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Decolonising the teaching of English in Ukrainian secondary schools

Understanding teachers' perceptions of English and promoting teacher professional development and well-being

Ursula Lanvers, Tetyana Lunyova, Louisa Field, Rachel Wicaksono and Maryna Zuyenko

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UL: Ursula Lanvers

TL: Tetyana Lunyova

LF: Louisa Field

RW: Rachel Wicaksono

MZ: Maryna Zuyenko

SC: Steve Copeland

AS: Alison Sharpe

ED: Ellen Darling

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Visualisation: Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work

About the authors

Ursula Lanvers is Professor of Language Education at the University of York, UK. She has published widely on language learner motivation, language policy and equity in language education. Before she joined the University of York, she worked at the Open University and the Universities of Durham, Exeter and Plymouth. She completed her first degree at the University of Muenster in Germany in French, History and Education studies and her PGCE at the University of Oxford.

Tetyana Lunyova is Associate Professor at the Department of English and German Philology at Poltava V.G. Korolenko National Pedagogical University. She holds her doctorate in English Linguistics from Kyiv National Linguistic University. She has been teaching ESOL and ESOL methodology to pre-service teachers and providing CPD to in-service teachers of English in Poltava, Ukraine. She has published on language policies in Ukrainian education and CPD for Ukrainian university lecturers.

Louisa Field recently obtained her PhD from the University of Sydney, Australia. Her thesis examined Australian students' motivation to study foreign languages in a secondary school and tertiary context. Louisa's undergraduate degree was in secondary teaching and she worked as a French language and history teacher before beginning her postgraduate studies. Louisa's recently published article examined the effectiveness of government policies to improve participation in 'Priority' Asian languages in New South Wales, Australia.

Rachel Wicaksono is Professor of Education at the University of East London, UK, where she is Executive Dean of the School of Childhood and Social Care. She is the co-editor (with Christopher J. Hall) of *Ontologies of English: Conceptualising the language for learning, teaching and assessment* and co-author (also with Chris) of the British Council-funded *Changing Englishes: An Online Course for Teachers* (changingenglishes.online/). She completed her first degree at the University of Oxford in English Language and Literature. Her Master's and Doctorate are from the Institute of Education, University College, London.

Maryna Zuyenko has been Director of the Education and Research Institute of Foreign Languages since 2024, and Professor of the English and German Philology Department of Poltava V. G. Korolenko National Pedagogical University, Poltava, Ukraine since 2022. She is the director of the Academic English Centre at Poltava V. G. Korolenko National Pedagogical University. She has published numerous articles in English philology (English literature mostly) and methods of teaching English. She is an organiser of the conference 'Contemporary English Research Discourse' for students, postgraduates and teachers, for which Universitat de Vic Universitat Central de Catalunya is a co-organiser.

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Executive summary

This teacher-training project for teachers of English in Ukraine is situated within three interrelated contexts:

a. the ongoing Russian aggression against Ukraine and disputes around the use of Ukrainian and Russian languages

b. the agenda of decolonising English teaching

c. supporting female teachers of English in their self-efficacy and professional well-being.

In this summary, we present the context, methodology and significant findings.

The intersection of these three issues is especially pertinent today as decolonised conceptualisations of English are not part of the current agenda in teaching English in Ukraine. However, as Ukraine moves towards westernisation and Englishisation, the danger arises that one form of linguistic colonisation replaces another if the traditional pedagogy of teaching English as a monolithic language is adopted uncritically. The year 2016 was declared 'the Year of English Language' in Ukraine and substantial funds were allocated for the training of English language teachers (Roberts et al., 2019), and compulsory tests in English for all public servants were announced in Документ 3760-IX in 2024 (Верховна Рада України, 2024).

In addition, there is a tension between incentives to provide more support to the Ukrainian language, on the one hand, and to elevate the status of English in Ukraine, on the other. Furthermore, in Ukraine, the teaching profession is extremely gendered (i.e. nearly 100 per cent female), and especially so for language education. Female teachers report benefiting from professional development to a lesser extent than their male counterparts. Consequently, the project focused on female school teachers.

The project had three aims:

1. to research what female secondary school teachers of English in Ukraine think about decolonised ways of teaching English
2. to enhance teachers' self-efficacy in teaching English
3. to develop teachers' perceptions and thinking about delivering English teaching in a decolonised manner.

A group of five academics from Ukrainian and UK universities developed a bespoke continuing professional development (CPD) programme delivered via Zoom to teachers of English in Ukraine. This programme was called *DEEP – DEcolonising English teaching Pedagogy* (sites.google.com/york.ac.uk/deep/home).

Delivery via Zoom needed to be sensitive to the context of war and teachers' intermittent access to electricity. For this reason, we moved more content from synchronous sessions to an asynchronous self-study area, thus shortening the meeting times, and ensuring laptop batteries could cope.

Using connections from Poltava V.G. Korolenko National Pedagogical University and the British Council in Kyiv, we recruited 90 participants from the Poltava area in a randomised control trial design. Control participants were also given the opportunity to engage with the CPD content. The phases of delivery were:

1. pre-intervention data collection on issues pertaining to decolonised teaching principles and teacher self-efficacy
2. intervention delivery
3. post-intervention data collection. For pre- and post-intervention data, we used both a tailor-made questionnaire and focus groups.
4. opportunity for control participants to study the materials.

While all qualitative results suggested a positive change in respect of all the aims, quantitative results show only a significant pre-post difference in respect of valuing diverse Englishes. Participants relished the opportunity to be involved, and felt the programme was a welcome change from the (in Ukraine, more typically delivered) authoritative and teacher-centred style. Participants experienced the DEEP materials and workshops as mind-opening and stimulating. In sum, several aims to change perceptions about teaching English were achieved; most importantly the aim of increasing the teachers' self-confidence in their mastery of English. Teachers also expressed the desire to participate in similar future activities, and have more teaching materials they might use in class which address the ideas congruent with decolonisation. Teachers especially liked materials about World Englishes that they might use in class themselves: the team therefore expanded these materials. Participants very much appreciated the flexibility of the academic team and the opportunity to be a part of an international project.

The DEEP project continues in a number of ways: the DEEP website (sites.google.com/york.ac.uk/deep/home) now has all the materials and recordings of the workshops as open access, and a follow-on Impact Acceleration UKRI-funded project ensures that from September 2025, the content will be available to all teacher trainers of English in Ukraine.

The team learned about the difficulties faced by teachers currently operating in a country ravaged by war and also explored possible solutions. One positive psychological aspect of the programme for our participants was that it was a meaningful and valuable diversion. Our participants also appreciated the flexible approach to delivering the content (having workshops and focus group slots to choose from), and the variety of synchronous and asynchronous contact. In sum, both the research and pedagogical aims were achieved, and the data analysis and the participants' feedback showed a pathway for further CPD in the area of decolonised language teaching.

Results also suggest that longer and more intense engagement with issues around pluricentric conceptions of languages would yield still better results. Regarding future directions for research, we suggest a stronger focus on (de)colonised conceptualisations of the learning and teaching of English in contexts where English has never been a colonial language.

1

Introduction

Background

This project, combining Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and research, is a contribution to the growing research agenda of decolonising language teaching and specifically, an extension to an earlier project that was also funded by the British Council (Hall & Wicaksono, 2024b).

The project responds to the challenges of teaching English in Ukraine in the context of:

1. decolonising language teaching (Kramsch, 2019)
2. the continual struggle, politically and linguistically, to emancipate Ukraine from Russian dominance
3. supporting a predominately female, undervalued and overburdened English teaching staff.

In the current challenging Ukrainian context, including the dual emphasis on validating both Ukrainian and English, one concern is that attempts to teach English in a decolonised manner may remain overlooked and/or poorly understood, leading to a disconnect between a rapid increase of teaching English on the one hand, and somewhat anachronous pedagogies, espousing dated models of language standards, on the other. Furthermore, the emphasis on English could impede the validation process of Ukrainian, a concern recently voiced by the language ombudsman in Ukraine (Кремінь, 2023).

To date, the agenda of decolonising language teaching, first and foremost English, while being very present in the Western sphere of academia, has not entered academia and the pedagogy of language teaching in Ukraine. However, this perspective offers both teachers and learners of English the potential to view language learning in a more liberational, emancipatory way, as well as the potential for teachers to experience higher self-efficacy in *their* use of English, rather than adhering to native speaker norms: appropriating the target language for the users' purpose is a core principle of decolonised language teaching. The intervention we created aimed to address these areas.

The problem statement

The potential danger of bringing a new form of linguistic colonialism via Englishisation efforts remains largely unnoticed by educators and scholars in Ukraine. There is a danger of propagating outdated conceptualisations of English, which rely on native-speaker and Inner Circle standards (Hall & Wicaksono, 2020).

