

Can persuasion be a teachable component of EFL pragmatics?

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Abstract

Research in the area of interlanguage pragmatics has mainly focused on speech acts (thanking, apologising, complimenting, refusing, etc.). We learn languages to communicate in different situations, and it is very common that we have take a certain stand or express our opinion, however, persuasion has not been previously considered in interlanguage pragmatics as a speech act. Drawing on the theoretical approach called Discourse-Historical Approach, the researcher suggests looking at persuasion as a complex speech act by extracting the most frequent language patterns, or strategies, and by teaching those to students. The study draws on political discourse as basis for this proposal, because defending a point of view and persuading other to agree with it is the main goal in this language domain

The present study aims to investigate if persuasion can be teachable the same way as other speech acts, and if teaching these strategies has any influence on the degree of persuasiveness of a written speech. The participants (N=40) wrote a speech on an emotionally charged topic to persuade their audience to take their side. A pre- and post-test design was used with an intervention for the experimental group, during which the researcher employed consciousness-raising activities to emphasise how we can enhance our argument with the help of certain linguistics features embedded in political discourse strategies. Two coders blindly scored the speeches on the scale from 1 to 8 and gave comments on what linguistic features they found most persuasive. Although the coders were not consistent in their scoring, the results demonstrated that the experimental group made larger gains than the control group, and those gains were marginally significant based on the data from both coders. Limitations, future research directions, and pedagogical implications are discussed in the final chapter.

Key words: interlanguage pragmatics, speech act, persuasion, EFL, adults.

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Introduction

When learning a foreign language, the key aim is being able to communicate one's messages based on a certain linguistic intention, and such that it is appropriate to the situation. One of the important goals for communication is to be able to persuade people in order to have influence on their decisions and their outlook.

The art of persuading one's audience has been the focus of public speakers, especially politicians, and it has long been done with the help of a vast variety of linguistic means (Van Dijk, 1993). However, there is rarely any focus on the other side of this communication, the audience, yet we surely have the right to be aware of how exactly language may be used to directly or indirectly influence us. The language of persuasion has its roots in conventional linguistics components: syntax, stylistic enhancement means, prosody etc. Interestingly , while we are surrounded with manipulative language on a daily basis, it does not seem to be part of foreign language curricula, including curricula for English as a foreign language. This is puzzling since the majority of people that speak the English language are L2 speakers, yet working on sounding persuasive by choosing actual linguistic means is not widely included into EFL/ ESL curricula. Although there seem to be a number of practical implications of the knowledge of persuasion, they have not been acted upon as there are few EFL textbooks that introduce rhetoric or persuasive language in their modules.

Although rhetoric has not been directly included into curricula, there have been attempts to introduce pedagogical discourse analysis into EFL, mostly as a way to improve reading skills (Wallace, 1999; Dar, Shams & Rahini, 2010; Hazaea & Alzubi, 2017). Discourse analysis is concerned with analysing various types of texts beyond sentence-level through linguistic and social contexts. Discourse linguistics focuses on the specific features of various types of texts used in

different areas, such as media, law, medicine, and politics. One of the ways to teach comprehension of persuasive speech is critical discourse analysis (Kress, 1990; Van Dijk, 1993). Critical discourse analysis is a discipline within discourse linguistics that focuses on critical evaluation of the linguistic means of a text, and it has been widely employed in speech writing as a powerful tool for impacting electoral decisions. Importantly though, the general audience is usually unaware of the tools aimed at persuading them, the most radical being propaganda, and thus may not be able to evaluate the arguments made without being influenced by the language used.

When it comes to language education, the domain of pragmatics serves the purpose of effective communication (Canale & Swain, 1980; Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Taguchi, 2008), which emphasizes the importance of the social aspect of language learning and consequently of addressing social issues and inequality. In this respect, the notion of pragmatic competence arose, commonly defined as knowledge of how to use language to achieve goals in language interaction (Kasper, 1997).

Pragmatic competence has been widely studied, and foreign language pedagogy has been able to benefit from it immensely. Within a cognitive perspective, a large body of research has focused on the teachability of pragmatics, examining pragmatic and sociolinguistic issues (Wildner-Bassett, 1994). What language pedagogy has been able to directly implement into foreign language curricula is speech acts, and a lot of work has been done on suggestions (e.g., Martinez-Flor & Alcon, 2007), on apologies (e.g., Olshtain & Cohen, 1990), on compliments (e.g., Rose & Ng Kwai-Fun, 2001), and on requests (Uso´-Juan, 2007). Speech acts have been predominant in L2 textbooks, while other areas of pragmatics have generally been paid less attention. Examples of understudied areas include the comprehension and interpretation of implicature (i.e. what is implied in communication), and the fluency of pragmatic competence (Taguchi, 2011).

Although language education has long accepted pragmatics as a crucial component, the domain has barely been looked at from the perspective of language influence, which seems unreasonable as we use language as a way to influence others in many social contexts. Moreover, there is an extensive body of research that covers and classifies different language patterns, structures and strategies that are aimed at persuasion and manipulation, yet this knowledge has never been brought into the context of English language teaching. All of this suggests that this is an area which should be taught in a foreign language classroom.

This research aims to explore the potential of persuasive language instruction. The goal is to explore if it is possible to teach language learners how relevant linguistic means can be used from a production perspective. The grounds for this is that it may be a good tool for raising metalinguistic awareness towards speech structures, as well as equipping learners with tools that may help foster their critical thinking skills. As a starting point, English is chosen as the language for the study.

Chapter 1 presents relevant literature review that this study draws on. Chapter 2 focuses on the methodology of the study. Chapter 3 presents data coding. Chapter 4 focuses on data analysis and results of the study. Chapter 5 discusses the results and the limitations of the study, as well as suggests further direction for research in the area.

1. Literature review

This chapter will focus on the body of scientific literature and research that have led to the concept of this research. It will first discuss political discourse and the social role of persuasion within this field, the basic structure of persuasive argumentation, and then will turn to a brief review of approaches within political discourse, highlighting the one chosen for the purposes of this study. The next section will discuss pragmatics and how the concept of persuasion seems to fit into the field, as well as pedagogical considerations for teaching pragmatics of persuasion when teaching writing.

1.1 Is political discourse for politicians only?

Politics has always been the main arena where representatives of various political opinions fought for support from their electorate and consequently for power. The verbal component of power assertion is obvious as language is the main weapon that is constantly used to attract any form of political support. It is widely acknowledged by researchers that language is inseparable from political acts and situations. Chilton and Schaffner (1997) insist that politics cannot be done without language. Pelinka (2007) emphasises that language should be studied beyond strictly linguistic disciplines such as literature and theoretical linguistics, and in fact "must be seen (and analysed) as a political phenomenon''. However, defining political discourse has been rather problematic as its definition has changed over the years.

Shapiro (1986) suggests that almost any discourse may be considered political, because it argues a point. There is work that has been done on classic political issues, such as control, domination and power (Fairclough 1995; Van Dijk, 1993). Importantly, however, the authors of this work explicitly state that discourse may

only be considered political if it is administered from either direct political actors, or within certain political institutions. While targeting political discourse for analysis, the researchers acknowledge that they conduct political discourse analysis for the direct purpose of criticism itself, and to support their own political values and ideas that seem to be threatened .

However, politics is reciprocal, and politically active citizens from various social contexts are involved in political discourse as members of pressurised communities and issue groups, voters, and demonstrators (Verba et al., 1993). Van Dijk (1997) mentions that the notion of politics and political discourse in this sense drives an extension to its previous rigid concept, and should include all participants of the political process.

Supporting this idea, Chilton (1997) mentions that there are different strategic ways to talk about anything in a political sense, as well as on different levels: personal, interpersonal, institutional, and educational. In addition to political actors and political institutions, Sheigal (2004) suggests that the facet of message, i.e. what is conveyed in a text, may also pertain to political discourse, because it may be considered political as long as it aims to influence power and authority in any aspect of social life.

Supporting this claim, Chilton (2004) argues that there are both micro and macro levels to how politics is enacted. He highlights that the micro level encompasses individuals, genders, and social groups using political discourse through various acts (persuasion, argumentation, bribing, threatening, etc.), while the macro level is concerned with law and policy implementation. By separating one from another, it may be argued that what counts as political is subject to interpretation, and is to be determined on case-by-case basis. (Chilton and Schaffner, 1997; Joseph, 2010).

Political discourse extends into the "life-world", and it includes any act of human communication in different social contexts, organizations, and relations marked by the access to power (Fairclough, 2001; Okulska and Cap, 2010). Moreover, while mentioning Muntigl and the concept of politicization, Dunmire (2012) insists that "politics functions as a set of discursive practices that do political work".

It can therefore be concluded that the general tendency of this research area has been to highlight the importance of the circular nature of political discourse, bringing under its umbrella political leaders and their audience that actively partake in the political life of society. Politics is not limited to politicians, and every member of any society can engage into political discussions, and therefore produce politics-related discourse.

While political figures have designated staff members who are knowledgeable about political discourse and who ensure the influence their speeches have on the audience, the latter are not normally aware of how this influence is passed on to them. It seems reasonable to follow the idea of political engagement being open to all members of society with how language may be used to verbalise argumentation, especially political, and to attempt to draw on it. The next section will cover the basic concept of argumentation and its structure, further move towards the linguistic features that are often encountered in political discourse, how they are classified by critical discourse analysis research, and how these may be used to reflect the pragmatic competence for language learners.

1.2 The nature of persuasive argument structure

Fairclough & Fairclough (2012) point out that political discourse primarily deals with argumentation as its intrinsic intention is convincing the audience, which is done through argumentative speech. Argument is a set of statements (explicit or

implicit), one of which is the conclusion (claim), while the others are the premises. The premises are used to support and justify the conclusion. However, apart from this logical view, argumentation is also understood as an activity, aiming to persuade an interlocutor of a claim (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2004). Fairclough & Fairclough (2012) call it *a complex speech act* by drawing on a theory of action and explaining that an argument is used to perform an act of persuasion, therefore calling for it to be considered part of speech act theory. More speech acts will be considered in this literature review in the next sections, but it is important to remember this view in order to consider theoretical, practical and teaching implications of using persuasion as a complex speech act later on.

The nature of argumentation has its roots in the work of Aristotle, and his work is commonly referred to as the basics of persuasive human speech. Researchers working in the area of argumentation and persuasion often start with Aristotle's work: it seems the oldest, yet still relevant and highly influential for speech writing and argumentation, and this thesis is no exception.

