Through publishing is one way, but I think we can be successful through outreach activities, through student training, through mentorship activities. These are all things that go into research, and more and more units start valuing other kinds of things in your performance. And at some point, I think it's our responsibility now, as slightly more senior faculty members, to get engaged in promotion and tenure committees and actually change these expectations. I think this is our duty now not to subject new generations of researchers to this culture of "publish or perish".

CN: I think that's a bit of an old guard expression because I would never tell a colleague that or expect that. Of course, I'm at an R1 institution, so I would expect my colleague to do research, but that can mean a lot of different things. And there are a lot of different ways to be a successful academic researcher/teacher/otherwise. So again, that's part of the negotiation between who you are and your identity as a scholar and a professional, because that's not going to be the same for everyone and your institution. I would advocate against that strongly.

PT: I think it makes for a very good question by job applicants to the adjudicating committee or the review committee, when you're being interviewed, about what kind of scholarly activities are considered to be important and you can have an open-ended question or you can ask a very specific question. The move in the fields of applied linguistics, education, psychology is to make research findings accessible to wider audiences. Would your unit consider something as good scholarly activity, something along the lines of making your research accessible to ultimate users of your research, going to professional conferences, writing an accessible summary of your work, writing multiple entries for the conversation website where researchers are writing layperson summaries of their own work? I think, ultimately, it's a two-way street.

CN: And it's easy to advocate for that because it's codified in grants and things. The NSF, its broader impacts, it's everywhere in educational components. Yeah, I think it's easy to advocate for that.

PT: Some of these things can be expressed from both levels, both by younger researchers applying for jobs asking about what's happening in those institutions and making perhaps those individuals aware…

CN: …and look at the younger people that have come up and see what they've done. You need peer-reviewed top-tier publications, but whereas some scholars might say that's the only valid thing, I'd say no, you can have a mix. You can have a mix of practitioner-oriented publications and peer-reviewed journal publications, as long as you have a clear understanding of what your institution expects.

Natasha Tokowicz

It's sort of in the middle. I mean, it is absolutely true, if you've never published anything, you wouldn't make it. But at the same time, the people who make it through are obviously people who can write and do get things done. I don't think we should use terms like that to just freak people out. I prefer to have students just think about things, like when you finish something, you work on writing it up and then you move on to the next thing. And it is hard sometimes, because, especially for students who are trying to get milestones completed and move through a program at a reasonable time, it can be difficult, because they want to really move on to something else. But it's important to learn that before you move to the next thing, you complete something, and that's part of finishing your project.

Luke Plonsky

Definitely, because the stakes are high, and the bar is high. During the Ph.D. program here [at Michigan State University], I had great support and help in getting some of my papers submitted. And then afterward, I think I was kind of trying to follow the model of people that I saw that were doing really well, like Shawn Loewen and Sue Gass who were my advisors. I saw how they, you know, can sort of handle multiple projects at the same time, and I tried to model myself after them. Different people work in different ways, but the way I work is to have lots of different projects happening all the time. Getting my first couple of articles after I started my first position was really difficult. Just being in a new environment and having all kinds of new responsibilities, I found it hard to find time to write initially, and that did give me a little bit of stress. But then eventually, I found momentum. And between having a lot of really good collaborators and doing a lot of projects at the same time, I think I sort of found my footing.

There's a lot of self-imposed pressure because I, like many people, am drawn to research and I didn't know, and still don't quite know exactly, what is the right number of projects to be

working on at a given time. I think I still take on too much because I'm drawn to the projects. I think that's also a hard thing to learn actually--figuring out how much is too much.

Also, the danger of having too many projects is they might not ever be done even if you are drawn to be part of too many. They all might just sort of be inching along. At some point, you need to put all of your chips into one of them, get it done and move one to the next. That's a hard thing to figure out.

Future of applied linguistics: What can we do better?