Decolonisation of language teaching harbours opportunities for improving teachers' professional confidence in that non-standard varieties are acknowledged and accepted, and non-native teachers of English are not undervalued. As teachers' low confidence in their linguistic ability and language teacher anxiety (Kim & Kim, 2004) can be alleviated, their professional well-being can be promoted. Thus, the context described above offers an opportunity to enhance the professional well-being of the female staff teaching English in Ukraine.

Objectives of the study

The project has the following objectives:

- to help raise female secondary school teachers' awareness of the variable and dynamic nature of global and local Englishes
- to enhance female teachers' self-confidence in their English and alleviate language teacher anxiety
- to help teachers move towards more decolonised professional practice
- to help teachers develop learning and teaching strategies relevant for their local needs and contexts
- to positively influence their feelings of professional self-efficacy and well-being
- to equip teachers with custom-tailored teaching materials
- to facilitate sharing materials and decolonising approaches among the teaching community
- to reach policymakers with recommendations on supporting the decolonised teaching of English in Ukraine.

2

Literature review

In the following, we expand on the three core conceptual aspects of this project: the position of English in Ukraine; the conflict between the Ukrainian and Russian languages; and specific challenges of the female teaching workforce.

The position of English in Ukraine

Ukraine joined the Bologna process in 2005 (Nikolaeva, 2015), taking steps to ensure the comparability and standards of its higher education qualifications and is committed more than ever to westernise and anglicise its education systems. In 2016, then President Poroshenko declared 'the Year of English' (Ukrinform, 2015). Accompanying efforts to improve the nation's capabilities in English were officially lauded but their effect remains undocumented. In the 2010s, governmental attempts to make a threshold competency in the language a requirement for key professions (such as law, medicine, civil service) were abandoned due to lack of proficiency in the target population (Bilaniuk, 2022).

In recent years, the Government has increased efforts to improve both proficiency in and use of English. The constitution of Ukraine and a 2019 law specifies that the learning of languages, especially English, should be for the benefit of international communication, supporting the rationale to learn the most powerful lingua franca globally to date (Bilaniuk, 2022). For academic and scientific publications, English and other languages of the European Union are mentioned as desirable.

In June 2024, the Government signed a law, Документ 3760-IX (Верховна Рада України, 2024), establishing English as the official language for international communication, and providing financial support for the public use of English (films, media, etc.). English proficiency was declared mandatory for heads of local administrations, military personnel and other middle-ranking officials, such as civil servants and heads of state-owned enterprises (Ukraine National News, 2025).

English proficiency in the Ukrainian population is ranked relatively low (Bolitho & West, 2017). A 2016 English Proficiency Index ranked Ukraine 41st of 72 countries (British Council, 2017). A recent survey (Гал-інфо, 2023) found that 44 per cent of the population professed to know no English at all, while some 20 per cent professed to have some knowledge, and only 7.5 per cent said they had sufficient knowledge to speak and read in English, albeit not fluently. The Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (2022) found that 51 per cent of the Ukrainian population profess to have *some* English skills. However, the news site Ukrinform (2023) reports that only 1.1 per cent is fluent in English. Internationally, the need for Ukrainian Government officials to improve their competencies is endorsed (Goncharenko, 2024).

Since its independence, the country has placed high importance on developing English capacities. Ukraine's effort to develop competencies in European languages, but first and foremost in English, has been part of the country's increasing orientation to the West (Kuczynska-Zonik & Kowalczyk, 2016). Improving levels of English has been seen as capacity building for the nation's economic and political future. In addition, English is welcomed in Ukraine as a language of distancing from the aggressor state of Russia and for joining European and Western communities.

Decolonising Ukraine from Russian

Since long before Russia's war against Ukraine, the Ukrainian language has been a central part of the political struggle between Ukraine's historic alliance with Russia and today's independence, including attempts to westernise the nation. The russification policies in Ukraine and struggle for the recognition of Ukrainian stretch over 300 years (Besters-Dilger, 2007). Tsarist Russia provided a consistent policy to suppress Ukrainian. Ukrainian was prohibited from being used in education, official communication and print with the aim of preventing it from gaining full functionality as a standard language (Flier & Graziosi,

2017). The early Soviet era (late 1920s to early 1930s) was characterised by a reappraisal of the Ukrainian language, permitting it to be widely used (Flier & Graziosi, 2017). However, this policy was reversed soon after – in the 1930s, during the period of the Great Famine (Holodomor) (Flier & Graziosi, 2017). Ukrainian was not officially prohibited in the Soviet Union, but it was often labelled 'Little Russian' and its usage was tolerated only for low-status communication (Bilaniuk, 2003). Using Ukrainian in higher-status domains and pro-Ukrainian activism were associated with political dissidence. After decades of systematic persecution and suppression, the Ukrainian language suffered from significant domain loss. Ukraine gained independence in 1991, and focused on both reinforcing its national identity and increasing westernisation, both socially and politically. Over the last three decades, language policy was repeatedly used, in a veritable tug-of-war, to drive forward at times Ukrainisation, at times russification, with the language laws giving more power variously to Ukrainian and to Russian (Lanvers & Lunyova, 2023).

Ukraine is well aware of its colonial past under Soviet rule and has been taking consistent steps to free itself from it. For instance, the law (Документ 317-VIII) *On the condemnation of communist and national socialist (Nazi) totalitarian regimes in Ukraine and the prohibition of propaganda of their symbols* was adopted in 2015 (Верховна Рада України, 2015). After Russia's full-scale invasion, the de-russification policy gained strength in Ukraine. In summer 2023, the Parliament of Ukraine passed the law (Документ 3005-IX) *On Condemnation and Prohibition of Propaganda of Russian Imperial Policy in Ukraine and Decolonisation of Place Names* (Верховна Рада України, 2023). Thus, Ukraine is striving to combat both past and present Russian imperial influences and colonisation policies. Russia's full-scale invasion has strengthened these Ukrainisation attempts, but also rendered their implementation more difficult.

The war has intensified anti-Russian language feelings in Ukraine, and increased the interest to learn and value Ukrainian, both in the country and outside (Hentschel & Palinska, 2022). A recent survey, conducted by Kyiv International Institute of Sociology in February–March 2025, has demonstrated that the majority of the respondents (63 per cent) state that they speak Ukrainian at home. This figure has grown by 11 per cent since 2020. The number of people who speak Russian publicly has decreased from 25 per cent in 2020 to 13 per cent in 2025. The percentage of those who speak both Ukrainian and Russian remains almost the same with 18 per cent in 2020 and 19 per cent in 2025 (Грушецький, 2025). As further evidence of the drive towards using more Ukrainian, Russian Wikipedia lost 17 million views per month in Ukraine in the last decade, while the Ukrainian version added 10 million (Danylov, 2022).

Issues for female teachers of English

The teaching profession in Ukraine is predominantly female with 85.5 per cent of teachers being women (Колодяжна, 2020; GenderTrust, n.d.; Марущенко & Плахотнік, 2012). We anticipated that all teacher participants in this project would be female.

Ukrainian teachers of English are subject to tensions between competing moves towards advancing English and supporting Ukrainian. Consequently, the project focuses on the professional development and well-being of female teachers.

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3

Theoretical framework

Decolonising language teaching

The recent (i.e. last two decades) paradigm shift towards language teaching in a decolonised manner has consolidated calls for language pedagogies that advocate appropriating the target language and culture for learners' own purposes, negating 'native speaker' standards and involving a critical engagement with the history of the target language. As English is by far the most frequently taught colonial language, most literature on language education decolonisation concerns English (Blackledge & Creese, 2010; Phipps, 2019; Macedo, 2019), but the principles apply to the teaching of any colonial language. Decolonised language pedagogy refutes the objective of teaching the 'standard' target language, or preparing learners for communication with 'native speakers' (however defined), and focuses instead on learner needs for communication within their communities and for international communities.

Lanvers (2025) lists four desirables for a decolonised approach to language teaching:

1. understanding and teaching of language in relation to hegemonic colonisation
2. appropriating the target language for international use and mutual intelligibility
3. honouring all language competencies
4. focus on interculturality and intercultural communicative competencies.

Regarding 1 and 2, teaching languages in a decolonised manner involves raising awareness of the drawbacks of monolithic notions of fixed standards, of native-speakerism, and of association between language standards and geographical or national variables. Fostering critical awareness of how the target language rose to global significance, and how different varieties (for example, Creoles) of the target language arose as a result of colonisation is a further cornerstone of this pedagogy. Teaching activities could include surveying global varieties of English, scrutinising (mis)communication between English first and second language speakers, and critical engagement with colonial cultural heritage in traditional teaching materials. As a consequence, a decolonised approach aims to teach English for international communication rather than communication with English first language speakers (desirable 4). This literature review explains why the honouring of all language competencies, including Russian, poses a particular problem in the current context of war (as referenced in the third desirable in the decolonising agenda).