While the art of persuasion can be divided into two important components, argument and form, Aristotle's work primarily considers the components of argumentative essence, and it is often regarded as the origin of persuasive argumentation. In his ground-breaking *Rhetoric*, Aristotle notes that three elements reflect the ability to persuade: the speaker's character (ethos), the audience's emotions (pathos), and the rationality of the speech's arguments (logos) (Beiner, 1983). Aristotle writes:

"It is not true, as some writers assume in their treatises on rhetoric, that the personal goodness revealed by the speaker contributes nothing to his power of persuasion; on the contrary, his character may almost be called the most effective means of persuasion he possesses. Secondly, persuasion may come through the hearers, when the speech stirs their emotions. . . . Thirdly, persuasion is effected through the speech itself when we have proved a truth or an apparent truth by means of persuasive argument suitable to the case in question."

In other words, Aristotle argues that both the rational and the emotional should be engaged in a political speech (Nussbaum, 1996). The audience should be put into a proper emotional state in order to relate to what is being said and to be put "in the right state of mind". As Beiner (1983) points out, this entails being aware of how emotion interacts with judgement, as well as choosing the most effective enthymemes, arguments, style, language, delivery, and arrangement of speech, therefore practically exercising one's wisdom in a situation of making a choice.

Aristotle also puts forward the concept of political deliberation and the fact that it is significantly different in nature from exercising philosophical wisdom. Triadafilopoulos (1999) points out that political deliberation deals with arguing for and against temporary truths rather than universals. When engaging into political speech, one is involved in a discussion of the current urgent matters and dealing with differences of opinions. It highlights the possibility of political speech being accessible to any member of society as opposed to philosophical deliberation: the latter is strictly limited to philosophers, while political opinions and current matters constitute a significant part of everyday interactions of ordinary people. Aristotle puts forward the idea that political deliberation is something common people should do, therefore supporting the view that, as mentioned above, political speech is not only the speech of politicians, but everyone involved in it, and those participating should be aware of what means they may use and what means may be used at them in argumentation.

The main concept in Aristotle's work on persuasion is enthymemes. Aristotle's Rhetoric begins with a sentence stating that "rhetoric is the counterpart of dialectic", where dialectical reasoning aims to discriminate general truths from common opinions, and rhetoric allows us to express these truth claims to other people. Aristotle's concept of enthymemes is introduced as the flesh of a truly persuasive speech. Enthymemes are rhetorical demonstrations that resemble

syllogisms as they present an argument whose premises are omitted due to being obvious and self-evident. Aristotle claims that enthymemes appeal to the "natural instinct for what is true".

Traditionally, enthymemes can be deductive or inductive by nature. For instance, the following argument is deductive, because its premises guarantee the conclusion: “All humans are mortal. Socrates is a human. Therefore, he is mortal”. An inductive argument is the one that is more modest in nature and does not presuppose a strong link to the conclusion, as opposed to deductive arguments. An inductive argument emphasises high probability of the conclusion being true without the premises being strongly linked together: “A chance of dying in a car crash is higher than dying in a plane crash. Therefore, if one travels by plane, they are less likely to die”.

A third type of argumentation is sometimes put forward, namely conductive argumentation (Govier, 2000). A conductive argument involves considering an argument from the perspective of its for and against/ advantages or disadvantages, and generally draws on the idea of a balanced argument. An example of a conducive argument is contemplating whether to take up a new job, move to a foreign country, etc. It is interesting to note that this type of argument is often used as an essay topic in international language examinations: it calls the writer to engage into reasoning and coming to their conclusion after reviewing a set of arguments.

Undoubtedly, argumentation is essential when attempting to persuade one’s audience. Nevertheless, it is not only the nature of one’s argument that political discourse deals with. In this dissertation, while acknowledging the importance of argumentation structure in persuasive speech writing, we are mainly interested in how persuasiveness is amplified linguistically. Linguistic features of a text are as critical as what is conveyed through them and how it is structured, and it is what

some approaches of political discourse analysis deal with in the first place. Although a lot of work in teaching argumentation is done on structure and argument presentation, argument enhancement with linguistic means does not seem to be paid enough attention. Language learners are able to express their opinions and present arguments, but the extent to which those arguments may sound persuasive may be increased. The following section of this literature review will therefore turn to discuss the discipline of political discourse analysis, considering the main approaches that are taken, and focusing on what linguistic features aid in arguing a political point.

1.3 Political discourse analysis approaches: which one?

In this section, I will discuss three main approaches to political discourse analysis (PDA). These approaches stem from different strands of linguistics, and therefore view political discourse differently.

Rooted in cognitive science and cognitive linguistics, Chilton's (2004) approach to PDA largely focuses on political reality, political actors, and their representation. His work has focused a lot on how metaphor and presumed knowledge are used in political discourse, which he has done through analysing various speeches of different political leaders. This perspective coincides with a comprehensive view of language such as that in pragmatics, which we find useful for the concept of teachability of persuasive speech. Moreover, Chilton's work on discursive strategies and concepts of representation may function as a solid basis for persuasive language training. It has a lot of potential in being implemented into foreign language teaching and learning as a set of clear-cut concepts. However, Chilton's work mostly focuses on specific features of separate political texts rather than on generalising commonly used linguistic strategies, which is why it is not the first choice for the basis of our study.

Fairclough & Fairclough (2012) suggest viewing PDA based solely on deliberation and argumentation. Their approach explicitly puts forward the pragmatic concept of politics as an action, which gives the central role to construction of argument. While acknowledging the importance of Chilton's cognitive-evolutionary framework, the authors emphasise the necessity to treat political discourse as fundamentally argumentative and deliberative in nature, stemming from Aristotle's *Rhetoric* rather than *Politics.* Additionally, the authors refer to decision and choice leading to action and therefore being central to PDA. They highlight the concept of practical reasoning and discuss it from various viewpoints, focusing on the nature of premises in argumentation. While this research relates to the idea of political speech being a complex persuasive act, this framework does not provide us with a quantifiable and teachable set of strategies, which remains the ultimate goal for this thesis.

The final framework I will discuss is the one I find most suitable for the study and the goals of this research. The framework within Critical Discourse Analysis called Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, 2009; Wodak, 2011) has gained our interest due to its four salient characteristics, which emerged from a study in 1990. The authors claim that DHA is interdisciplinary and focuses particularly on problem-solving, promotes teamwork and triangulation as its fundamental methodological principle, and is oriented towards application, which is significant in our context of applying this field-specific knowledge to foreign language instruction. Within this approach, Wodak (2015) integrates three related aspects under the umbrella of socio-philosophical orientation of critical theory:

1) Text or discourse critique seeks to discover inconsistencies, contradictions, paradoxes, and dilemmas in the structures inside and outside the text.

2) Sociodiagnostic critique aims to demystify the manipulative character of discursive practices by using contextual knowledge and drawing on various theoretical models while interpreting the discursive events.
3) The prospective implications of critique aim to contribute to improving communication (e.g., by providing guidelines against sexist language behaviour, or by eliminating "language barriers" in hospitals, schools etc).

These values align with the goals of this research on the domain level, and equip researchers with distinct understanding of what is to be sought while conducting analysis. Furthermore, Reisigl and Wodak (2001) clearly state what their preferred political model is, and mention that DHA is based on the ideas of Habermas (1996). His ideas appeal for free and equal participation in political life of a country including debates, critique, and decision making, which is in line with the idea of providing access to persuasive language material. They argue that the model of deliberative democracy focuses on the concepts of "deliberation" and "discourse" and allows its supporters to assume that "language is the central medium of democratic organisation". From the point of view of DHA, ideology is defined as "an (often) one-sided perspective or world-view composed of related mental representations, convictions, opinions, attitudes, and evaluations", thus requiring DHA to focus on the ways "linguistic and other semiotic practices mediate and reproduce ideology in a range of social institutions".

Regarding the in-depth analysis of texts, DHA focuses on the ways linguistic forms are used to express and manipulate power as these power relations are commonly legitimized or delegitimized in discourses. DHA views texts as "sites of social struggles" and acknowledges that power may be discursively exerted in various forms, not only by grammar.

The concept of context is an inherent part of DHA, and Wodak (1996) views its contribution to the triangulatory principle on four levels:

1) the immediate, language, or text-internal context;
2) the intertextual and interdiscursive relationship between utterances, texts, genres, and discourses;
3) the extralinguistic social variables and institutional frames of a specific "context of situation";
4) the broader sociopolitical and historical context, which discursive practices are embedded in and related to.

When looking at context and intertextuality, DHA considers relationships between utterances, texts, genres, and discourses with other extralinguistic and social variables. Researchers, says Wodak, are able to explore discourse-, genre-, and text-level changes in relation to sociopolitical changes. DHA views discourses as open and hybrid, noting the component of interdiscursivity: if discourse is related to a certain topic, it often refers to other subtopics or discourses, e.g, a discourse on climate change will relate to finances or health (Wodak, 2015). This emphasises that topics are connected as society and its issues are often interconnected, which highlights the social nature of language in different discourses. Thus, when looking at a text or discourse, various topics may be embedded into its structure.

Reisigl and Wodak (2009) provide an exhaustive overview of discursive strategies, which breaks each strategy into its objectives, argumentation schemes, and, what is most important for this research, what linguistic devices may be used to achieve the set target. Although these strategies are initially considered within the area of discursive construction of nation, they provide the reader with examples of the exact devices that represent various strategies in their unique contexts (e.g., for strategy of perpetuation, one of the micro strategies is *continuation*, which emphasises political continuity with explicit comparisons such as "as…as", adverbs of time such as "always", and particles creating continuity such as "continuously", "again", "as well").

On the level of macro-strategies, the authors distinguish *constructive strategies* (establishing a certain national identity by promoting unification, differentiation, identification and solidarity), *strategies of transformation* (transforming an established national identity into another, previously conceptualised), *dismantling or destructive strategies* (dismantling parts of an existing construct). Mentioning only the most frequently occurring strategies serving the macro-strategies, the authors use strategies of assimilation and strategies of dissimilation that aim to linguistically create either a similarity or a difference between speakers, their audience, and the issues discussed. For each of these, there is a list of means of realisation, i.e. linguistics devices, as well as argumentation schemes.

It is worth mentioning that many researchers have attempted to classify discursive strategies (Van Leeuwen, 2007; Cap, 2008; Skarżyńska, 2002; Richardson, 2007), and their views are largely similar with slightly different formulation. This is another strength of the DHA approach as a lot of its concepts are distinctly reiterated and reflected in other scholars' works within the field. DHA provides its interpretation of commonly acknowledged ideas, making this exhaustive list of strategies an elaborate product of long-standing tradition, not a completely new product only stemming from the researchers' reasoning. Wodak and Reisigl's list focuses on national identity construction and the most common means that may be used to reach this goal,but it seems feasible to use these strategies for a broader set of goals. This may be done when attempting to persuade within the scope of political discourse and potentially some other areas such as media discourse, which is close to political discourse in its goal to establish opinion dominance, and law discourse, which essentially revolves around proving or disproving the opponent, or marketing, which aims to persuade to purchase a product. DHA aims to provide the field with an exhaustive list of strategies that brings together much of the previous work. Table 1 illustrates a selective list of strategies that seem common and relatively straightforward to

comprehend, making them a good starting point for implementation in language instruction.