Luke Plonsky

I worry a little bit about the status of the field in terms of our place and recognition among other disciplines. On one hand, we feel fairly established in that we have quite longstanding traditions of journals and conferences and Ph.D. programs that, in the aggregate, look like a dedicated discipline. But, at the same time, we're very much off the radar for not just the general public but even our colleagues in other social sciences. I feel like nobody knows we exist. We have done a good job of borrowing substantively in terms of theories and constructs, as well as methodologically, from other fields. But we haven't really been able to contribute back to them. And I think we have something to say. Applied linguistics has something to say in broader discussions that are happening in education, or psychology, or sociology, or anthropology.

So, I do feel like that's a weakness on our part, and I think, looking to the future, I'd like to see us have a place at the table with our colleagues across the social sciences. But that's kind of a big undertaking. I feel like there's a public awareness issue that we have not been able to address. I also think that's partly AAAL's [the American Association of Applied Linguistics] responsibility. Have you heard of "Science on Tap"? Bars all over the country, and maybe other countries as well, organize a kind of lecture series. They'll have people (researchers) lead a discussion on some of the research that they're doing currently. We could get involved in those kinds of events. Other possibilities are having a lecture series that is specifically targeted to the public, not for an academic audience. This is something the philosophy department [at NAU] does. And so, those kinds of events could help raise awareness of who we are and what we do.

[In terms of supporting new members of the community], I think that the classes and workshops on professional development do matter. In our Ph.D. program and at NAU, we have a one-credit professional development seminar every fall semester and every Ph.D. student takes it every year. The topic rotates from year to year from teaching to research and service. Every year, though, we discuss the job market. Things like that, or the professional development workshops that sometimes happen at AAAL. As I said before, I think that a lot of this stuff is unnecessarily mysterious. It doesn't need to be that way. And the workshops that are happening today here [at SLRF] … like Shawn Loewen's workshop on turning the manuscript into a published article. That kind of support is very valuable and makes a big difference. And I hope to see that continue.

Natasha Tokowicz

I do feel that we, as a field, are growing a little bit. I don't think we're growing too big, but I think we are growing. One of my main conferences is the Psychonomic Society, and they used to have membership only for faculty and that was very weird. And they kind of acknowledged that it was bizarre. One of the things that they did was they never had a registration fee for their conferences, it was just membership. So, if you were a member, that was it, you didn't have to pay registration and students could just come for free. And now they've decided to have a membership for graduate students. I think that actually, in a way, even though it costs them a little bit of money – and you don't have to pay every year but they could pay if they want to be part of society, coming to the conference and things like that. And I think, in a way, having societies that students belong to and can get notifications from, might actually be a way of welcoming students into a community. And SLRF is an interesting thing because it's a student-run conference. It's a very interesting beast because of this. It's not student-focused but it is student-led. But maybe it could have a nominal membership. Maybe you don't pay to be a member, but maybe it could have a belonging where people can claim: "I'm a member of this society". And that would be meaningful to them. And I think that could be a way of roping people in and getting more communication started. Maybe they'd have an easier time finding people to host if their members were students. I think it could be kind of an interesting way of bringing new people in. To say they were part of something. I think students like to feel part of a community and maybe they could have students coming up with different ideas of activities to do at SLRF.

Charles Nagle

We should reinforce this idea of helping one another and meeting people where they're at. So, it doesn't matter if you're the junior and this is your first presentation, or you're the most senior scholar in the world. Everyone should be treated with respect and helped where they're at. So, there are no hierarchies or seniority. And that also goes for people in teaching-oriented positions, research-oriented positions. No lip service to "teaching is as valid as research". It is. Practitioners have excellent insights. So, I just think bringing everyone to the table and trying to help everyone is the key. And I think we do that already, to a certain extent. But I think we can do better, personally.