Teacher well-being: Self-efficacy

Language teacher well-being has become an increasing focus in language learning research (Babic et al., 2022). Themes influencing teacher well-being include workplace culture, social relationships, sense of meaning and purpose, status and physical well-being (Babic et al., 2022). Among other issues impacting on well-being, teacher confidence in their foreign language ability (linguistic self-efficacy) is a key variable (Mercer, 2021). Hence, one of the strands of teacher professional development is to empower teachers with both an understanding of the complex status of English(es) in the modern world and a realisation that being a 'non-native' speaker of English does not denigrate their professionalism. From an ecological perspective, well-being is contextual to individual experiences within a social setting, which often adds further systemic burdens for language teachers (Mercer, 2021). With the current urgency and prominence of the national campaign for further Ukrainisation, social expectations might provide additional pressure on Ukrainian teachers of English. While the prospects of English replacing Russian as a lingua franca in Ukraine in the late 1990s were identified as 'concerns' (Bilaniuk, 2003), currently such prospects are often advocated as a desired goal. However, English is also viewed as a potential danger to the Ukrainian language (Масенко, 2023; Панов, 2025).

Interest in language teacher emotional states is evidenced by the increase in research into emotion in ELT over the last decade (Simons & Smit, 2021). One of the observations is that in their desire to support learners' language development goals, teachers often perform additional emotional labour, while neglecting their own well-being (King & Ng, 2018). Within studies looking specifically at well-being, findings relate predominantly to the experiences of female language teachers due to the higher number of women participants (for example, MacIntyre et al., 2020).

The gender dimension of professional teacher well-being is crucial to this project. In particular, research into professional confidence revealed that female staff experience a significant confidence gap in their professional identity, compared to male colleagues (Drudy, 2011). This is especially pertinent given that language attitudes in Ukraine have been shown to be gendered, with women seen to be responsible for upholding traditional language practices on the one hand, and harbouring more positive attitudes towards English as a language offering opportunities for social advancement on the other (Bilaniuk, 2003).

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4

Methodology

Research design

The project followed a quasi-randomised trial design, with both qualitative and quantitative data collected pre- and post-intervention from both intervention and control groups.

The aim of the first phase was twofold: to reveal teachers' conceptualisations of English and find out whether they experienced any tension between teaching English and supporting Ukrainian, as well as to discover how confident teachers were of their professionalism and how they rated their self-efficacy. We then used the results obtained in Phase 1 to develop materials and workshop plans for the intervention aimed at offering teachers a CPD opportunity to broaden their understanding of English(es), improve their self-efficacy and professional well-being. Phase 2 included a teacher-facing CPD intervention, with pre-post tests and control groups. The following research questions do not specify teacher genders as all the participants were female.

Research questions

1. How do female secondary school teachers of English in Ukraine conceptualise English (monolithic/plurilithic concepts, ideal standards)?
2. Do they experience a tension between teaching English and supporting the mother tongue? If so, how?
3. How do they rate their: i) language teacher self-efficacy and ii) professional well-being?
4. What effect does the intervention have on these teachers':
   - **a.** decolonised (plurilithic) conceptualisations of English?
   - **b.** teaching practice (methods, materials, resolving potential tension between teaching English and supporting the mother tongue)?
   - **c.** i) self-efficacy and ii) professional well-being?

The project served to gather information on teachers' beliefs on English standards and English teaching, and teachers' linguistic self-efficacy and well-being. This was done in focus groups, with teachers given the choice of speaking English or Ukrainian.

The intervention phase involved designing and carrying out an intervention with a cohort of English school teachers. The team undertook collaborative writing materials for a series of four Zoom sessions, each one accompanied by pre- and post-lesson activities. Each session was run twice, with two time options given to teachers to choose from each week. Lesson timing was tailored to the context of war and insecurity regarding internet and electricity access. The intervention included the following topics:

- **a.** how English became a global language
- **b.** first and second language speakers of English
- **c.** global varieties of English
- **d.** reclaiming Ukrainian.

For the pre-post instrument, we customised a version of the OEQ questionnaire, part of a 2011 ELTRA-funded project (Roberts et al., 2019), thereby extending the impact and reach of the earlier project, and adding to our knowledge of the decolonisation of language teaching in an important new and under-researched context. The instrument measures levels of awareness and beliefs regarding monolithic versus plurilithic concepts of English. The tool was complemented by a teacher efficacy and well-being measurement tool (Akbari & Tavassoli, 2014). Focus groups were conducted in both phases, and with both control and intervention participants.

This mixed method data was analysed using t-tests and thematic analysis. Control group participants were offered the chance to also complete the intervention CPD, and seven participants completed this training.

Participants

Among the teachers that completed both the pre- and post-intervention questionnaires, there was some variety of length of experience. Most teachers had between 11 and 15 years' experience, with 33.3 per cent (n=15). Just 6.7 per cent (n=3) had 0–3 years' experience and 13.3 per cent (n=6) had 25 or more years' experience.

The participant teachers had spent limited time overseas, with 95.5 per cent (n=43) of respondents reporting having spent less than one month where English is spoken as a native language.

When asked about how often they engage with English outside of the classroom, 8.8 per cent (n=4) of teachers reported doing so several times a day, 31.1 per cent (n=14) reported engaging with English daily, 40 per cent (n=18) reported engaging with English a few days a week, and 26.6 per cent (n=12) reported not engaging with English on a regular basis outside the classroom.

Table 2 gives an overview of participants and the phases.

Table 1. Participant teaching experience

Years of experience	n	per cent
0–3 years	3	6.7%
4–10 years	10	22.2%
11–15 years	15	33.3%
16–24 years	11	24.4%
25 years and over	6	13.3%
total	**45**	

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Table 2. Study design

Time	Phase	Intervention participants	Control participants
	Phase 1		
Nov 2024	Data collection phase	30 focus group participants 60 questionnaires (of which 27 qualified for pre-post analysis)	30 questionnaires (of which 21 qualified for pre-post analysis)
	Phase 2		
Jan–Feb 2025	Intervention phase	60 recruited 34 started the CPD programme 30 completed the CDP programme	–
March–April 2025	Post phase	25 focus group participants 27 questionnaires	21 questionnaires
March 2025	Pre-intervention for the control group	–	4 focus group participants
March–April 2025	Delayed intervention opportunity for control participants	–	7 completed the CPD programme
analysis	Focus groups: thematic analysis Questionnaire: descriptive statistics and t-tests		

Instruments and analysis procedures

The survey instruments (see Appendices 1 and 2) were designed to measure seven constructs related to teachers' beliefs, attitudes and self-perceptions concerning English language and language education in Ukraine as informed by our theoretical framework. These constructs included:

- 'Valuing multilingualism', which assessed participants' appreciation for the use and presence of multiple languages in educational and societal contexts.
- 'Valuing different Englishes', which focused on attitudes towards the legitimacy and value of the wide variety of Englishes spoken around the world.
- 'Monolithic language beliefs', which captured participants' adherence to the idea that there is a single, correct form of a language.

In addition, two constructs measured dimensions of teacher self-efficacy:

- 'pedagogical competence anxiety', which relates to anxiety around teaching English
- 'general English anxiety', which reflects more general discomfort or confidence when using English in broader contexts.

Of these constructs, the one we considered most important and aimed to influence was that of self-efficacy. The underlying hypothesis here was that participants would show more open, confident and inclusive attitudes post-intervention because they had experienced the huge diversity of non-native English varieties spoken and taught around the globe.

The final two constructs, 'valuing Ukrainian' and 'valuing Russian', explored attitudes towards these specific languages in Ukraine. Understanding attitudes to these languages is important for grasping the context in which this research into decolonising English is taking place. For these, the research applied a null hypothesis, with no expected directional change resulting from the intervention. All the constructs were measured with a five-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree). A pilot study was carried out to test for validity and reliability of the instruments, and some minor changes were made based on the resulting feedback.

To assess the internal validity of the survey, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated using SPSS for each of the seven constructs, and four constructs had values above 0.7 (valuing multilingualism, general teacher self-efficacy, pedagogical teacher self-efficacy, valuing Ukrainian).

Regarding the qualitative data, focus group participants were given a choice of using Ukrainian and English, with the questions asked in Ukrainian. The focus group participants overwhelmingly used Ukrainian in their responses, occasionally inserting a few words or an expression in English. On very rare occasions, participants used Russian words when they could not immediately think of Ukrainian equivalents. The recordings were transcribed by hand and in-depth thematic analysis was undertaken. The quotes selected to be included into this report were translated into English. These translations were done with fidelity to the source and translation, preserving many of the quirks and idiosyncrasies that come from transcribed interview data. These reflect real speech patterns and convey meaning: removing this would not be true to the sources and removes the nuance for which qualitative data is prized (Turner, 2010).

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5

Results

The results are discussed according to the pre-post differences per construct. An analysis of the survey data from pre- and post-intervention revealed some changes in the seven constructs which this study set out to examine. Quantitative analysis examples can be found in Appendix 3.