Strategies	Linguistic means
Justification:	
Strategy of emphasising the difference between "us" and "them"	Lexical units creating difference\ singularisation (to put into an alien form)
External dependence or threat	Naturalising metaphors ("catastrophe")
Casting doubt	"Yes, but" - figure; vagueness
Scapegoating/ victim-perpetrator inversion	Stories, fictitious scenarios
Strategy of avoidance and strategy of euphemising	Passive (agent deletion) Euphemistic verbs obscuring agents ("die" instead of "murdered by x"
Constructing positive representation:	
"We are all in the same boat", I.e. emphasis on sameness	Personal pronouns, spatial and personal references
Emphasis on positive political continuity	Temporal reference ("since" "always") Spatial reference through personal pronouns ("with us" "here" "in this country")
Singularisation/ uniqueness	Lexemes constructing individualisation ("unique") Hyperboles "we are superior compared to them"
Constructing negative representation:	Lexemes constructing differences and exclusion (antonyms, metaphors)
Emphasis on subject difference and on a difference between now and then	"They" "those" "them" "the Germans" "the foreigners"
Negative connotation	Negatively connotated metaphors "crumble", "fossilised", "many well-established structures have become old and fragile under their 50-year-old patina"

Table 1. List of persuasive strategies (adapted from Reisigl and Wodak, 2009).

Overall, the Discourse-Historical approach seems the most convenient to use within the framework of this study as it a) supports the view that political

deliberation is and should be available to all people, b) views texts as opportunity to establish and claim power, c) provides a comprehensive list of discursive strategies that may be turned into foreign language class material with different opportunities for focus. In the following section of this paper, I am going to look at how the abovementioned persuasion strategies may be implemented in teaching L2 pragmatics.

1.4 L2 Pragmatics

Pragmatics is broadly defined as the study of linguistic forms and how they are used in different social contexts to perform a communicative act. There are several definitions of pragmatics that operationalize the term from cognitive and sociocultural perspectives (Levinson, 1983;Crystal, 1997; Mey, 2016). While attempting to differentiate between different subfields of pragmatics, the term Interlanguage pragmatics or L2 pragmatics was proposed (Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993; Bardovi-Harlig, 2013), and it refers to how language learners develop pragmatic competence over time including the ability to produce speech acts (e.g., apologizing, complimenting, complaining, refusing), the understanding of indirect meaning (e.g., implicature), deixis (e.g., vocatives and reference in pronominal selection), and discourse markers (e.g., well, so, then). Andrew Cohen's work greatly influenced the field, and his and Olshtain's fundamental work (Cogen and Olshtain, 1981) became the basis for examination of different aspects of pragmatic knowledge, learning, instruction, and assessment.

The core idea of speech act theory comes from the work of J.L. Austin, who was concerned with the philosophical category of truth value of statements, or "how to do things with words" (Austin, 1962). He described three components within an utterance that impact the real world: locution (the actual words and their direct meaning), illocution (the intended meaning behind the words leading to a real

world act, e.g. expressing a wish, making a suggestion, making a request), and perlocution (the actual effect of the utterance, e.g. granting a request, restoring a relationship after an excuse etc). Searle (1976) took this concept further and classified speech acts into 5 major categories: representation (e.g.,complaints, boasts), directives (e.g., requests, suggestions, invitations), commissives (e.g., promises, pledges), expressives (e.g., apology, gratitude), and declaratives (e.g., declarations). The area of speech acts is fundamental to research in cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics.

Pragmatics also includes a significant area of implicature, the concept of which developed from work of Grice (1975). He noted the discrepancy between the meaning implied in what is said and the surface meaning of utterances. Grice developed his 4 conversational maxims. The Maxim of Quantity states that interlocutors will contribute as much information to the conversation as required, and the Maxim of Quality is concerned with the fact that this contribution should be truthful. The Maxim of Manner describes being clear, brief and orderly, while the Maxim of Relation emphasises the contributions being relevant to conversation. These maxims can be followed, violated, flouted, or interlocutors may want to refuse to converse.

Flouting has given rise to a particularly interesting area in L2 pragmatics (Taguchi, 2005). When a maxim is flouted, a speaker violates it so obviously that a competent interlocutor is able to detect some additional meaning. For instance, flouting the Maxim of Quality when answering the question “How was the meeting?” with “I nearly died of boredom!” will lead to concluding that the meeting was tedious, not death-inducing. In addition to maxims, Brown and Levinson (1987) came up with on-record and off-record strategies, which essentially represent ways to either explicitly or implicitly demonstrate what an interlocutor wants from a hearer. In their study on politeness strategies, they mention that some of these are hinting (violating the Maxim of Relations),

overstatement (violating Maxim of Quantity), and irony (violating the Maxim of Quality).

While the speech act theory and several pragmatic components in Grice's maxims, such as idiomaticity and metaphors, have found their direct way into many foreign language teaching materials and course books, some aspects of pragmatics have not been brought into language education. As mentioned in the previous section, Fairclough & Fairclough (2012) put forward the idea that persuasion should be considered *a complex speech act.* They claim that arguments are used to induce action, and it seems natural to consider persuasion part of the theory of speech acts. Interestingly, to the best of my knowledge, persuasion has not been considered this way in L2 pragmatics yet. After considering the grounds for it from the perspective of political discourse, it seems reasonable to join the theoretical standpoints of means of persuasion in political discourse and of speech act theory to examine whether they may be teachable.

1.5. Empirical research in L2 pragmatics

Having indicated a gap in the scholarship, this section turns to empirical research in L2 pragmatics 1) to draw on other important areas of L2 scholarship relevant to this research, 2) to evaluate how persuasion may fit into it, and 3) to analyse methodological strengths and weaknesses of the previous research and attempt to improve in those aspects.

There have been various points of focus in empirical research in interlanguage pragmatics. A common one is the relationship between grammatical development and pragmatic competence. Roever (2005) found that participants with high language proficiency (hence confident grammar users) demonstrated better results in pragmatic tests than low language proficiency participants in English as second language context. Although the researcher recruited a sufficient number

of participants (N=267), the main criterion, the proficiency level, was self-reported and not additionally assessed. The same proficiency level self-report was administered in the study by Bardovi-Harlig & Doernyei (1998) that investigated whether EFL and ESL learners were aware of pragmatic violations. They, on the other hand, reported that even high level learners represent a range of pragmatic development, thus suggesting that this competence needs to be developed separately. In their sample of Hungarian EFL learners and American ESL learners, the participants of both low and high levels of proficiency demonstrated a range of scores: the EFL participants scored significantly higher in grammatical measures (M=3.68 against M=2.04 in pragmatic measures), whereas the ESL participants scored significantly higher in pragmatic measures (M=3.63 against M=1.89 in grammatical measures). This view is supported by other studies (e.g. Takahashi & Beebe, 1987; Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993), which reported a mismatch between learners' grammatical development and their pragmatic development. All this evidence seems to suggest that pragmatic development is a separate component of language education, and should therefore be paid careful attention. The studies which do find a strong link between proficiency and pragmatical development would have potentially found a clearer correlation if a more objective proficiency measure was used. In our study, the issue of English language proficiency level is solved by collaborating with language schools, which have done rigorous proficiency level (grammatical and spoken) testing before start of teaching with each participant, and with individuals who have taken English language proficiency exams and/ or have been tested by the researcher individually with a short written task.

Another relevant area in research in L2 pragmatics is the impact of various pragmatic instruction methods. In the present study, noticing is chosen as the main pedagogical tool, and there has been some empirical research on noticing for some types of speech acts. Pearson (2001) aimed to investigate noticing and explored the effectiveness of metapragmatic discussion or pragmatic instruction.

She studied beginner L2 Spanish learners' acquisition of speech acts by using the data from their oral and written responses to a questionnaire with multiple choice and open ended questions. There were 4 groups with different types of treatment: 1) explicit pre-instruction and explicit feedback, 2) explicit pre-instruction and implicit feedback, 3) no pre-instruction and implicit feedback, 4) explicit pre-instruction and implicit feedback. While her results indicate non-significant statistical difference between the treatment groups, it was found that the metapragmatic discussion group demonstrated a higher level in the use of intensifiers and speech act appropriateness in apologies. It was found that the variation in instruction only influenced the use of low complexity linguistic items, while as for more complex strategies noticing may have occurred, but the use of actual strategies was not observed as this knowledge was not integrated in the interlanguage system of the learners. Pearson concludes that the learners in the metapragmatic instruction group were able to notice the pragmatic features, however, no quantitative analysis was conducted to support this claim and therefore the claim that noticing does not play a role may only be considered speculative. Moreover, it seems rational that no increase in pragmatic awareness for complex strategies should occur as the general language awareness for beginner language learners is low, and the author acknowledges this as well. In the present study, we are aiming to conduct a quantitative analysis to be able to make more robust claims, as well as conduct a study with higher proficiency level participants to reflect an appropriate level of difficulty.

In a more rigorous study, Witten (2004) also investigated the role of consciousness awareness in L2 Spanish speech acts acquisition. She observed beginner learners of Spanish in a semester-long course that employed interactive video as instruction. The participants received nine treatment sessions and interestingly, Witten focuses on enhancing the input claiming that it is more feasible to control the actions of the instructor than manipulate any other variables in the students' environment. The experimental group were asked to

find examples of L2 speech acts similar to those in their L1, and to note in which contexts certain grammatical forms were used. Her control group watched several videos and later completed quizzes on the content of the videos without attending to any pragmatic pragmatic content. After their treatments, the participants completed three activities: written feedback on what the learners noticed and whether they could articulate those features, oral role-play, and a multiple-choice quiz. The results indicated that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group on the written tasks and oral tasks, while the multiple-choice questionnaires indicated no difference between the two groups. Although the results from the tasks were inconsistent, two of the tasks show evidence of a pattern of enhanced pragmatic performance. However, the study did not employ a pre- and post-test format, which is necessary to be sure that differences between the groups occur because of the intervention, rather than on an accidental basis. In our study, a pre- and post-test design is employed to track the gains.

While there have been studies investigating speech acts from the perspective of the importance of level of proficiency or methods of pragmatic instruction, no research has focused on persuading as a speech act and investigating the potential of explicit instruction for it, therefore indicating a gap. Based on the theoretical overview of how persuasion fits into the field of L2 pragmatics in the previous sections and on how acquisition of pragmatic speech acts has been studied empirically, the next section of this literature review will cover how noticing is employed in teaching L2 pragmatics, and how it may therefore be used to raise awareness of persuasive discursive strategies.