Pavel Trofimovich

I completely agree with [Charles]. For me, it's sort of removing and breaking down silos that were created, in terms of seniority status, or in terms of experience, or in terms of work areas that we're engaged in. We're all here for one reason and being an editor of a journal sort of puts a very humbling perspective on things because we're here for one reason. We're here to try our best

at doing research and nobody's perfect. Everybody makes mistakes. So, senior people, junior people, mid-career people are all in the same shoes and we should be equally accessible to each other and equally helpful to each other. There shouldn't be any tier system: more senior researchers, junior researchers or mid-career researchers and then suddenly these people are inaccessible, and these are in editorial positions, they're gods. That's not the case. Everybody is in the same shoes. Editors are acting researchers. They're also publishing, they're also making the same mistakes and they're learning from reviews. So, just coming together and sharing these experiences is an extremely healthy activity for younger scholars to see that everybody gets rejected, and how more senior scholars are dealing with these rejections, and how they're dealing with the reviews. And maybe for senior scholars to get re-energized with the energy of junior scholars and their optimism and enthusiasm for future work. Everybody should be approachable, and everybody should be there for each other's benefit. It's not a class system.

On writing

Natasha Tokowicz

[At the beginning of my career], I suffered from a common misperception that you need large chunks of time to write. That is a big problem that a lot of people have, and I actually give a presentation on writing productivity. And a lot of other people tell me: “Yes, you need huge chunks of time to write”, and you don't have them when you're a faculty member. We just don’t have the luxury of a lot of time. And so, if you believe that you need five hours in a row to be able to write anything, you will not get anything done. If you can get over that feeling, you'll be more productive. I kept waiting until I had a schedule where I had large chunks of time to work on writing projects. And that took till summer one year and, well, you can't just only write for four months. You won’t have enough papers. And then they'll come back, and you have to revise them, and you will only write in the summer. So I think that it's really good if you can appreciate the fact that you have little pockets of time throughout the day and can sit and work on things, and the more you work on writing regularly, as a regular part of your daily habit, the better you will be at it, and you'll get a lot done. I think that's something that not everyone appreciates, students, or faculty, or postdocs, or whoever. And that's something that I took a little while to come to. That's why it was a little slow in and then I started getting stuff done. That was important for me to learn.

The only other thing related to writing that I can think of is that a lot of people use outlines, and I've read that outlining is detrimental to creativity. So that's one thing, but I've never used outlines, I hate outlines. I've never been able to do it. I have witnessed in my students’ writing, the people who started with an outline give these very linear outline-like papers that have no transitions. And I wish they hadn't written an outline. You get stuck in this very rigid sort of flow. If I do something that requires an outline, I just write the thing and then derive an outline from it. But yeah, I have read a little bit of literature that says that outlining is just detrimental to

writing creativity. And not necessarily in creative writing but being able to put things together in a meaningful way in scientific writing stuff.

Charles Nagle

Write thirty minutes a day [is the type of advice I found not helpful]. And I know that the spirit of that is to be working on your research actively. But what I think people sometimes take away from that is "if I don't do that, I'm somehow not a valid scholar" or "if that one model doesn't work for me, that means I'm doing something wrong". And no, it doesn't. I don't write 30 minutes a day – it doesn't work for me. I have developed a research model that works for me. Maybe you write two times a week for three hours, and if that works for you – great. That's what I would say. Maybe you disagree with that.

Luke Plonsky

I remember that Silvina Montrul came here to campus [when I was a Ph.D. student]. I was talking to her and was like, "Silvina, how in the world do you publish at the rate that you do?" And I think she said she writes every single day, even if just a little bit. That is not my strategy.

I recognize that works for some people, but the way I work… Some people would call it 'binge writing'. But I prefer to call it 'burst writing'. Sometimes, I will spend weeks, maybe months, without writing, but when I do write it's usually for short and very intense periods of time. I write out larger chunks of manuscripts—or even entire manuscripts—in just a week or two.