Valuing multilingualism

Quantitative

Valuing multilingualism scored highly in both pre-and post-intervention groups. The small uplift in post-intervention was not statistically significant.

Qualitative

The question of the value of learning several foreign languages, in particular languages other than English, was discussed during the pre-intervention focus groups. The teachers unanimously spoke in favour of promoting learning several foreign languages in Ukrainian schools, for example:

> *I agree with all the colleagues that the more [languages one learns], the better.* (PreInt2.2)

While supporting the idea of promoting learning several foreign languages, the participants gave the following reasons, such as supporting humanistic ideals and psychological development, as well as serving economic benefits and employment. The following citations illustrate this:

> *The more languages you know, the more you are human.* (PreInt4.3)

> *I agree with all my colleagues that the more the merrier <languages should be taught in schools>. And who can do it better than young people? They have very good ideas, and they have a good memory <...>* (PreInt2.2)

> *<knowledge of different languages> enables one to become globally competitive* (PreInt2.2)

Opportunities for employment were mentioned, too, for example:

> *And this gives them unlimited opportunities in the future, in choosing their future profession, and of course there should be no restrictions* (PreInt2.2)

> *I would say that learning foreign languages is important in general. For Ukraine, at this stage, it is extremely important, as young people should be able to communicate with people from as many countries as possible.* (PreInt2.3)

Many teachers confirmed that their school offers a second foreign language to the pupils, for example:

> *German is taught at our school* (PreInt1.2)

with some specialised schools offering also a third foreign language.

Several teachers highlighted that the popularity of foreign languages in Ukraine depends on the political and economic situation in the country, for example:

> *<...> Polish is not as difficult as German, Czech is not as difficult as German, and unfortunately, many people go to those countries and these languages are in demand. Do you remember that a few years before the war there was a huge demand for Japanese or Chinese?* (PreInt1.2)

No one spoke against teaching foreign languages other than English.

The results reveal that Ukrainian teachers of English place high value on promoting multilingualism and strongly support learning at least one more foreign language besides English.

Valuing different Englishes

Quantitative

Pre-intervention, participant responses and control group responses had similar means (control 3.08, and intervention 3.13). Post-intervention, intervention participants showed an increase in valuing different Englishes, while the control group remained largely stable (3.08 to 3.05). This was the only construct to show a statistically significant change between groups ($p = .027$).

Qualitative

During the pre-intervention focus groups, the teachers typically spoke in favour of teaching British English, for example:

> *I absolutely agree that British English <should be taught in Ukrainian schools> because it's very popular. I've been to some countries – it is possible to communicate very well with people <using British English> and thus I think it would be great if we keep <teaching> British English (originally in English)* (PreInt1.2)

Many teachers talked about the comparison they make between British English and American English in their teaching practice and focused on these two varieties exclusively, for example:

> *I am inclined to the British variety, of course, but I do not deny the American variety, because they are definitely connected, so I do not exclude <American variant> when teaching British English and I often highlight to children that there are American equivalents of words <...>* (PreInt2.1)

A few teachers stated that they teach American English.

When prompted about other varieties of English, the opinions of the teachers during the pre-intervention focus groups were divided. Some teachers argued against introducing any other variety of English except the British and American English, for example:

> *Well, I think that simply due to the lack of time, and especially in the conditions we are in, we do not have time to consider these varieties* (PreInt5.3)

Other teachers admitted that it is worth exposing students to variously accented varieties of English, for example:

> *The accent may be strange, but understandable. If we're talking about Arabic <English>, I've listened to it, and it is possible to understand them, but they have an interesting pronunciation. Perhaps it would be great if – well, as a part of study, children could listen, they need to hear different dialects and pronunciations, and it would be great if they understood it <...>* (PreInt2.2)

Still others expressed curiosity about other varieties of English, for example:

> *I even set myself the goal of listening <to other varieties of English>, finding and listening <to them>* (PreInt2.1)

During the post-intervention focus groups, many teachers spoke very enthusiastically about the importance of introducing their pupils to a wide variety of English, for example:

> *I also agree with my colleague that in class I gave the children to watch a video about these dialects, and they were interested in listening, recognising* (PostIn4.2)

The results confirmed that the DEEP training increased teachers' acceptance of the variety of English(es) and boosted their readiness to introduce this variety to their routine teaching practice.

Monolithic language beliefs

Quantitative

There was no significant difference between groups before or after the intervention ($p = .779$, questionnaire items 19, 20, 21).

Qualitative

We observed some acceptance of the plurilithic language beliefs among the teachers before our intervention. In particular, during one of the focus groups, a teacher stated that a language is in constant change and cannot be fixed:

> *In fact, I think that there can be no such typical stable language at all. Why? Because it is modified, it changes, it transforms, there are a lot of borrowed words.* (PreInt3.1)

and thus argued for teaching *a mix* that will include *classical British English,* some American words that reflect American media-content that everybody is exposed to*, slang, and colloquialisms*. Another teacher instantly agreed with the conceptualisation of the English language as a mix, for example:

> *I agree with the previous speaker. I also believe that we should strive for the British variant as a basis, but add elements of the American variant and slang <…> That is, a mix, a mix of languages: British with a touch of everything that is modern in order to understand the language and interlocutors from all over the world.* (PreInt3.2)

However, some teachers spoke strongly in favour of 'standard English', for example:

> *I think that <we should teach in schools> Standard English because it is the British variant, because we were taught it, it was what we studied <…> this variant has never failed me, everyone understands it, this is my opinion.* (PreInt1.1)

During a post-intervention focus group, one of the teachers spoke in support of English-Ukrainian code-mixing, claiming that the inclusion of the English words into a Ukrainian phrase contributes to the accuracy of the utterance. For example, this participant talks about the integration of the English word *proof* being used as '*pruf*', in addition to the Ukrainian word for it '*dokaz*' being used depending on the context in everyday use:

> *But yes, there are equivalents [of English words] in Ukrainian, however they may not convey the same accuracy, they do not have the same accuracy as in Ukrainian <…> And the children today had words like pruf, not doka, and so on, so we can't escape from this – from English words that are presented as already changed and everyone should understand them.* (PostIn2.2)

Another teacher expressed a welcoming acceptance of the English language in the streets of a Ukrainian city and justified it by an appeal to embrace wider intellectual horizons, for example:

> *If we talk about shop signs [in English] and how we don't understand them, it is really interesting whether it doesn't make our language inferior – no, it does not, we are developing, <…> I agree with S., we should promote Ukrainian, be proud of being Ukrainian, but we should not be afraid to learn something, be afraid to see something new, to join in. One should think more broadly, you know.* (PostIn2.3)

Such opinions can be plausibly interpreted as a further acceptance of plurilithic conceptualisation of language.

Both quantitative and qualitative data demonstrated that monolithic language beliefs proved to be hard to change within a limited period of time. It might be plausibly attributed to the fact that the conceptualisation of language as a bounded named entity was deeply ingrained during teachers' professional training.

Teacher self-efficacy: English pedagogical competence anxiety

Quantitative

There was no significant difference in teachers' self-reported self-efficacy in the questionnaire between groups before or after the intervention ($p = .617$).

Qualitative

During the pre-intervention focus groups, we observed that teachers talked eagerly and at length about the strategies and practices they use to cope with the challenges of teaching English in the modern changing world. These include using contemporary textbooks or taking part in webinars, as the following citations illustrate:

> *<…> the latest textbooks published by, for example, Oxford University Press or Cambridge, so one should keep up with all the updates <…>* (PreInt1.2)

> *<…> of course, webinars are also great <…>* (PreInt1.2)

A teacher in one of the focus groups expressed a wish to have more opportunities to undertake CPD abroad, for example:

> *And the second point is extremely important – if we could have an opportunity to go abroad for courses <…>* (PreInt1.2)

Very many teachers spoke about the importance to prepare content that is interesting and relevant to the young people whom they teach, for example:

> *And one should choose dialogues, for example, between young people, so that there is maybe a little bit of their slang, or a little bit of their pronunciation, so that it is not so perfectly staged, but it rather a speech closer to real life* (PreInt4.1)

In contrast to the quantitative data, during the post-intervention focus groups, many teachers indicated increased confidence in teaching English, as well as increasing the variety of teaching materials, including from different English speaking areas:

> *Well, I can say that yes, I am more confident, because very often I search for video or audio materials for lessons and for certain topics I often come across materials prepared by teachers from India and one can hear that those teachers have a certain accent, they have a very specific accent. And I understand that it was me who doubted it at first, because the material was good and interesting, but the accent made me feel very unsure. Now I understand that it's ok, and children need to hear it <...>* (PostIn2.4).