1.6 Noticing in L2 pragmatics

Scholars working in the field of L2 pragmatics emphasise the importance of Interactional Competence (IC). Kasper (2006) defines interactional competence as the ability "to understand and produce social actions in their sequential contexts", importantly adding the capacity to construct social and discursive

identities. In words of Young (2009), IC includes being able to employ language resources in appropriate contexts. Scholars have attempted to raise learners' awareness about different types of resources used to accomplish social actions when looking at structure of interactions (e.g., Barraja-Rohan, 2011; Huth and Betz, 2019). For example, Félix-Brasdefer et al. (2006) describes an elaborate set of procedures that help to raise awareness among learners about the nature of conversational interactions. The author demonstrates how each action is delivered with linguistic means and how participants construct their roles and identities. Therefore, attempting to raise learners' awareness about different linguistic resources seems to be a long-standing approach to teaching certain aspects of pragmatics.

Consciousness-raising has been long favoured and promoted by a great number of researchers (Gass and Madden, 1985; Ellis, 1990; Ellis, 1995; Robinson, 1995; Schmidt, 1990; Smith, 1991, 1993), who all argue that explicit learning is more effective than implicit learning for L2 adult learners and provide some evidence to support their claim. Schmidt (1990) theorized that conscious processing is essential for the initial stages of language learning as it allows learners to form and tests hypotheses by attending to their acquired knowledge. Schmidt (1990) referred to this process as noticing and put forward the Noticing Hypothesis (NH). The NH has since been actively examined in different areas of language learning with some evidence both in favour and against the concept.

When it comes to the role of noticing in the acquisition of pragmatics, it has been emphasised in the work of numerous researchers (Judd, 1999; Kasper and Schmidt, 1996; Kasper and Rose, 1999; Schmidt, 1993, 1995). Kasper and Schmidt (1996) argued that there was a need for a teaching approach that would help language learners focus their attention on co-occurring features of relevant linguistic means and context. This can be accomplished by employing overt metapragmatic discussions, teaching materials, and some indirect means of

classroom discourse. Judd (1999) stated that consciousness-raising activities may help learners develop awareness of the pragmatic features of a target language. Schmidt (1993) argues that understanding of L2 pragmatic is based on attending to linguistic forms, functional meaning, and relevant context features. As noticing is essential for L2 learners, explicit instruction is seen as useful for facilitating language acquisition. From the pedagogical perspective, it has been shown that explicit identification of "portable" language resources and target norms is beneficial when trying to increase learners' awareness about resource diversification to accomplish social acts (Félix-Brasdefer and Hasler-Barker 2015).

In the context of the present study, noticing plays a key role. L2 learners tend to focus on getting their ideas across and not on achieving a native-like form (Taguchi et al., 2013). They focus on the functionality of their language without attempting to increase the felicity of their expressions, and it might sometimes be seen as restricting to their language development. In this study, we suggest employing noticing as a way to raise awareness of how persuasiveness is achieved by explicitly considering the most common strategies mentioned above. As the scope of this research does not let me indulge into the topic of whether nativelikeness is a viable construct, it should be emphasised that achieving a native-like form is commonly interpreted as attempting to use the exact form the native speakers use. It does not seem possible to convey persuasiveness in persuasive speech acts in the same way it is done in other speech acts (e.g., "Could you please do this for me?" for requesting, or "I really appreciate your help" for thanking). In this study we suggest using persuasive strategies and language patterns from the available work on native speakers' speeches, which is close in nature to set expressions that are used in other speech acts. These strategies may be used as a teachable component to highlight the importance of both following certain linguistic guidelines (in line with relative rigidity of speech acts) and enhancing language diversity.

Having considered how noticing may be employed to promote acquisition of persuasiveness within L2 pragmatics speech acts, the next section of this literature review will turn to discuss writing in L2 and how the persuasive speech act may be carried out in writing.

1.7 Pedagogical considerations for L2 persuasive writing

In this section of the literature review, I will briefly explain why writing was chosen to test the teachability of persuasive strategies by appealing to the literature that discusses L2 writing issues. I will also cover the importance of L1 writing in L2 writing, research on emotional writing, and how persuasive writing instruction may benefit from employing linguistic noticing instead of a more common focus on strategy-instruction.

When it comes to writing, one of the main subskills of L2 acquisition on higher levels, it has been notoriously known as the hardest to master in L2 context (Han & Hiver, 2018). Writing is a challenge even for L1 English secondary school students that helps them prepare for their upcoming academic reality (Pessoa et al., 2017), but these skills are also applied more widely later on in life. Hirvela (2017) points out that being able to write effective L2 argumentative essays is an important indicator of learners' general L2 writing ability. It may be explained by the fact that argumentative writing has different important language components at its core, which makes it a perfect tool for L2 examinations that many L2 learners have to sit. As L2 learners have to deal with both language and argumentation in their argumentative writing, it becomes challenging to focus on both at the same time (Jin et al., 2020), and language instructors have long had the need to facilitate this type of writing (Hirvela, 2017).

Swain (1993) suggested that output helps learners process language more effectively and on a deeper level than engaging with input through listening and reading alone. When using writing as a language learning tool, learners may reflect on their essays, notice gaps in their L2 and attempt to fill them when engaged into writing (Manchón & Williams, 2016), and later bring these skills into their other major L2 skills. Moreover, nowadays a lot of communication is done through writing, and even though it is not always writing by hand, it still remains important to be able to appeal to advantages of writing as an offline processing task that allows for more reflection. Given how both challenging and important writing is, we suggest employing noticing to promote acquisition of persuasiveness as a pragmatic component within L2 writing.

Turning to empirical research, a lot of attention has been paid to different L2 writers' individual variables that influence successful writing. It has generally been found that L1 writing is a strong predictor of L2 writing (Carson et al., 1990; Carson and Kuehn, 1992; Ma and Wen, 1999; Wang and Wen, 2002). For instance, Hirose and Sasaki (1994) found that the students' L1 writing ability played a significant role in the quality of their L2 writing, which is similar to the general agreement in the field. However, they only tested 19 Japanese L1 university students, and those students all majored in British and American studies. All of the above makes it hard to generalise these results onto a broader language learning audience. Interestingly, when it comes to L2 variables, one of the most common variables is that skilled writers have been known to receive rhetorical instruction both in their L1 and L2 (Sasaki & Hirose, 1996; Victori, 1999), however in modern L2 English course books this component is not well-represented. This finding seems logical as most people improve their L1 writing skills in a formal school setting, where a lot of rhetoric instruction is commonly done. It supports the idea behind the present study, suggesting that rhetoric instruction enhances writing ability, and should therefore be employed in teaching L2 writing.

A peculiar psychological variable for L2 writing is emotion. There is not a lot of research done in this area, but it is closely related to the idea of the present study that looks directly at how attempting to persuade someone to support one's emotional stance may be done through writing. A rigorous study was done by Clachar (1999), who studied the works of 55 L2 English students from Puerto Rico aged 19-22 years old, with control for their language proficiency level and L1 writing skills. The researcher set out to explore what influence a writing prompt may have on the product of writing, if this prompt represents an emotional topic that covers a teething problem for the participants. The results of think-aloud protocols showed that when asked to produce an emotional piece of writing, students spent more time focusing on vocabulary, morphology and syntax, because they wanted to convey their intended meaning in its most expressive form. The students also demonstrated to be more concerned with the meaning-making components of specific linguistic features. However, the essays on the emotional topic were scored lower than on non-emotional due to less focus on clarity and structure, which are important for grading. The author concludes that this distinct processing of writing prompts certain writing behaviour, which leads to a better focus on linguistic features. The sample also seems to give solid grounds for generalisation. It should be considered reasonable, then, to provide learners with such topics that evoke some emotional response as it seems to motivate them to focus on the language they use.

Another important aspect that has been studied in regard to L2 writing and that can be linked to our study is type of writing instruction. As stated before, the present study will focus on noticing the linguistic features that are commonly used as they seem to play a role in persuading the audience. The scholarship has addressed various issues pertaining to writing instruction, including comparison of product and process approaches (the product approach focuses on the result that the writer wants to achieve, and the process approach focuses on analysing

how to achieve this result by reflecting on the audience, working on the structure, etc) in the works of Lim (200), and Chen (2005); the development of genre-based L2 writing instruction, which largely focuses on the difference between such types of writing as emails, essays, proposals etc, in the works of Hyland (2016), Devitt (2004), and Yasuda (2011); strategy-instruction as L2 writing pedagogy (De Silva and Graham, 2015), and some others.

There have been studies that focused particularly on L2 argumentative writing. Baghbadorani and Roohani (2014) investigated how strategy-based instruction affects L2 persuasive writing ability of 60 Iranian undergraduate students. The pre- and post- design was chosen for this study. They found that the Self-Regulated Strategy Development model improved the students' writing significantly, however, the control group receiving traditional writing instruction also improved. In their case, they measured format, content, organization and coherence, sentence construction and vocabulary, but no component that would directly measure persuasiveness was employed. Moreover, the researchers do not mention what exactly was meant by "traditional writing instruction", which is confusing. Nevertheless, their results indicate that explicit self-regulating strategy-based instruction seems to improve the students' persuasive writing, which is in line with some other studies (Nicholas et al., 2005; Yu-Wen, 2007; Fidalgo et al., 2008).

While all of these studies do report improvement in persuasive writing, they do not employ any measure that would directly assess how persuasive the produced texts are. The only measure in the present study is that of persuasiveness. Although how persuaded someone feels is largely subjective, using a scale may still reflect whether the texts achieve the main goal of a persuasive text, persuading the reader.

It is also important to note that itt is possible that L2 learners can only focus on a limited number of task aspects due to limited attention capacity (Skehan, 1998, 2014), leading to inaccurate language production, dysfluency etc. In this study, I propose facilitating writing by turning the focus away from pure argument or structure-oriented type of task to focusing on language. Undoubtedly, argument structure and ability to support one's argument is essential to argumentative writing, however, focusing on language may help enhance argumentation and should not be disregarded as a way to promote conscious language use. In case of persuasive writing, it may be done with the help of rhetoric persuasive strategies to enable a writer to connect with their audience on a deeper level and boost persuasiveness, as was already discussed above. While our writing task remains argumentative in nature and is technically speaking-oriented (as students write a speech and have to keep in mind that it will hypothetically later be delivered as an oral speech), it allows L2 learners to notice their train of thoughts. Writing a speech on a controversial topic that involves the writer emotionally makes them not only pay attention to their points and support to their argument, but also reflect on the form and how they can enhance their argument with a range of linguistics features.

This chapter considered some theoretical and empirical evidence of why persuasion should be considered a speech act in the field of pragmatics, how it can draw on the earlier research into the linguistic means of persuasion stemming from political discourse, and considered employing noticing to teach it.

2. Methodology

This chapter will present and justify the methodology used in the study. A mixed methods design was used in order to address the research questions of the study, accounting for the strengths of both types of research design, qualitative and quantitative, and aiming to counteract the limitations of each. As Dornyei (2010) put it, this design may be characterised by good internal and external validity, because it provides evidence through multiple methods. It may potentially make the results generalisable and more robust, and it provides an opportunity to approach a phenomenon in complimentary ways (Lazaraton, 2005).