[If this isn't working], I would try and design a program that would maybe force you to write, at least, differently and hopefully more. There are lots of programs that people would describe, like blocking out periods of time, or just closing your email, or building the writing time in your schedule, or writing really sloppy and then just trying to not worry about it but just get something down. I mean that's another strategy that can work but figuring out some kind of plan that will enable you to get the writing done.

On helpful and unhelpful advice

Is there any kind of advice that you have often heard as a graduate student or as a faculty member but actually found not to be helpful? You know, this type of thing that you would like to exterminate from the minds of people?

Natasha Tokowicz

There is one, I don't know if it's common, but one piece I did get that I ultimately was unhappy with – and I don't know if people commonly say this – but I did get a piece of advice that I later

regretted taking. I wanted to take a grant proposal and submit it to multiple agencies at the same time and was told not to do that. I was told, "Well you should just write something different if you can", and I ultimately didn't have anything different to write, but I hadn't submitted it to the other place. I should have just submitted the same thing to the other place. I really regretted not doing that. I think it's OK if you have two similar things, and they expect this. They actually asked about it at some funding agencies. I think if you have two things, if you have two places where something could go, and you have something similar, it's OK, as long as you acknowledge it if you get offered funding from both places. If you tell them, then you can negotiate that, and I know that my advisor has done that before.

What's the most helpful piece of advice you've ever received?

Charles Nagle & Pavel Trofimovich

CN: I just thought of it and it came from a friend. Well, I guess I have two. One is a practical research thing: you can only be innovative one way at a time, which is really a way of saying focus on your message, pick a central message and make sure that that message is conveyed throughout the publication, whatever it is, whatever scholarly product you have. So that would be the research piece. And I think, it's not a piece of advice, it's just general mentorship. If I'm upset about something or disappointed, I reach out to Pavel or I reach out to people to help. We all have to buffer our ego a little bit sometimes and say: this is hard. And I need a support system and sometimes I just need somebody more senior in a different position than me to say: "Don't worry about it, or this is very good feedback or bad feedback". So it's like a thousand little acts of kindness that can't be quantified into one piece of advice. But to me that's everything.

PT: You're articulating something that's on my mind all the time. We're all in it together for one reason – to make a difference in people's lives at some level through research, through outreach, through different things, so we're all very similar. We should be connecting to each other, helping one another. Everybody goes through all these very similar experiences, regardless of whether you're a senior, junior or mid-career scholar. Just stepping over this idea that maybe people have different kinds of experiences and thinking: no, actually, everybody is in it for the same reason and probably experiencing the same things, and that puts everybody on the same playing field and makes it so easy to talk to anyone, regardless of your research area. I guess, for me, the two pieces of advice that I got before a job application and job search were… my advisor told me, when you go on a campus visit, always remember that it's not only them evaluating you, it's you evaluating them as well. So try to actually make a choice of whether you see yourself working among these people in this institution, looking at how people interact with each other. Do you see yourself for the next three, four, five years, minimum, staying in this institution, working with these people? Make a choice in there. And then another thing, I think, she told me was trying not to fit yourself into some other people's visions of yourself. So, if the job is searching for one kind of individual and they're interviewing you with the idea of whether you would fit some other idea of what you can do, do not accept a job where you're going to be pigeonholed into doing something that other people would like you to do, because you will never

survive that job. It's better to come upfront immediately and say, well, by getting me for this job, you're getting this, this and this, but I'm sorry, I would not be able to do this, because this is not me, I don't have expertise, I need to get a little bit more training or more mentorship, or more experience working with somebody else, because these jobs, never in my experience, never work when they're looking for somebody else. When the fit is not perfect and staying in a job that you ultimately hate is going to be only to the detriment of everybody – you and the people hiring you – because you're going to leave anyway. You're not going to last.