One of the teachers specifically highlighted that she feels more confident in selecting the materials for her pupils, for example:

> *Now, a little bit, I understand that I have the right to choose something for my pupils* (PostIn2.4)

Several teachers reported having given deeper thought to some new ideas and would embrace some changes in their teaching, for example:

> *<...> well, we didn't think about it, but your trainings really gave us such an impetus to reassess, rethink, and try something new* (PostIn1.3)

Many teachers specifically singled out their improved confidence in using Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). Several participants overcame their fear of learning how to employ CLIL as an innovation that is being brought to Ukrainian schools, for example:

> *<...> you know, CLIL always evokes, I don't know, some kind of caution, it is something new, so I'm probably going to look at the materials a little bit more in this regard, and I probably want to dive deeper in a little bit more here and thank you for giving me this magical shove* (PostIn2.3)

Among those teachers who had not done it previously, many felt eager to use CLIL after the DEEP training:

> *I'm going to use this CLIL method in future, in the 6th grade. I would like to take a biology lesson and integrate it with English* (PostIn4.1)

A teacher who had been using CLIL before taking the DEEP training, reported feeling more motivated to try to integrate a wider range of subjects than she had previously covered:

> *Perhaps I will expand for myself – more subjects. Previously more often it was literature, but I have already gained some experience with chemistry and maybe then mathematics <...>* (PostIn2.4)

In sum, while the quantitative analysis provided no statistical confirmation of the project intervention for this construct, the qualitative analysis demonstrated that the DEEP training was well-received by the participants as a boost to their pedagogical competence. In particular, the qualitative analysis revealed that the teachers benefited from the training by making use of the provided materials to respond to the current trend of introducing (more) CLIL to schools in Ukraine. Even though an in-depth discussion of the CLIL methodology was not among the core aims of the DEEP training, being properly contextualised and supported with relevant materials for self-study and discussion, the information about CLIL included in the final DEEP workshop was highly relevant to their teaching, as confirmed by the project participants.

Teacher self-efficacy: general English anxiety

Quantitative

Although both groups showed minor fluctuations, the changes were not statistically significant ($p = .177$) for this construct. The intervention group did not experience a measurable improvement in self-efficacy for general English use.

Qualitative

During the pre-intervention focus groups, the teachers demonstrated positive attitudes towards coping with general English language anxiety. In particular, one of the teachers voiced her position that learning naturally involves making mistakes, for example:

> *<…> It is normal to make mistakes, we are all learning, it is normal when people make mistakes. I learned too, I made mistakes too <…>* (PreInt4.2)

Another participant argued that teachers should be prepared to admit their lack of knowledge should it happen, for example:

> *And not to be afraid to cooperate with children. I have an 11th form, so they often ask me 'have you heard of this?' I say to them 'no, it's good that you've told me' – that is, we should work together all the time <…>* (PreInt3.3)

During the post-intervention focus groups, teachers often reflected that they experienced an improvement in confidence of their English language skills. Many teachers appreciated that the DEEP training enabled them to address their need for practising using English themselves, which, as a participant remarked, is often difficult to satisfy for school teachers, for example:

> *<…> we, teachers-practitioners of English who work in school so often lack English practice* (PostIn2.3)

Overall, the participants of the post-intervention focus groups noted positive changes related to reducing their English anxiety. Several teachers highlighted that they had come to accept their own accent, for example:

> *Thanks to your workshop, I finally accept my English and understand that my English with my Slavic Ukrainian accent is also English, good English for teaching pupils. It's only thanks to you, because before I was always a bit shy about my Slavic accent, my Ukrainian accent, but thanks to you I realised <…>* (PostIn1.8)

Another teacher acknowledged that she started feeling less afraid to make a mistake while speaking:

> *<…> as always, teachers are afraid of making mistakes, maybe not only teachers, it might be a feature of our national character, yes, that we are afraid to speak because we are afraid to say something wrong, yes. That's how I always think about pronunciation <…> how I should say correctly the American version or the British version, whether I will make a mistake, whether I will be ashamed in front of the children, and so on. So maybe your training can influence this fear more, so that I can just explain the difference to the children, and they can choose how to pronounce* (PostIn4.2)

In addition, one participant reported a delayed positive effect: after feeling a lack of confidence to speak out during the workshops she realised it might have been OK to do so:

> *<…> frankly speaking, at some moments I was – I understood, I understood everything that was being discussed, but some personal, personal lack of confidence in my English <…> did not allow me to turn on the microphone and speak out. I mean, maybe it would have been ok, maybe everything would have been fine, but for some reason it was still a little bit difficult for me to switch on the microphone and speak out* (PostIn2.1)

In sum, the data suggests that the initial positive attitude towards coping with English language anxiety helped the participants of the DEEP training to experience a meaningful positive impact. This was particularly in regard to acceptance of their accents and the inevitability of making mistakes when speaking in English. Even though the quantitative analysis did not find the change in their English language anxiety to be statistically significant, the qualitative analysis demonstrated that the DEEP training gave the participants an incentive and an opportunity to move towards feeling more confident and more competent as speakers of English. It is plausible that the short duration of the training could only initiate the start of this process.

Valuing Ukrainian

Quantitative

There was a small increase in the mean scores for valuing Ukrainian in both control and intervention groups. While the post-intervention scores were slightly higher for the intervention group, the difference was not statistically significant (p = .090).

Qualitative

Ukrainian was invariably valued very highly in both the pre-intervention and post-intervention focus groups. The teachers were unanimous on this issue. For example, the quotation below illustrates the conceptualisation of the Ukrainian language as an important link between the generations and places high ethical value on Ukrainian:

> *<…> in our situation, language is certainly important. It is something that connects us to the past, and it is something that will connect us to the future. And we should only teach the Ukrainian language to our generation, to our children, – the language that has been suffered for, the language that has been prayed for, and the language for which so much is happening now, for which so many lives are being given and sacrifices are being made* (PreInt3.4)

The following quotation represents an opinion of a teacher from a post-intervention focus group who strongly endorsed the idea of promoting and supporting Ukrainian:

> *<…> to promote Ukrainian, yes, to promote Ukrainian and to support Ukrainian and not to impose it by force, but to encourage people to willingly start speaking Ukrainian – yes* (PostIn2.4)

The main reasons given for placing a high value on the Ukrainian language in both pre- and post-intervention focus groups were the following: Ukrainian is the state language, the mother tongue, and of great importance for constructing Ukrainian identity, history and culture, for example:

> *Ukrainian language is the mother tongue, one should know it, one should think in it, one should learn poetry in order to understand culture and even history more deeply* (PreInt1.2)

In addition, some teachers demonstrated a strong understanding of the functioning of Ukrainian as a state language and a keen interest in the current language legislation, for example:

> *<…> I think it's right that since recently, if a person wants to hold a position, to become a civil servant, they have to pass a test, a test in the Ukrainian language <…>* (PreInt1.1)

In sum, quantitative and qualitative evidence shows that Ukrainian teachers of English place high importance on the Ukrainian language and demonstrate a heightened awareness of its broader societal and state significance, not only within education.

Valuing Russian

Quantitative

The mean score for valuing Russian remained low before and after among both the control (1.62 to 1.90) and intervention groups (1.89 to 1.93), with no statistically significant changes observed (p = .942).

Qualitative

During the focus group discussions, the participant teachers demonstrated quite a lot of tolerance to the speakers of the Russian language in Ukraine, giving concessions for not using (exclusively) Ukrainian to those who have grown up and lived in predominantly Russian-speaking areas of Ukraine. This attitude was present in both the pre-intervention and post-intervention focus groups. For example, during a pre-intervention focus group, one teacher spoke against imposing Ukrainian by force and showed understanding of the challenges faced by pupils from predominantly Russian-speaking regions:

> *not to force – I agree, yes, not to force and not to prohibit, because it is difficult for them [pupils from the predominantly Russian-speaking regions] and many of them just translate from Russian into Ukrainian in their heads and it is actually difficult to do* (PreInt2.1)

A teacher in a post-intervention focus group highlighted the importance of not judging people from the predominantly Russian-speaking regions, for example:

> *<…> we [people from Kharkiv region] have a slightly different attitude to the Russian language in Kharkiv, but this does not mean that there are bad people there <…>* (PostIn 4.4)

In addition, a participant in another post-intervention focus group acknowledged that some people have very strong opinions about the Russian language and writing in Russian:

> *<…> for some people it is very important that no Russian is used, even though Shevchenko [Taras Shevchenko was a Ukrainian poet] also wrote in Russian <…>* (PostIn6.1)

while highlighting that teachers avoid confrontations:

> *we, teachers, are tolerant* (PostIn6.1)

In sum, recognising the sensitivity of attitudes towards the Russian language in Ukraine, we examined this issue with care. Our quantitative and qualitative analyses suggest that participants did not attach specific significance to the Russian language and did not ostracise Russian speakers.

6

Discussion

In what follows, we first summarise the results relating to pre-post differences and teacher experiences. We then contextualise these results and conclude the section by outlining the limitations of the study.