A teaching intervention with a pre-/post- design was conducted, and the results were provided for quantitative and quantitative analysis. The quantitative design was chosen to explore the statistical strength of the results, and to provide a clear representation of the results. A qualitative strand was chosen to explore what features the coders paid attention to when asked to evaluate a persuasive speech, and to provide a deeper insight into the answers to the research questions.

2.1 Research questions

Given the studies discussed in Chapter 2, the following research questions were investigated in the present study:

1. Does explicit instruction of common persuasive strategies have impact on the degree of persuasiveness of a written text?

2. What linguistic features that enhance persuasion seem the most teachable?

These RQs have the following hypothesis and a prediction that are associated with each of them respectively:

H1: Explicit instruction of common persuasive strategies leads to an increase in the participants' ability to produce more persuasive texts. Thus, the participants who receive this instruction produce more persuasive texts at post-test (after the instruction) than at pre-test (prior to instruction). The same change does not occur (or occurs to a lesser extent) in a control group who do not receive the intervention. (H0: Explicit instruction of common persuasive strategies does not lead to an increase in the participants' ability to produce more persuasive texts as the participants do not produce more persuasive texts at post-test than at pre-test).

2. The coders highlight the same range of features that are taught during the intervention and give comments emphasising these features.

To test the hypothesis and prediction, the data from language learners were collected during an intervention, held at several language schools across Oxford, UK, and online via Microsoft Teams.

2.2 Participants

The participants in the study were adults high level learners of English as foreign language, meaning they were born in countries with other official languages and did not grow up speaking English. Overall, there were 40 participants (5 male and 35 female), 20 in the experimental group and 20 in the control group.

There were two strands of recruitment: from language schools and online via social networks. For the recruitment from language schools, school principals were contacted via email, who then upon agreement recruited participants from

within their schools. With online participants, a recruitment message was posted on social networks (Instagram and Telegram), where the prospective participants expressed their willingness to participate. The language schools were approached and asked to recruit participants from their students body (the main criteria – being older than 18 years old, and have at least B2 level of proficiency in English), and the same criteria were applied to online recruitment. Originally, the project was intended to be delivered entirely in language schools only with the target of 40 participants, but due to lack of cooperation from language schools the researcher had to recruit half of the participants additionally from social networks. In the end, 19 participants were recruited from language schools and 21 participants were recruited online. Figure 1 represents the distribution of participants across conditions.

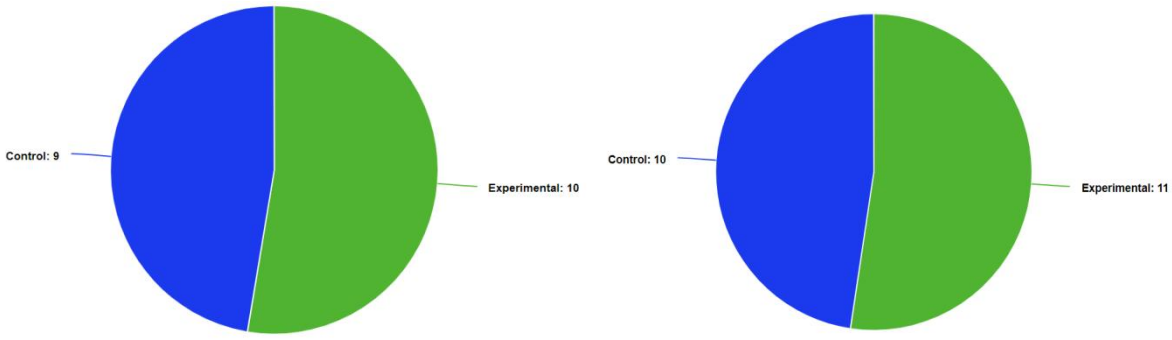
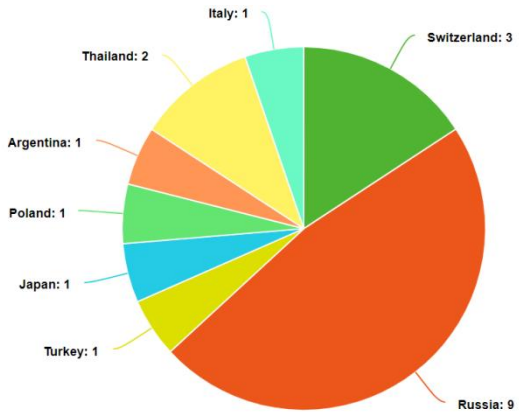


Figure 1. Participants recruited from language schools (left) and recruited online (right).

All participants were checked to have the appropriate level of English (min B2 - max C1), which was confirmed via the placement tests at language schools (19 participants), or via international language examinations such as IELTS and C1 Advanced (17 participants), or via a personal assessment from the researcher, based on a short interview and a written task to test the English language ability (4 participants).

Although it was initially planned for the group to include a variety of L1s to allow for more generalisability, it turned out to be impossible, so the researcher had to turn to recruiting participants on other platforms she had access to, which were in Russian. Thus the sample is biased towards L1 Russian speakers. Figures 2 and 3 below summarise the data about the participants' countries of residency as a proxy for their L1s. for each of the conditions. As can be clearly seen from the figures below, the data is skewed towards Russian speakers, and there are more L1s in the experimental group. The implications of this will be discussed later.



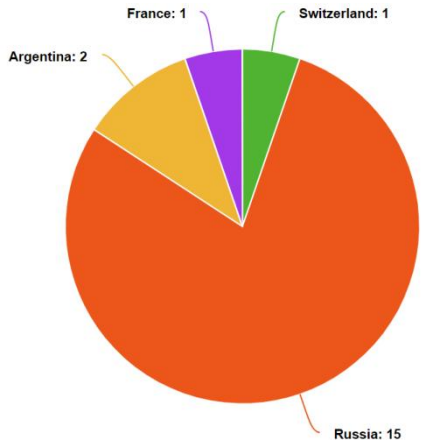


Figure 2. L1s of the experimental group Figure 3. L1s of the control group

In regards to condition allocation based on gender, there was an attempt to control for it (for experimental group: N=21, 16 female, 5 male; for control group: N=19, 12 female, 7 male). The same was done for age (for experimental group: N=21, M=23.4, STD=7.8; for control group: N=19, M=24.9, STD=6.4).

The two coders were recruited individually. The coders were both female students of a post-graduate programme in applied linguistics aged 22 and 23 years old. There were given specific instructions that will be covered in the chapter on data coding.

2.3 Research procedure and materials

The participants were randomly allocated to two groups, each related to either an experimental or control condition. A pre-test and post-test design was implemented. Pre- and post-tests were identical across the two groups and comprised a pen-and-paper written task.

At pre-test, both groups were asked to write a 300-word public speech on a topic of their choice from a set of suggested topics. 40 minutes were allocated for writing, which was based on roughly how much time is allocated to tasks of this kind in international examinations such as IELTS or Cambridge examinations. This word number/ limit corresponded to general argumentative task requirements in international English language examinations. The chosen questions and topics were contentious in order to evoke emotional response and interest the participants in arguing their point and expressing their opinion, as well to avoid bias from the scorers based on the participants' opinions. The participants were explicitly instructed to argue their points in such way that they could persuade their audience to take their stand on a certain topic. They were also specifically instructed to write a speech, not an essay, to ensure the participants would understand the importance of appealing to their imaginary audience. The audience was not specified. The participants could choose one of the following questions:

1) Should governments track their citizens?
2) Should abortion be made illegal?
3) Should parents take obligatory "ready-to-parent" tests before having children?
4) Should assisted suicide be made legal?
5) Should grades be abolished across all levels of education?

The experimental group then proceeded with the intervention (elaborated below) and later with their post-test, which was the same as pre-test with the only difference that the participants had to choose another topic for their speech. This was done in order to avoid repetition effects. The post-test for the control group was identical to the experimental group.

For the intervention, a lecture-based class on possible persuasive strategies was taught by the researcher. For the experimental group, everything was done in one session: they did their pre-test, followed by the intervention, followed by their post-test. For language schools, the intervention was done in person, and for the online participants it was done via Microsoft Teams. Each intervention group consisted of 4 to 8 people. The control group did their pre-test on one day and their post-test in some time after. The pre- and post-test were done individually, and the intervention was conducted in a group. The following class design was implemented.

At the beginning of class, students were asked to elaborate on what usually contributes to persuasiveness. The participants worked together as a whole group and named such components as body language, argumentation, connection with the audience, and finally language forms. The last component was used as a link to move to the lecture part. This part took around 10 minutes.

During the lecture, the lecturer presented Power Point slides with excerpts from the adapted taxonomy by Wodak and Reisigl (2009), explaining how and why each of the strategies is used and giving examples and trying to elicit examples from the students. The students were encouraged to make notes, and the researcher also drew a mind map of all the discussed strategies on the blackboard to ensure the students would have something to refer to in the final part of the study. This part took about 25 minutes.

Finally, the students received a set of 4 speeches on abortion, gun violence, and war. The students were asked to read through these speeches and highlight the bits where the discussed strategies were used. The class instructor remained as passive as possible, giving the students time and space to apply the knowledge and to elicit first signs of at learning. This part took about 15 minutes.

The present study has gained ethical approval from University of Oxford Central university Research Ethics Committee (Appendix A). All participants were presented with a Participant Information Sheet (Appendix D), which specified the procedure and the goals of the study, the potential risks, what will happen with the data, and the contact details of the researcher and the PI. Each participant was asked to sign Consent forms (Appendix E), agreeing to take part in the study. The participants received a Certificate of Appreciation as evidence that they took part in the study (Appendix F).

3. **Data coding**

3.1 Data coding

There were two coders who coded independently. The coding was blind for both quantitative and qualitative stages, meaning when they read each text, the coders were unaware whether it was a pre- or a post-test, or whether it came from experimental or control condition. The coders were not aware of the type of intervention that was given to the participants during the intervention and of the types of strategies that the researcher would look at.

For the quantitative analysis, while there are several very rigorous and robust scales, they tend to categorise and measure isolated language traits (e.g., reasoning only, or persuasive appeals only, as in Connor and Lauer, 1988) without focusing on the general perception. Moreover, coders would require intense training to be able to apply the scales to texts, which does not seem to support the idea of measuring the overall impact of language strategies on non-specialist audience. Therefore, the final scale was built on the concept of measuring general persuasive attitude, and was based on the work of Burleson and his persuasive adaptiveness scale that goes from 0 to 8. The coders were asked to give a score from 1 to 8 of how persuasive they find the texts, where 1 stands for “not persuasive at all”, i.e. the text does not evoke even a slight change in the attitude and does engage the audience emotionally, and 8 is for “very persuasive”.