CN: And that's the self-advocacy and the idea that we're not just passive agents being moved through these things. We can make choices and we can empower… Really, it's just empowering ourselves to make choices and to assert our positions, rather than seeing ourselves as "oh, I'm just a grad school student" or "I'm just an early career scholar". That's valid. You're a grad student. You've gotten a Ph.D.; you've gotten a job, you've published. Seeing ourselves as intellectually valid [is important], I think.

Remembering Kimi Nakatsukasa

Dr. Kimi Nakatsukasa was born in Kyoto, Japan, and she completed her bachelor's degree at Sophia University in Japan. In 2006, she completed her Master's degree at Georgetown University. She joined the Second Language Studies program at Michigan State University in 2006, and completed her doctorate, entitled *Efficacy of gestures and recasts on the acquisition of L2 grammar*, in 2013 under the supervision of Shawn Loewen; Susan Gass, Debra Hardison and Paula Winke also served on her dissertation committee. Her dissertation was one of the few studies to combine nonverbal behavior with corrective feedback research, and she pushed the boundaries even further by designing a quasi-experimental study that investigated the effectiveness of combining gestures with oral corrective feedback on English past tense and locative preposition.

After completing her doctoral degree, Kimi worked as an assistant professor at Texas Tech University from 2013 until the time of her death. Kimi's interest in gestures continued after graduation, and in 2017 she and Gale Stam co-founded the AILA Research Network on gesture, multimodality, and SLA.

In 2017, she married Johannes Dahl, also a professor at Texas Tech. Their son, Alain, was also born in 2017. In addition to her academic work, Kimi was well-known for her love of French food, yoga, and photography, and she loved to share her interests with her friends on social media. Kimi leaves behind friends and family around the world, and she will be sorely missed.

Shawn Loewen,
Director of the Second Language Studies program
Michigan State University

In lieu of a bio, I will share a couple of memories that are so very Kimi.

Kimi had a way of making me feel stupid in the best possible way. Whenever I felt wronged by the world (that could be a conference rejection or a driver cutting me off), her response would almost without fail begin with "maybe". Maybe they were just not ready for your abstract. It's really good. Maybe the person's cat is sick. That's why they were driving so fast. This positive outlook encapsulates Kimi for me. Her go-to response was always the most empathetic and optimistic one. Kimi knew what mattered in life, and as dedicated as she was to her profession, she was just as dedicated to being kind and helpful and, simply, good. Something else that we will always remember about her is the value she placed on beauty. Not for some superficial reason, either. She always said that beautiful things make people happy. This extended to all areas of her life. Her macarons were without a doubt the most immaculate – I was once treated to a whole tub of her "failed attempts" (delicious). But it did not end there. I saw her obsess for days (maybe weeks) over all those cat-themed tasks she used in her dissertation, which will forever be the prettiest ever created. That and so much more was our Kimi, the most beautiful creation of all.

Dominik Wolff,
Assistant Professor of Languages
West Chester University

When we sent out a call for volunteers for the SLRF Mentorship program, Dr. Kimi Nakatsukasa was one of the first faculty members to sign up as a mentor. When we asked if she would be willing to be interviewed as well, she also agreed without hesitation. We agreed upon a 15-minute-long interview but ended up talking for half an hour, just because she wanted to share as many insights as possible to help graduate students and other young professionals navigate their academic path. We were transcribing her interview when we heard the tragic news, and it was immediately clear that we needed to publish this interview separately. Dr. Shawn Loewen, her dissertation advisor, volunteered to write an introduction, and her friend, another SLS alumnus, Dr. Dominik Wolff shared a few memories that, as he put it, are so very Kimi. All we could do was to do our best to make you hear Kimi's soft voice and see her smile while reading her interview.

Irina Zaykovskaya
Curtis Green-Eneix

- You are now an accomplished professional, but it probably didn't happen overnight. Could you walk us through your journey from graduate school to where you are now?