Results summary

Pre-post differences

The quantitative analysis of pre- and post-intervention survey data revealed varied outcomes across the seven constructs examined. The only statistically significant quantitative result was an improvement in participants' valuing of different Englishes, suggesting that the intervention increased appreciation of the variety of Englishes spoken around the world.

Alongside this, an important qualitative finding was evidence of improved teachers' professional well-being. Several teachers said they felt revitalised because the training offered them a break from routine, for example:

> *Actually, it's a very useful course, interesting as, you know, a breath of fresh air in this routine of ours <... >* (PostIn6.2)

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the construct *valuing Ukrainian* was particularly high, reflecting the importance placed on the Ukrainian language in the context of the current conflict and existential threat to Ukraine. This context may also help explain the comparatively low value attributed to the Russian language in the quantitative data. However, the qualitative findings revealed a more neutral attitude towards the Russian language and acceptance of Russian-speaking Ukrainians. As one teacher noted:

> *<...> I can understand Russian-speaking people, because if people have lived a certain amount of time, almost all their conscious life in the eastern regions [of Ukraine] and have spoken Russian there, I understand it [they continue speaking Russian] in principle* (PostIn4.5)

Overall, these findings suggest that the DEEP workshops had a positive impact on teachers' confidence and ideology regarding English varieties. In particular, the qualitative data indicates perceived growth in teachers' self-efficacy. Participants described increased confidence in their English skills, reduced anxiety about making mistakes, and a greater willingness to engage in CLIL instruction. The qualitative data further highlighted how engagement in the training contributed to teachers' sense of well-being, motivation, connectedness and professional identity, for example:

> *It touched me so deeply, it moved me so much, that I am sincerely grateful for it, because it is really very important – it is not only communication, but actually support for each other* (PostIn1.2)

> *I'm more motivated to work and develop myself, first of all, to focus on my own development* (PostIn5.2)

> *material that allowed us to analyse ourselves and improve* (PostIn4.3)

> *I felt like a scholar, not a teacher, but a scholar first and foremost (PostIn5.1)*

The qualitative data, more than quantitative, showed the impact the interventions had on the teachers' pedagogical self-efficacy. Teachers professed greater confidence in their English skills and acceptance of their own non-native accents, as illustrated by the following comments:

> *I finally accept my English and understand that my English with my Slavic Ukrainian accent is also English* (PostIn1.8)

> *Now I understand that it's [non-native accent] ok, and children need to hear it* (PostIn2.4)

Appreciation of intervention materials

The teachers stressed that there was something new for them in each topic that was discussed, and they found the materials interesting and stimulating. The teachers found the language in the Zoom sessions to be comprehensible, with many stating that they were prompted to broaden their vocabularies as a result of participating in the workshops.

The participant teachers also found the topics to be of value and found the materials to be useful for their professional development. They specifically appreciated the reminder about the British Council resources which many said they would engage with.

The following aspects of the training arrangement were mentioned as especially positive:

- the combination of synchronous and asynchronous modes
- variety of formats (including Padlet)
- enough time to study and understand pre- and post-workshop materials
- helpful visualisations in the presentations
- having options for when to attend sessions.

The majority of the teachers found the content and materials to be easily applicable to their teaching with only one teacher indicating that the need to follow the curriculum within a limited number of teaching hours in ordinary schools restricts the applicability of the DEEP materials.

Many teachers attributed the benefits they experienced to the break from their everyday routine during the project. Many also noted that the topics that were introduced within the DEEP training were beyond the traditional materials the teachers usually used, for example:

> *It was really interesting for me, yes, to learn, it was like getting immersed in it and get away from the everyday routine, yes, from the topics of ordinary lessons, I mean, like 'Music', for example, and 'Environment'* (PostIn4.2)

Different teachers mentioned diverse positive experiences during the DEEP training and various positive impacts after it. These can be attributed to the sessions providing them with an enhanced sense of well-being. Many teachers spoke about feeling truly happy and deeply satisfied with their professional development, the joy of feeling like scholars again, alleviating feelings of fatigue and burnout, feeling inspired and more motivated, as well as more confident in their use of English.

One participant voiced her appreciation of the fact that the project focused on experiences and opinions of Ukrainian teachers, for example:

> *<…> in such difficult times, that really we are interesting* (PostIn1.2)

> *<…> we studied the point of view of the British scholar when he visited our exhibition, the book exhibition, and how he felt, you know, what we are feeling. It touched me so deeply, it moved me so much, that I am sincerely grateful for it, because it is really very important – it is not only communication, but actually support for each other. Thank you.* (PostIn1.2)

> *And I would also like to add the following, that these meetings are probably not only about language, for me, for example, it was such sincere support <…>* (PostIn1.2)

Finally, the teachers appreciated that their participation in the training earned them British Council certificates. A lot of teachers expressed the wish to participate in further similar projects. As one participant commented in the questionnaire:

> *Thank you, please invite [us to] more.*

In sum, the DEEP aims regarding the intervention delivery were achieved, namely the intervention should be:

- interactive
- accessible (length, English vocabulary, not overly academic in style)
- practical (with applicable principles teachers could use in their classrooms)
- informative and developmental (include new information/open up new perspectives to the teachers)
- relevant (with examples selected so that teachers could relate them in some way to their own experience/their students' experience).

Contextualising results

Contexts of war and colonisation often generate conflict not only between dominant and subjugated peoples but also between their languages, a phenomenon observable across different global contexts (Footit & Kelly, 2012). In such situations, the adoption of a purportedly 'neutral' language such as English can, and at times does, offer

a welcome solution (Wee, 2010), provided it is implemented in ways that do not inadvertently (re) produce further injustices. By contrast, continuing to teach English through colonised approaches, marked by native-speakerism and monolithic views of language, would risk reinforcing such injustices, both in contexts where English has functioned as a colonising language and in those where it has not. One way of addressing this tension is precisely through the promotion of decolonised approaches to understanding and teaching English.

The participants of this project saw Russian and English very differently when they looked at these languages through the prism of colonisation. In all types of focus groups (pre-, post-intervention and control) the most often voiced opinion was that English and Russian significantly differ in terms of colonial or otherwise impact on Ukraine, for example:

> *What happened there in the past may have really been done by violent means, but this language [English] has taken root and is used there. Our situation is a little different, because now we have a situation when we are pushing the Russian language away, trying to push it away – even people who did not know how to speak [Ukrainian] are learning to do it, and it is very good, so we cannot draw a parallel [between English and Russian]* (Control4)

The participants often emphasised the strong direct impact of the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war on the perception and attitude to the languages:

> *At the moment, I wouldn't compare Russian, the expansion of the Russian language and the Brit... English language <...> at least for our country, because the desire to speak a particular language depends on the historical events that we are experiencing* (PreIn1.2)

Teachers most commonly cited the following reasons for viewing the colonial past of English as irrelevant to Ukraine:

- English colonisation happened long ago and Ukraine was never colonised by the British Empire:

  > *<...> it was so long ago, and maybe we look at it differently because we didn't participate in it, I mean, we didn't conquer anyone, neither were we conquered by English, and now it [English] is just as a means of communication* (PostIn2.2)

- In contrast with the past, today English is perceived to have a positive impact and this is exactly what is relevant for Ukraine now:

  > *<...> if we consider the current impact of the English language in general, and, let's say English culture, on other countries, then let's be honest, they bring positive things. <...> So it is a completely different story if we compare Russian and English. <...> the English language at the moment is no longer about colonisation – here, at the moment, in our time, it is more about progress, development, evolution* (PostIn1.2)

Interestingly, one teacher voiced an opinion that introducing learning Polish in Ukrainian schools (which has become a popular tendency in Ukraine since 2022) can potentially be a form of colonialism, for example:

> *That is, for some reason, I see learning Polish [in Ukrainian schools], the imposition of Polish as a possibility of some kind of colonisation. Because, perhaps, the experience of Ukrainian lands having been under the rule of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth is at work here. But I don't see the English language in this respect as an opportunity to colonise Ukraine* (PostIn2.1)

The project remained deliberately neutral on the topic of the two disputed languages in question, as the team strongly felt that the (relatively young) nation of Ukraine must be given the opportunity to develop language policies to align best with future nation building and international outlook. Current (relatively strong) anti-Russian language sentiments are to be understood in the context of war, and not necessarily the most reliable predictor of future language policies for this multilingual nation.

Our workshop provided a safe space for expressing both negative, neutral and sometimes even positive (i.e. accepting) attitudes towards the Russian language. The design of the Zoom sessions helped to create a supportive environment by establishing clear ground rules, validating all contributions, and offering female-only spaces.