Before starting, the experimenter introduced the coders to the difference between commonly measured types of persuasion: belief, attitude, and intention, corresponding to accepting arguments, overall evaluation of a text, and performing a specific behaviour respectively (Hoeken, 1994). It was done in-person. The coders clarified that they needed to look at the persuasive emotional

appeal within language that is used, and not at dry arguments. The difference was exemplified with the following: “eating meat is bad for the environment” is an argument, but “eating meat causes suffering and destroys the lives of thousands of innocent living creatures” is the same argument with some negatively loaded language units that produce a certain emotional image. The coders were asked to focus on their attitude, because it seemed to be the concept that reflected the general idea of being persuaded rather than focus on accepting arguments or being prone to a certain behaviour after reading the speech. This was done to define what effect was expected from the speeches, and therefore the intensity of which should be measured.

While it was impossible to completely avoid the bias from the personal opinions of the coders, they were instructed to remain open-minded: 1) by remembering that the topics are controversial and may be approached from different angles, and, if it would seem infeasible to detach from their personal stand, 2) by evaluating the texts based on what effect they would have on an audience with no prior knowledge or opinion on the matter. It was specified that the coders should not focus on argumentation, but on the way it is framed and how language helps emphasise arguments. The coders were also instructed not to pay much attention to errors as it may switch their focus from meaning to form, as well as may have a significant negative effect on evaluation (Planken et al., 2018). To ensure general validity and validity in following these instructions, the coders were chosen to be native speakers of English (British and American variants). Both coders were female and with a background in linguistics/ English literature (i.e. a bachelor’s degree in either). Both spoke English as their first language, as well as Arabic and French.

For the qualitative analysis, the coders were asked to highlight the linguistic features that contributed to persuasiveness in each speech. They were also asked to leave comments if there was anything they wanted to add about the texts.

Based on the results from the quantitative analysis, several texts were chosen from the participants whose scores increased from pre- to post-test for both coders, and from the participants whose scores decreased from pre- to post-test for both coders. These data were chosen for qualitative analysis, because they may shed light on whether the experimental group participants improved with the help of the strategies that were taught during the intervention, as well as what strategies seem to be the easiest to comprehend and use after the intervention. Upon looking at the texts during the qualitative analysis stage, the researcher found that there were two texts from one participant that had to be excluded from the study, because they did not suffice the 300-word limit requirement as they only had ~130 words each. In the final analysis, the data from 39 participants were examined.

The next chapter will cover both quantitative and qualitative data analysis and present the results of the study.

4. **Data analysis and results**

4.1. Quantitative analysis

RQ1 inquires whether explicit instruction of common persuasive strategies has impact on the degree of persuasiveness of a written text. Statistically, it can be evaluated by seeing if the participants in the experimental group improve from pre- to post-test more than the participants in the control group.

The quantitative analysis started with checking for normality of data distribution. Shapiro-Wilk test of normality was conducted for the pre- and post-test data for both coders. The results indicated that the data is not normally distributed, $W(40) = 0.9$, $p = <0.05$. As the data were not normally distributed, non-parametric tests were used for subsequent analyses (Field, 2018).

Next, Spearman's correlation coefficient was chosen as a way to check interrater reliability between the two coders. The results indicated that there is a small, but significant correlation between the coders at pre-test ($r = 0.357$, $p = 0.024$, $df = 38$). However, there is no evidence of such a correlation at post-test ($r = -0.045$, $p = 1.54$, $df = 38$). Given the absence of evidence of correlation, at least at post-test, subsequent analyses were run separately for each coder. The implications of lack of consistency in coding will be discussed in the final Discussion chapter.

To be able to find the answer to RQ1, which is whether explicitly teaching persuasive strategies has impact on the degree of persuasiveness, we first plotted pre- and post-test performance in Figure 4. The bar charts show the distribution of mean scores across the pre- and post test data from both coders with comparison between two conditions, control and experimental, with standard error bars. Upon visual inspection, we can see that both coders give stronger ratings overall to the control than experimental group, but this is presumably due

to chance sampling differences between the groups; critically, visual inspection suggests that, according to both coders, the experimental group improve while we do not see this clearly in the control group. Figure 5 demonstrates the gains scores plots showing this more clearly. To investigate whether this was true statistically, we performed non-parametric independent t-tests (Mann-Whitney-U) on the gains scores (i.e. the difference between pre- and post-test) as the dependent variable and condition (experimental versus control) as the independent variable.

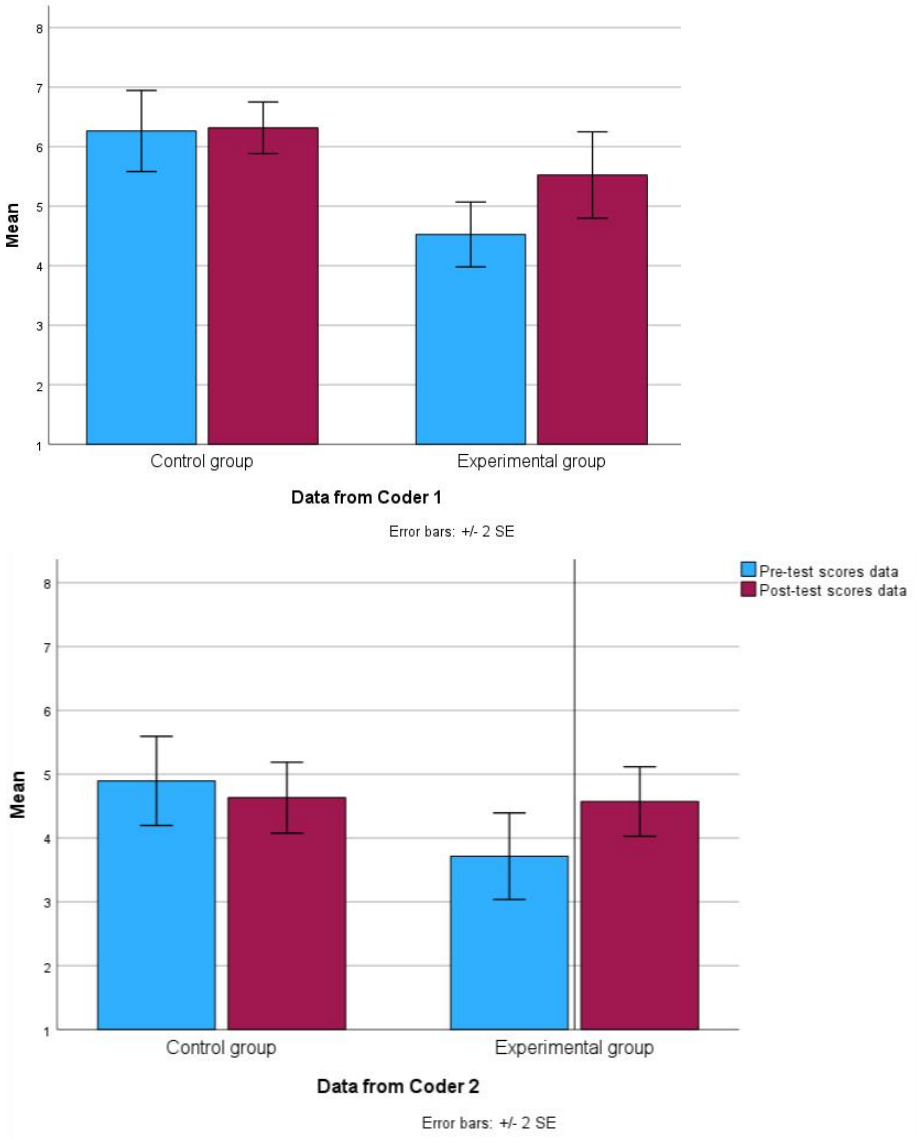


Figure 4. Mean scores for both groups from each coder

The results of the previous test suggest that for coder 1 there is a significant effect of condition (U= -1.882, n=38, p=0.034) while the effect was marginal for coder 1 (U= -1.543, p=0.066). To further investigate this, separate non-parametric t-tests (Wilcoxon signed ranks test) were run with gains scores as the dependent variable for each of the conditions separately. The results indicate that the gains in the experimental group are marginally significant for both coders (for Coder 1: T=156, n=21 , p= 0.052; for Coder 2: T=127, n=21, p=0.067), and the gains in the control group are non-significant for both coders (for Coder 1: T=71.5, n=19, p=0.853; for Coder 2: T=49.5, n=19, p=0.545). Figure 5 represents the difference in gains more clearly.

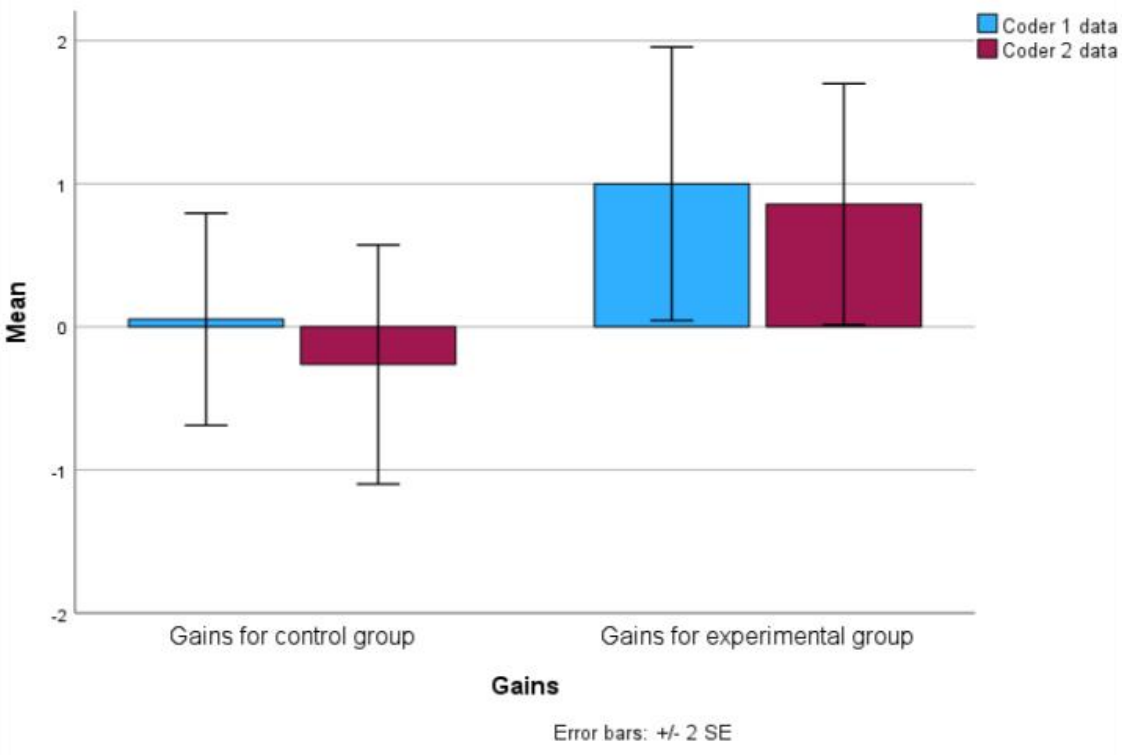


Figure 5. Mean gains scores for both groups from each coder

4.2 Qualitative analysis: sample rationale

While there are several variations of what may be investigated from the qualitative perspective, the present study focuses on the teachability of the persuasive component, and it seems most relevant to focus on the group that received instruction. Therefore, in this section of data analysis, we took an approach of identifying the participants who improved or did not improve in the experimental group, to see what linguistic features the coders highlighted in the texts as contributing to persuasiveness, and whether those features seem to be part of the strategies taught during the intervention. To conduct the qualitative analysis, the parts of the texts which had been highlighted by the coders, and their comments were examined. Those participants whose scores improved from pre- to post-test according to both coders (N=10) were identified as "improved", while those who did not improve according to either coder were identified as "not improved" (N=4). The pre- and post- test scripts for each of these participants were then used as the dataset for qualitative analyses. Both of the groups may shed light on whether there was any uptake of the intervention material, what strategies the participants were able to implement, and what may have impeded learning and further use of the strategies.