I started my Ph.D. in Second Language Studies in 2006 and graduated in 2013. It took some time for me, because there were things happening in my family – my grandma passed away – so I left the program for a little bit and then came back. It was really nice that my friends and professors helped me get through the program, and when I was finishing my dissertation, I got an offer from Texas Tech. I made really good progress on my dissertation, because without it I couldn't go to Texas. I wasn't sure if Texas was the right place for me, because I was worried it was too conservative, but now I'm happy there. I actually tried to go to a different university. I took a job in Japan, but I really missed the academia in the U.S. and being able to collaborate with the people in the U.S., so I left that job in Japan and came back to Texas Tech University.

- Do you remember what the job market was like in the year you were applying, approximately how many jobs did you apply to?

According to the Excel file that I created as a Ph.D. student, I applied to 15 schools and got two Skype interviews and one interview at the MLA conference, and I got two campus visits. They both happened to be in Texas and I chose Texas Tech. Job-market-wise, I think it's tough. I

taught both Japanese and ESL, so that made me a little bit more versatile in terms of the schools that I could apply to. But I mostly focused on North America, although applied to some schools outside the US and Canada too.

I applied to jobs in ESL, just because there were more available on the market, but the position that I got was not ESL. I'm a coordinator of a Japanese language program and I am also teaching applied linguistics courses. But I don't teach Japanese, just coordinate a program. It's a different duty. Coincidentally, when I was TAing in the SLS program, I was helping manage students coming from Korea and other places. They were in a special program, and that coordination experience helped me to coordinate a Japanese language program, too. I didn't expect that when I was doing it, but, retrospectively, I feel like that experience really helped me.

- What advice do you give your graduate students when they go on the job market?

I have a couple pieces of advice because I've been on several search committees. Finding a job reminds me a bit of online dating. If your profile is really generic and if you keep sending the same messages to everyone – we notice that you're canvassing. Canvassing is noticeable, so I recommend tailoring your letters. Also, if you get an interview, I recommend doing your homework: investigate what kind of research support projects are happening at the university and what areas people are working in. You need to advertise why it's good for them to have you, so I highly recommend doing your homework. And if at the Skype interview you're good, that's good – but I think it's getting more and more competitive, so you really need to show that you're the best candidate for the program. I recommend working on that, even at the stage of a Skype interview. At my university, getting that through a Skype interview was a bit more difficult. I'll explain. We had about 40 applications for one position and chose 12 people for Skype interviews. That part was easy. But to choose three people for a campus visit after the Skype interview was a lot more difficult. It's funny, but even during a Skype interview we can feel the passion, when a person is really excited and wants to be here as opposed to someone whose attitude is: "I'm from a strong program and you can take me if you'd like to." We can feel the attitude behind the camera. So I recommend showing your excitement, why you really want to be with this particular school and what you can do with the other people in the department.

- Would you invite such an enthusiastic person for an interview, even if they're a less than perfect fit on paper?

Yes, I think so. A number of publications is important, but at least at our university we looked at whether the person had even some record of publications, it showed that they know how to publish – and they can publish after being hired. If it was zero, we thought of it as a bit more of a problem, but if there's anything at all, it shows that the person is actually trying to do research. We became a research university recently, and so pressure to do research is quite heavy from the upper administration. So if there is some sign that you're trying to publish, or you have published, then it's OK. I don't think we expect lots and lots of publications from someone who is just finishing their Ph.D. program.

– How did your own transition to being a professor go? What was the most challenging part of it?

I think I made a big mistake when I first started teaching. One of my weaknesses was that I thought that because these were graduate students, they all must love research, so I started assigning all these readings and the students were lost. My evaluations were really low in my first semester. The students were very intelligent – they were Master's students, and many of them wanted to be language teachers, although some of them were already considering PhDs, – but they didn't really see the relevance of these articles, and that's not something I really thought about beforehand. So now I try to get to know the student population first: what they are looking for and if they understand that SLA is important for language teaching. Then they will really enjoy it. But I had to work more on making the connection between the actual practice and the research part of it. Now I can really say: even if you're a language teacher, if you can't really test if your teaching is working, you can't really assess it, so let's look at some experimental studies. I think they are more convinced then to do the reading and why they need it.