Conclusion

The first observation is that this project is proof of concept that effecting changes in orientation towards English can be achieved in the context of Ukrainian secondary school teachers. It may be that the initial change in how English is conceptualised is related to an increased interest in, raised awareness of and subsequent acceptance of the many varieties of English around the world. Such conceptual changes might also be possible in other countries currently experiencing political and linguistic conflict, and also in countries that have not experienced English as a colonising language. In such contexts, raising awareness of historic injustices related to today's dominance of English can often be harder to achieve (Pennycook, 2002).

The project findings further suggest that some teachers experienced the materials as adding to their knowledge of the use of English around the world, thereby increasing their expertise and confidence, in a cumulative way. This is perhaps consistent with the move away from thinking about English as a standardised/centralised linguistic code, with one correct form (or maybe two, where 'American English' is acknowledged), to a 'World Englishes' approach with its multiple centres and standards. Other teachers involved in the project seemed to experience the materials as a challenge to monolithic concepts such as centres, borders and standards, consistent with subsequent plurilithic 'English as a Lingua Franca' and translanguaging approaches to what English 'is' (see Hall & Wicaksono, 2024a, for an overview). Both experiences, the additive and the challenging, seemed to increase teacher confidence and create a sense of belonging to a scholarly and global community of English language users. In this respect, the project demonstrates a 'two for one' benefit: adding to the teachers' knowledge about Englishes has 1) the ethical benefit of promoting decolonised concepts of language and 2) the professional/personal benefit of increasing self-efficacy. A possible third benefit is that those teachers who acknowledged the challenge to monolithic concepts of English also reported a new, plurilithic understanding of the concept of 'mistake' or 'error'. These teachers were able to apply their new understanding to their own use of English – liberating them from the experience of judging themselves, or being judged, negatively ('errors'), and allowing them to move towards a position of describing (rather than judging) 'differences' or 'innovations'.

Given the above, the project is also firmly situated in the current emphasis on increasing teacher well-being and self-efficacy, especially among the strongly feminised teaching workforce that constitutes language teachers. Following two decades of relatively intense focus on student motivation and well-being in language learning, the focus is increasingly turning towards teacher well-being, recognising the intrinsic link between them. Hopefully, this DEEP project will also spur a much-needed increase in the focus on language teacher well-being outside the Global North.

In addition, the DEEP team takes away from the experience of delivering the materials that listening to participants at all times is crucial. It allowed us to deliver the materials at a time convenient to the teachers, offer them the recognition they most needed, as well as the professional support they most desired. An example here is the delivery of Cambridge University Press and Assessment (CUPA) English teaching books, via Poltava V.G. Korolenko National Pedagogical University. The team had initially planned to send stationery as reward for participation but after consultation, it became clear that up-to-date English books for pedagogical development were what our teachers most desired, so we sent these, with the help of CUPA in Cambridge and a Kyiv distribution firm.

Finally, the DEEP team would like to note just how positive the experience was for teachers currently living in the very challenging context of a war zone. For our participants, the CPD was a positive light in otherwise bleak surroundings, allowing them to feel recognised, and for their voices to be heard among the global community. This is an observation that academics delivering CPD in a variety of challenging contexts may take into consideration.

Limitations

The project only involved teachers from one administrative unit of Ukraine: the Poltava region (province) and the city of Poltava as its administrative centre. The project's key limitation was the short delivery time which was partly due to the original project design, but also a response to the realities of Ukrainian teachers' lives during wartime. Hence, the duration of the face-to-face sessions had to be cut down because the Ukrainian teachers' access to electricity supply was limited after Russia's attacks.

Since changing conceptualisations about language is inevitably a long-term process, to observe and document the complete change from the monolithic to plurilithic ideas was beyond the remit of this project.

The analysis of the data suggests that the quantitative instruments used in the research could be developed and refined further, testing and expanding the construct items pertaining to teacher anxiety using English and monolithic beliefs, although it is important to retain the mixed methods approach used here.

7

Recommendations

In the following section, we offer recommendations for future teacher training, such as CDP events, as well as for further research and pathways to impact.

Future interventions

A number of suggestions from participants concern practical arrangements of CPD delivery.

- Teachers really appreciated having all the materials accessible to them in one place. At the start of the project, this was not feasible, as we needed to avoid 'contamination' by permitting the control participants access to materials. As soon as feasible, all materials were deposited on the DEEP website, and much appreciated by the teachers.
- Synchronous meetings should remain an anchor piece in delivering remote CPD. Teachers really appreciated the Zoom sessions with academics. We needed to shorten the duration due to war-related power cuts, but the interactive dimension of the meetings was retained as much as possible, and much appreciated by participants. The delivery of asynchronous study material both before and after each session also proved ideal as we could launch into discussion of materials teachers had engaged with before the Zoom sessions, and these also permitted further asynchronous discussions afterwards on the forum and Padlet linked on the DEEP website. Again, for ease of delivery and accessibility, leaving the format of asynchronous interaction to one mode (a forum, or Padlet) works best here, to keep the momentum of offline discussion and create a sense of community.

A further recommendation for future interventions concerns feedback to participants.

> *And we also thank you for an interesting project and we would like to read its results later – if you could send them to us, we would be very grateful, we would be interested* (Control1)

The DEEP team has already given some initial feedback but will also put a link to this report on our website and direct our participants to it.

Supporting language teachers' well-being and reducing work-related stress has been recognised, in the last decade, as a key dimension in improving language teaching. This project showed that CPD events which encourage feelings of self-efficacy can contribute to this aim, even in contexts of extreme physical challenges such as war. The team felt that the combination of a) increasing self-efficacy in their current level of English; b) academic exchange with international researchers, giving participants a sense that they are generating knowledge; and c) intellectual pursuit made this CPD successful. It is therefore recommended that future interventions seek to retain some or all of these elements when designing CPD for language teachers in similarly challenging contexts.

Future research and pathway to impact

Approaches to a decolonised way of teaching English can be harder to communicate and ascertain in regions and contexts where English has never been, and never will be, a language of colonisation and oppression. Uniquely, the project's results indicate that for such contexts, raising awareness of the fast changing nature of Englishes, accompanied with teaching examples of such varieties, can help teachers move away from native-speakerist and monolithic notions of 'standards'. The international varieties of English used in the intervention materials were much appreciated. Relatedly, the DEEP team are themselves mostly English second language speakers, and using our own Englishes and language trajectories as an icebreaker worked well as a way of instilling non-native speaker attitudes from the start. We recommend that any future research team equally draw on their own multilingual resources to underpin similar attitudes.

The DEEP team also thinks that future CPD content writing could build on the collaborative element of the project, involving participants even more, not only in the delivery formats (see above) but also some content, for instance, by drawing more on the participants' multilingual resources and their personal language trajectories.

A number of future research directions relate to Ukraine specifically, and its volatile language context. The first observation concerns Russian, currently a language whose status is very much disputed in Ukraine, and not a topic that normally encourages calm and rational debate. Our data on this topic showed, however, that some controversy on opinions on Russian was permitted, indicating that participants perceived the context we offered as a safe space for debate. From a multilingual perspective, it might ultimately be desirable to depoliticise the use of the Russian language in Ukraine, once political contexts permit this. Other than linguistic symbolic action on the ground, we currently have little empirical data on the Ukrainian population's views and preferences regarding future language policies for the nation.

Furthermore, little is known about what the population at large, pedagogues and other key stakeholders such as education ministers and politicians think about moving towards more English at different levels of education. Here, empirical data is urgently needed to inform future policy decisions. Such research should also look into the feasibility of rolling out higher education programmes for Ukrainian (home) students.

Regarding impact, the DEEP team can conclude on the positive note that the University of York has granted a UKRI-funded impact acceleration project. This project will deliver the materials created to teacher trainers of English situated at different universities across the whole of Ukraine. Poltava V.G. Korolenko National Pedagogical University and the British Council in Kyiv have granted support for locating and contacting these academics. Furthermore, we will invite the Department for Education of the Ministry of Education and Science in Ukraine to collaborate on this, safeguarding the longevity and future use of the materials.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire pre-intervention English version

Dear Teacher,

We are reaching out to you because we have an exciting project, funded by the **British Council** that we would like you to take part in.

What does this mean for me? We have prepared four exciting workshops we would like to share with you. It will be entirely delivered via Zoom. Sessions are offered after work, at a time convenient to you. There is also self-study material. We also invite you to try some of the ideas out in your class. On completion, you will be handed a numbered and named certificate demonstrating that you participated in this training. Furthermore, your participating schools will be offered a range of goods (such as books or stationery) to choose from, as payment in kind. We invite you to complete a questionnaire both before and after we deliver the training. It helps us to understand your perspectives and experiences related to teaching English in Ukrainian schools. The questionnaire will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Participation is voluntary and anonymous. If we ask for your name initially, it is only for your record holding: all personal names will be removed once we finish with our data collection. We invite you to a Focus group (group discussion). This would also be online and would take about 30–50 minutes. Please indicate below if you would like to take part.
Why have I been invited to take part? Because Poltava V.G. Korolenko National Pedagogical University has excellent working relations with your school, and our contribution could positively impact on the teaching of English in your region.
Do I have to take part? No, participation is optional.
Will you share my data with anyone else? Only the research team (above) and the British Council will have access to the data. The British Council will only have access to anonymised data.
How long will you keep my data? Anonymised raw data will be securely stored for 5 years from the date of last requested access on the University of York's centrally managed filestore.
Will I be identified in any research outputs? No. If we cite anything you might have said, we will give you a pseudonym, e.g. Teacher 06.