In the group that showed improvement, the language units highlighted by the coders were matched to the themes, or rather the strategies that were taught during the intervention, by the researcher. In the group with no improvement, the researcher aimed to identify the same strategies and/ or the reason why there was no improvement in contrast to the other group.

4.2.1. Thematic analysis: data analysis and results

Thematic analysis (TA) was chosen as a method for working with the qualitative data. It is a useful method for examining different perspectives and emphasising

similarities and differences (Braun and Clarke, 2006). TA is useful for summarising the key features of data sets, especially large ones, because the researcher is forced to structure the data in a meticulous manner, therefore producing a clear final report (King, 2004). However, while TA is flexible, it can lead to lack of coherence and inconsistency when developing themes derived from the data (Holloway and Todres, 2003). To solve this, in our study we are combining both the inductive and the deductive approach to handling data: there were 9 codes that were defined before the start of analysis and the researcher was open to more codes emerging from the data.

The themes were pre-defined according to the 9 strategies that were taught during the workshop. These are the following:

1) juxtaposition of "us vs them", including antonyms, metaphors, personal pronouns (we vs they), and spatial references;
2) external dependence or threat, including naturalistic metaphors;
3) the strategy of casting doubt, or the "yes, but" figure;
4) the strategy of avoidance (agent deletion), or euphemising;
5) telling personal stories/ appealing to personal experiences;
6) political continuity, i.e. emphasising with temporal adverbs such as "always", "never", "since" etc;
7) using hyperboles;
8) positively/ negatively loaded words/ ideas;
9) rhetorical questions;

Additionally, themes 10 and 11 arose from the analysis:

10) a pure idea/ argument/ concept;
11) usage of linking words.

In theme 10, the coders highlighted certain phrases that did not match any of the above mentioned taught strategies, which were put together under “a pure idea/ argument/ concept”. Those ideas represented newly introduced ideas rather than contributed to the arguments by emphasising them through language, e.g. “eating meat is bad for the planet”. Theme 11 represents the usage of linking words that the coders found helpful, potentially because these contribute to a better structure and can therefore help emphasise certain points.

Each highlighted phrase/ sentence was matched with a code. The researcher first counted how many occurrences of each strategy there were for the experimental group at pre-test and at post-test. The results are visualized in Figure 6 and Figure 7, where the labels represent the themes/ strategies, and the digits indicate how many times each strategy was used. It is important to note that the participants commonly used several strategies in one highlighted sentence or phrase, which can be easily explained by the fact that some strategies suggest syntactic patterns, while others are more vocabulary focused, making them an ideal combination for maximum effect, and these were counted separately. Additionally, if both coders found a certain phrase/ feature effective, they were counted separately (e.g, both coders highlighted the same phrase, so they were counted as 2 instances of strategy X).

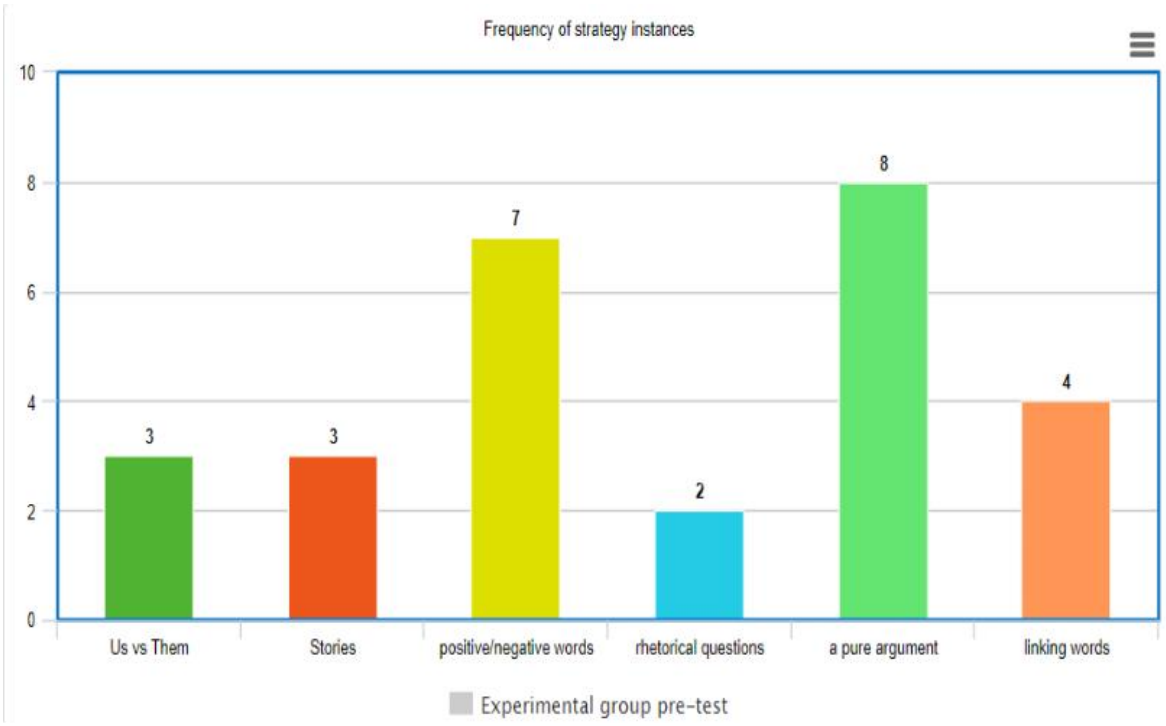


Figure 6. Frequency of strategy instances at pre-test

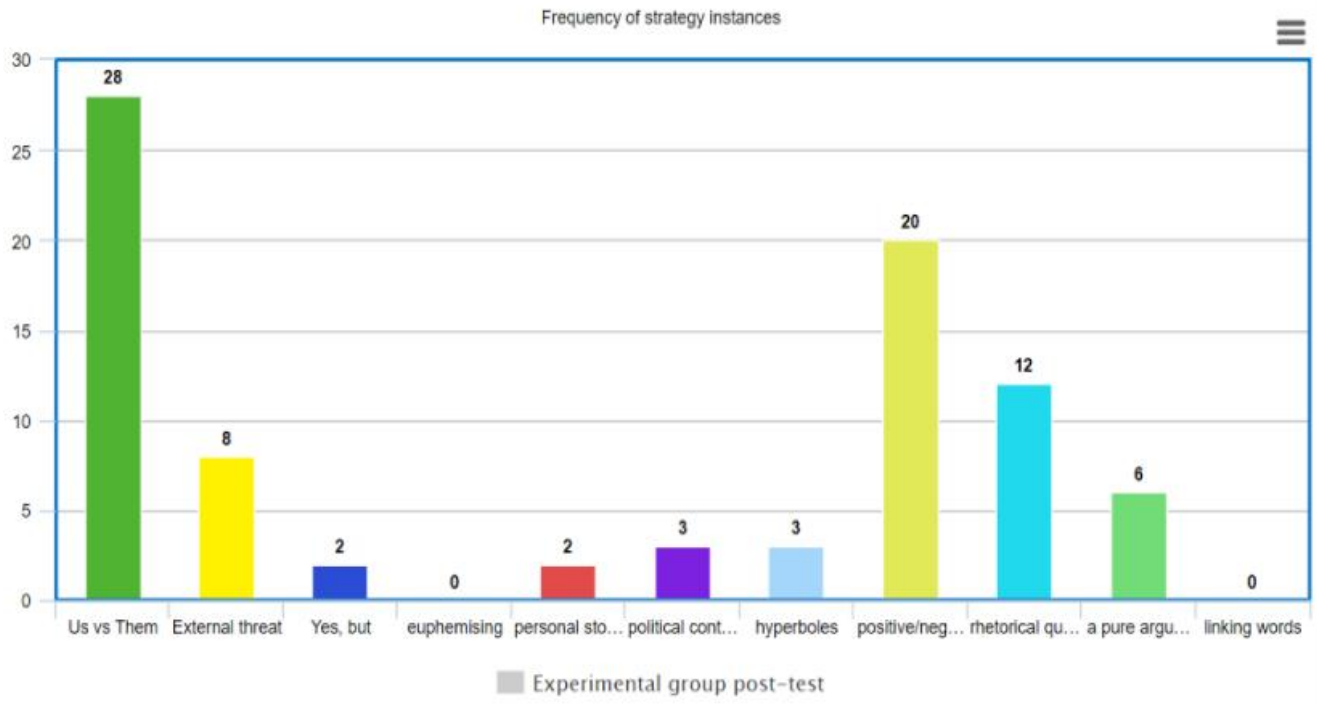


Figure 7. Frequency of strategy instances at post-test

Based on the results that are represented in the bar charts, it can be seen that the experimental group demonstrated different ranges of strategy use, improving both in regard to the types of strategy use and the frequency of strategy use. The only

strategy that seems to have declined in use is the strategy of using personal stories or appealing to the audience by creating an image with the help of a story. The use of pure arguments and linking words declined as well, however as noted above those were *not* strategies that were taught in the intervention, having arisen from the analysis as something the coders highlighted as contributing to persuasiveness. Further analysis will examine in detail how the most and least frequent strategies were used before and after the intervention in order to provide insights into what participants have gained from the intervention.