– What about the balance between teaching, research, administrative work?

At Texas Tech, the first one or two years your administrative duties are pretty low, because you're being protected. The department has a rule that junior faculty members shouldn't do too much service, which really helps. We also had a reduced teaching load in the first year or so – we only had to teach one course. That made me get used to the environment. I also didn't know how much time I had to spend to teach a graduate level course, because I had never done that before. I used to spend a whole week just preparing for the course, but then eventually I started feeling that if I did that, I had zero research time, and I started balancing them a little bit. But it was a pretty gradual process, to find out the balance between research and teaching.

– How did you create your life there? Because when you came there, you probably knew next to no one and it was a new place.

The first year or two were really difficult, because it's not a big city and I don't meet new people easily. When you're a graduate student, you can make friends very easily, because you have the structure for that and you meet with them pretty much every day, and they have the same mentality, so it's easy. But the first two years for me were difficult. There were also a couple of other new hires in that year, but they all came with families, and I was the only one that was single – and many other people in the department were rather more senior, so I couldn't find a person I could get connected to. It wasn't easy, but I did meet a few people during the new faculty orientation and then started to get to know people outside the department. Also, some people in the department hosted social events and I tried to attend those events as much as I could, and I got to know people inside and outside the department and that helped.

– Let's talk about the infamous "publish or perish" idea. Because we see this phrase a lot. We see it in academic columns, on "Shit Academics Say" and all those places. But is this something real or is this more of a monster that now exists to scare graduate students?

I think it's it really depends on what you want to do. If you go to a university that pushes research, if you don't have a certain number of publications, you don't get tenure. So there is some truth to that, but mostly at universities that push research. There are also different levels. If you go to a university that is really strong, maybe they push research more. If not, it's less so, and if you go to a teaching college, they focus more on teaching. I think some SLS alumni are in colleges that focus more on teaching, so their push to publish is less compared to research schools. If you go to the industry, like ETS, maybe they also worry less about publications. So you can choose what you want to do. If you like research and you want to publish, a research institution is good, but if you want to get connected to actual teachers, a teaching college is better. So I think it's there, but not for everyone.

– You were an international student and now are an international and non-native speaking professional here in the United States. How was this experience different for you?

When I was an Ph.D. student, I had a Japanese kind of mentality, where I first needed to get approval from someone to do something. So, when I was a first-year student, I didn't go to any

conferences, because none of the professors told me: "Your project is good, and you should go to a conference." Then I submitted my annual report to the program director and I got feedback from the program, saying: "Kimi, you must attend conferences." That told me that even though I was not praised or given approval to go, I could still submit a paper to a conference. That's something I learned, needing to be active and not just waiting for permission all the time. It's something cultural that I learned when I was a student. When I got the job, I noticed that people think that I'm approachable, because, being Asian, I tend to look younger than my real age, and because I'm female. This is nice, because I got connected to the students more, but maybe I became too approachable. I needed to learn to set boundaries – and that's not something I was used to. So that's something I'm still working on. You have to earn respect, but you need to be nice, because as a junior faculty member, you go up for tenure and you can't become a mean person. But I do think sometimes you need to stand up for yourself – and that's not something I do naturally, so I'm still trying to learn it. I think it's really important.

– How did having a child change your balance?

I think it brought a lot of positives in my life, because when I was single, research was something I had to do and I kind of lost the passion for it a little bit. It was something that was required and it was a bit like eating chocolate every day and forgetting how good it tastes. But after I had a child, I also started developing my identity as a mom – and there are a lot of things you have to do as a mom! So, at home, I am 100% mom, because my son is currently two and I can't do any work at home. I was able to get modified duty instruction right after I gave birth. I'm teaching two courses a semester, but they could waive one of them. I had grant money, so I used it to do a course buyout so I could stay at home, but I decided to go to school once a week to do some of the research. It turned out that I really missed it and that was the moment I realized that I actually am a researcher, so now I am learning how to do things more efficiently. It's really nice, because at home I have family and at work I can do research.