Here is the list of members of the research team:

Lead: Prof Ursula Lanvers, Department of Education, University of York

Prof Rachel Wicaksono, University of East London

Dr Tetyana Lunyova, University of York and Poltava V.G. Korolenko National Pedagogical University, Poltava, Ukraine

Dr habil Maryna Zuyenko, Poltava V.G. Korolenko National Pedagogical University, Poltava, Ukraine

Dr Louisa Field, Department of Education, University of York

If you have any questions about this participant information sheet or concerns about how your data is being processed, please contact:

ursula.lanvers@york.ac.uk or tetyana.lunyova@york.ac.uk

Telephone: +44 1904 323440 (Prof Lanvers) or +38 0503276088 (Dr Lunyova)

The project was granted ethical permission under the stringent rules of the University of York. If you have any questions about this process, data handling, criteria for ethical permission, etc. please email education-research-admin@york.ac.uk

Consent to participate in events

I would like to participate in online training for teachers.

☐ Yes ☐ No

I agree to fill out the questionnaire.

☐ Yes ☐ No

I agree to participate in an online focus group (group discussion).

☐ Yes ☐ No

Consent to data collection

Please select 'Yes' if you agree with the following statements:

	Yes	No
I understand that participation in all of the above activities is voluntary.		
I understand that I can withdraw from participation in the above activities at any time up until the time of completing the questionnaire after the workshops.		
I understand that my responses will be anonymised immediately after the project is completed. My name will not appear in any potential publications.		
I understand that all data obtained as a result of this work will be used only for the purposes of this project.		

1. Please give your full name _____
2. Please give your email here _____
3. Please give the name / number of the school here

_____

Please note: we only ask you for this information for our records and the final certificate. Please rest assured that your data will not be shared in any way.

4. What language/language varieties do you use in your classroom?

	Always	Most of the time	About half the time	Sometimes	Never
Ukrainian					
English					
Russian					
Surzhyk					

5. What language/language varieties do you speak with your students during breaks at school?

	Always	Most of the time	About half the time	Sometimes	Never
Ukrainian					
English					
Russian					
Surzhyk					

6. How much time have you spent overall in regions where English is used as a native language?'

- ☐ Less than one month
- ☐ 1–6 months
- ☐ 7–12 months
- ☐ More than 1 year
- ☐ More than 2 years
- ☐ Most of my life

7. Have you previously engaged in Continuing Professional Development workshops conducted by the British Council or by Ukrainian institutions?

☐ Yes ☐ No

8. If you answered yes to the previous question, please specify what workshops you have completed and where these were held.

9. On average, how often do you speak, read, write, watch or listen to English for more than a few minutes in your personal life (outside of work)?

- ☐ Not regularly
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ A few days a week
- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Several times a day
- ☐ All the time

10. How many years of teaching experience do you have?

- ☐ 0–5 years
- ☐ 6–10 years
- ☐ 11–15 years
- ☐ 16–20 years
- ☐ 21–25 years
- ☐ 25+ years

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by selecting the option that best represents your opinion. (Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree)

11. Ukrainian should be given more priority in education.

12. Ukrainian is the most important language to drive Ukraine forward.

13. Ukrainian should be the primary language of instruction in all schools to preserve national identity.

14. It is important to teach students about the various global forms of English, not just British or American English.

15. Only British or American forms of English are important for the advancement of the Ukrainian nation. (Negative)

16. Non-native speakers of English have just as much right to say what is right and wrong as native speakers.

17. It is enough for Ukrainian students to be exposed to only American or British English. (Negative)

18. Ukrainian school pupils should be proficient in the Russian language.

19. Speakers of a language should all use the same standard of that language.

20. Rules in any language (like those to do with grammar and pronunciation) can only be changed by those who grew up with that language.

21. There is one way to speak a language properly.

22. The more languages people know, the easier it is to learn a new language.

23. Speaking more than one language is an important skill in modern life.

24. Speakers of many languages have more opportunities in life than those who speak just one language.

25. If you speak several languages, it helps you understand different cultures and people.

26. I am confident responding to spontaneous questions about English from my pupils.

27. Unfamiliar topics in the textbook confuse me. (Negative)

28. I feel confident when teaching the cultural content of English.

29. I feel anxious when I have to use English spontaneously. (Negative)

30. Making pronunciation mistakes while I am speaking in English does not bother me.

31. I feel confident that I can express what I want to say in English writing.

32. When I hear something in English I cannot understand, I feel embarrassed. (Negative)

We really appreciate your comments. Would you like to add anything on any of the topics and issues examined in the questionnaire? Please write them in the space below. Feel free to write in Ukrainian or English.

Appendix 2: Questionnaire post-intervention English version

We really appreciate your opinion on issues concerning language teaching in Ukraine. Would you kindly fill in the answers to the next few questions. Please understand that your opinion will remain anonymous and that we are only interested in your name so we can tick off your participation on our participant list. It will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

All our materials relating to teaching English in a decolonised way will be available very soon on our DEEP website. They will be free to download. We will send you an email when these materials are up on the website.

Please give your full name _____

Please give your email here _____

Please give the name / number of the school here

_____

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by selecting the option that best represents your opinion. (Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree)

1. Ukrainian should be given more priority in education.
2. Ukrainian is the most important language to drive Ukraine forward.
3. Ukrainian should be the primary language of instruction in all schools to preserve national identity.
4. It is important to teach students about the various global forms of English, not just British or American English.
5. Only British or American forms of English are important for the advancement of the Ukrainian nation. (Negative)
6. Non-native speakers of English have just as much right to say what is right and wrong as native speakers.
7. It is enough for Ukrainian students to be exposed to only American or British English. (Negative)
8. Ukrainian school pupils should be proficient in the Russian language.
9. Speakers of a language should all use the same standard of that language.
10. Rules in any language (like those to do with grammar and pronunciation) can only be changed by those who grew up with that language.
11. There is one way to speak a language properly.
12. The more languages people know, the easier it is to learn a new language.
13. Speaking more than one language is an important skill in modern life.
14. Speakers of many languages have more opportunities in life than those who speak just one language.
15. If you speak several languages, it helps you understand different cultures and people.
16. I am confident responding to spontaneous questions about English from my pupils.
17. Unfamiliar topics in the textbook confuse me. (Negative)
18. I feel confident when teaching the cultural content of English.
19. I feel anxious when I have to use English spontaneously. (Negative)
20. Making pronunciation mistakes while I am speaking in English does not bother me.
21. I feel confident that I can express what I want to say in English writing.
22. When I hear something in English I cannot understand, I feel embarrassed. (Negative)

We really appreciate your comments. Would you like to add anything on any of the topics and issues examined in the questionnaire? Please write them in the space below. Feel free to write in Ukrainian or English.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix 3: Survey data analysis sample

An analysis of some of the survey data from pre- and post-intervention is reported in the tables below. The t-value, degrees of freedom (df), and p-value for the overall comparison between post-intervention scores are reported for assessing the impact of the intervention.

Valuing multilingualism

Group	Pre-intervention M (SD)	Post-intervention M (SD)	T	df	p
Control	4.43 (.43755)	4.36 (.45119)			
Intervention	4.40 (.42324)	4.55 (.42197)			
Overall	NA	NA	-1.495	46	.142

Valuing different Englishes

Group	Pre-intervention M (SD)	Post-intervention M (SD)	T	df	p
Control	3.08 (.44253)	3.05 (.57347)			
Intervention	3.13 (.58577)	3.43 (.57303)			
Overall	NA	NA	-2.287	43.121	.027

Monolithic language beliefs

Group	Pre-intervention M (SD)	Post-intervention M (SD)	T	df	p
Control	2.9000 (.37619)	2.9841 (.55253)			
Intervention	2.9136 (.67680)	2.9383 (.56263)			
Overall	NA	NA	-.282	46	.779

About the British Council

We support peace and prosperity by building connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and countries worldwide. We work directly with individuals to help them gain the skills, confidence and connections to transform their lives and shape a better world in partnership with the UK. We support them to build networks and explore creative ideas, to learn English, to get a high-quality education and to gain internationally recognised qualifications. We work with governments and our partners in the education, English language and cultural sectors, in the UK and globally. Working together, we make a bigger difference, creating benefit for millions of people all over the world. We work with people in over 200 countries and territories and are on the ground in more than 100 countries. Founded in 1934, we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body.

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