I think you get kind of burned out, even when you're in a graduate program, because there are deadlines and you just have to keep pushing, and pushing, and pushing – and that was something I was feeling when I was starting my job, too. All of a sudden, I had to teach, and then I had to write and I was questioning why I was doing all that. Being a mom really made me realize that I actually enjoy it and it's really fun, so now I enjoy it more.

– What was the most useful and helpful piece of advice you have ever received?

I can't pinpoint who told me this, but I think it's important to remember that we are very strong. Maybe it's the Asian education system – but maybe you can also relate to it – if you get 90 out of 100, you are asked why you only got 90. So I always felt like I wasn't good enough. "Of course, you can get 100, right?" I think it's cultural. We don't do a lot of positive reinforcement in Japan, in our education, so I think it was ingrained in me, and I never thought that I was good enough. I also think that it doesn't help to be humble. It's nice to be humble, but I think it's also important to keep in mind that you actually finished college – which only about 10% of the world population has done – and even went to a master's program – so that's more like 3% of the world. That means you're actually a very strong person and you have lots of capabilities. I just try to keep reminding myself: "I got this, I got this, I got this." And I'm not Sue Gass, but I'm capable of doing things and that's something I keep telling myself.

– What do you think about the future of the SLA community? Not in terms of research agenda, but what could we do better as a community to grow and to welcome new colleagues more efficiently?

As a field, I think it's getting more and more interdisciplinary. I went to talks at SLRF and I saw a lot of presenters cite works outside the typical SLA studies. I think collaborating with people from different areas is really important. I'm currently working on a project with someone in psychology, someone in phonology and someone in computer science, and that is really bringing our expertise together – and we can do some novel stuff together. So, I think that being interdisciplinary is important. As for graduate students… I don't know how to make this happen, but I think it's really important to know what's happening behind their CV. When you look at someone's CV and see a publication, you can say that they applied to this one journal and were accepted, but it's not like that. Before that, you go to one publisher and get rejected. You revise, send it somewhere else and get rejected. And I think it's the same with grant money: while it looks like you got this big grant in one shot, it actually usually takes several attempts. I think knowing the story behind the CV is helpful.

There's a group that Kazuya Saito created on Facebook where we share our publication process. At the first glance, it looks like there's one journal, one article, a very clean process, but someone actually submitted to six or seven journals to get there, and you know that the process isn't really as easy as it looks on a CV. It really encouraged me – I thought I was failing because

I didn't make it into the journals I submitted to initially, but I saw that it was OK, because others were also struggling, and we're all doing the same thing. It really empowered me. Some community like that for graduate students would be helpful, and I also think the mentorship program that you have [here at SLRF] is really good. It was really helpful for me to have a mentor. Shawn Loewen was my advisor, so I still consider him a mentor, but I have other mentors for different purposes. I have someone else who has managed being a mom and being in academia, so when I have that kind of question, I can go to her. I have multiple layers of mentorship and I think it's really important to have someone outside the department – and outside the institution, too, – because there are politics in every department and you might doubt whether a particular person is good to talk to about an issue, not knowing what will happen as a consequence. I think it's good to have someone like that, because they usually bring a new perspective and show you how things work. At Texas Tech, we have a thing called the Women's Writing Group. People from any discipline meet for three hours a week, we write together, and 30 minutes are devoted to discussing productivity, or departmental issues, or other things you want to share. It's a safe space, it stays there, doesn't go out. A community like that after someone gets a job, I think, is also helpful. Even current students or classmates can be a part of the community.