4.2.2 The most frequent strategies

Starting with the most frequent strategies at post-test, it can be noted that the concept of the juxtaposition "us vs. them" was used most often in the post-test, in 28 instances. It is not surprising as this strategy represents an umbrella of linguistic means that realise the idea of opposition by either emphasising the similarities between the audience and the speaker, therefore appealing for supporting an opinion, or the differences between the view of the audience/ the speaker and the opposite opinion. The use of personal pronouns occurred in the texts often, which may have created a feeling of unity with the speaker and invited the audience to share in their ideas. Some participants wrote:

"We fought for the rights we have today… we have to defend them."
"...we're forced to defend our personal security. "
"They want to track us in every possible place, when we go for a walk to a park…"
"They even don't care about mother's health."

One of the coders mentioned in the notes that "good direct address of the audience at the end will make them feel more personally included as they are invited to join the speaker in her opinion", referring to a highlighted sentence

starting with “I ask you to join me”. Another addition to this aspect is the comment saying that in this speech there were “arguments seeking to unite the audience and speaker” that contributed to persuasiveness, which also suggests that the participant has used the strategy.

Some more complex ways of establishing the opposition were used, such as metaphors or comparisons. These were not as widely used, but it is easy to notice how the previous technique is incorporated into the sentences:

“I am certain that everyone here has a mother, a father, friends or children, therefore I believe that we have our common ground in regard to our evaluation of the human lives. And yet, some people think it is okay to discard one of us no different from what we do to a tumor.”
“…have always understood where to draw the line and how to defend our national values and traditions. We will not let this bureaucratic tsunami destroy our unity in this matter.”
“And if in life you decide how to live, you must be able to decide how to die.”

Further on, the strategy of using negatively/ positively loaded language units was used in 22 instances. It was a popular strategy with the participants potentially, because it is not as cognitively demanding as coming up with a metaphor, but allowed them to create a certain image and evoke an emotional response. Among the sentences highlighted by the coders, the following examples were found:

“We should avoid suicide and help the people that are suffering.”
“Think about the hell, hell on earth...”
“Women will be doing abortions anyway, it is just going to be illegal… it can lead to someone’s death.”
“Today, like almost every other day of the year, the misogynistic government is putting it’s focus on eliminating fundamental women’s right on healthcare.”

The third most often used strategy was the strategy of asking rhetorical questions, with 12 instances found in the texts by the researcher. During the intervention, this strategy was presented as effective by the researcher on the grounds that rhetorical questions instil an idea without directly stating it: rhetorical have the potential to enhance the processing of message content as they help elicit judgements (Howard, 1990). It also seemed easy to implement for the students as making a question usually does not pose a problem at high proficiency levels. The following examples were found in the participants' writing and highlighted by the coders:

"Who wants to see a person we love suffer? Nobody."
"Could you look into each other's eyes and tell them that they used to be merely a lump of meat?"
"When that unborn child have the potential to become what you are today, how could you treat them as merely objects?"
"Would you forbid an abortion for the young-aged girls who were rapped, especially if she is young girl? I want all the people who suggest those laws to publicly announce that you are agreeing to be signed up for ruining the lives of those girls!"

The strategy of creating/ talking about an external threat was highlighted in 8 instances. All these instances are merged with some other strategies. It is a useful and convenient strategy, because it appeals to the basic need for security and safety. The participants needed to talk about a negative phenomenon or event and to oppose it to the idea they tried to promote in their speech. Some examples are:

"They even don't care about mother's health."
"We will not let this bureaucratic tsunami destroy our unity in this matter."

7 instances of pure argumentation occurred that were deemed persuasive by the coders. It is understandable that appealing to reason was persuasive enough without any linguistic enhancement, especially if the coders found the ideas matching their own. The examples of pure argumentation are the following:

"Women wants to have their rights and they must have a full access on what they want to do with their body, and they must decide themselves ether they want children or not. This rule is just a step back on what we were fighting for a very long time. "
"I would like to remind that human fetus in the female womb is not a human yet."
"We all know that being the father or not has always been the choice for the man, and for women this is still a choice…"

Having considered the most frequent strategies, the next section will cover the least used strategies.

4.2.3 The most infrequent strategies

With 0 instances found, the strategy of avoidance (agent deletion) and euphemising was not found in any of the participants' texts either pre- or post the intervention. This may be because this strategy is complex and should take more time and practice to be learned. While euphemising may be used in metaphors (e.g., "eternal rest" when talking about death), it did not seem to be the case within this sample.

As few as 2 instances were found of the strategy of casting doubt, or the "yes, but" figure. The strategy offers both a syntactic pattern and suggests framing an idea in a contradictory way, which may be time-consuming and effortful, leading to few attempts to use it. The examples are the following:

”Yes, grades help create a system of measuring children’s abilities and add objectivity to a selection process, but here, in this country, grades do not reflect the actual knowledge.”
“Yes, they claim… but they forgot to mention they are depriving us of our own freedom and turn us into their slaves.”

Following the previous strategy, the strategy of personal appeal/ using personal stories was as unpopular with only 2 instances. It is surprising that this strategy was not more frequent as it is commonly used. The reason for that might be that developing a whole storyline to support an argument is commonly done in oral speech, not written, and that it is also time-consuming. While there were no direct uses of the strategy that were highlighted (i.e. referring to the speaker’s personal experience), the following examples add a storyline that might appeal to the audience:

“...just let you imagine what the woman went through?”
“(who probably would have)… done anything to get an A.”

The strategy of political continuity was found in 3 instances. This strategy is easy to implement, but it was not used a lot perhaps as it is very brief. It does, however, create an image of a certain political stand and its development over time:

”Have you better thought about helping and supporting them financially? Of course not, we are talking again and again about limitations, prohibitions, restrictions.”
“Today, like almost every other day of the year, the misogynistic government is putting it’s focus on eliminating fundamental women’s right on healthcare.”

The strategy of using hyperboles received little attention with its 2 instances, probably due to the fact that exaggeration requires more cognitive effort as it is creative in nature, and is in fact a separate skill. The following examples demonstrate the two instances of this strategy use:

"..who aren't willing to tolerate unprecedent attacks…"
"And yet, some people think it is okay to discard one of us no different from what we do to a tumor."

This section analysed what strategies corresponded to the sentences highlighted by the coders as contributing to persuasion. The next section will focus on the participants from the experimental group that showed no improvement or whose scores deteriorated from pre- to post-test with the goal of qualitatively asses the writing and attempt to provide reasons as to why 4 participants in the experimental group did not improve from pre- to post-test.

4.2.4 No improvement/ deterioration in the experimental group

Participant number 10 tried to use several strategies such as giving anecdotal evidence ("let's imagine...") and using first person pronouns, but the speech seems to neither tap into the emotional perception of the topic, nor do the language strategies enhance the arguments. This may be due to the topic effect as the participants were asked to write their second speech on a topic different from their first essay: they may have simply chosen a more interesting topic for their first essay and did not apply as much effort with their second one. The coders did not highlight anything strategy-related. One coder highlighted some linking words and introductory phrases in post-test writing such as "there are some ways to evaluate students", which adds value the importance of structure and reflects that it was important to this coder.

Commenting on the post-test speech from participant 17, one of the coders notes that “the messy structure detracts from the writing”. The writing generally seems disconnected, the idea is not clear. No strategy use was found. In contrast, looking at their pre-test speech, it may be seen that it was more coherent, it was well-structured and well-written; the second speech reads more like an essay rather than a speech. This may again be due to the topic effect: their first speech was on abortion, while their second was on parenting tests, which may not have tapped into their interest. This example illustrates how other aspects of writing, other than persuasiveness, might be influencing the coders scores.

Participant number 26 made good use of the strategies in both of their texts, however the topics do not seem to be supported by any factual information. While the goal was to focus on the language, it was also important to remember that the linguistic means only enhance the arguments, not substitute them. This may have made their writing weaker as there was no substance in the writing. It is essential for any type of writing and cannot be overlooked no matter how experienced the coders may be in working with language and differentiating between its aspects. No comments from the coders were given, suggesting the speech did not stand out in any way.

Finally, for participant number 38 one of the coders commented that they used a “nice broad opening highlighting the complexity of the topic” in their pre-test speech, and “emotive and uniting language” in their post-test speech. The participant is a strong writer (score 7 out of 8 from both coders for their pre-test text), and they made good use of the strategies even in their first piece of writing, which may indicate that they potentially did not gain anything during the workshop. Their score went down to 6 and 5 at post-test according to the coders. Another important aspect was found upon closer looking at the writing: the participant chose the wrong topic for their second speech. The participant chose the topic from the wrong list, which was not an emotionally charged one and was

added to the presentation in case there would be some time left at the end of the intervention as a back-up exercise. The topic they ended up writing on was not one of the suggested emotionally-charged topics, which may have influenced the results.

6. Discussion

6.1 General discussion

The present study aimed to introduce the concept of persuasion into L2 pragmatics, and to assess whether using consciousness-raising for this aspect of pragmatics would be an effective teaching approach. This was done by conducting an intervention with the experimental group (N=20), during the course of which the researcher outlined some of the most common persuasive strategies taken from the work of Wodak and Reisigl (2009) on political discourse. Both groups of participants, experimental and control, had to write speeches, the main goal being to persuade the audience to take the stand introduced in their texts. The participants were given 5 question prompts and had to choose one that was most important for them each time they were writing, at pre-test and at post-test. The results were later compared to those of the control group (N=19) who also did the pre- and post-tests but did not get an intervention. Two coders were asked to assess the works on a scale from 1 to 8 and to highlight and/or give comments on parts of the texts that seemed to contribute to persuasiveness most. The results tentatively indicate that the experimental group made larger gains that the control group according to both coders. While the gains for the experimental group do not seem significant in practical sense and only equal 1 score point for coder 1 and 0,86 score point for coder 2, it is important to acknowledge that the diagram represents the mean scores, not individual scores for each of the participants. One-sided p values signify that the gains in data from Coder 1 are marginally significant (0,066>0,05) and that the gains in data from for Coder 2 are significant (0,034 <,05 respectively). The qualitative analysis revealed that the participants in the experimental group were more likely to use the strategies of juxtaposition of us vs them, the strategy of using positively/ negatively loaded words, and the strategy of using rhetorical

questions best of all. The current chapter will discuss the results and their implications, the limitations of the study, and suggest further directions.

The findings of the present study seem to support the Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990), especially Schmidt's claims on the role conscious awareness plays in L2 pragmatics acquisition (Schmidt, 1993, 1995, 2001). It is claimed that Pragmatic Consciousness Raising (PCR), as suggested by Rose (1994), may enhance learners acquisition of pragmatics greatly by attracting their attention to specific L2 pragmatic features, noticing those features in the input, and later turning this explicit knowledge into their pragmatic performance. Explicit teaching of L2 pragmatic features in the form of consciousness-raising seems to facilitate the learning of the features that may otherwise be unnoticed by the learners. As pointed out by Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1985), if no such approach is implemented in L2 learning and teaching, learners may need years of immersion into the language to acquire L2 pragmatic competence. While it may be possible for ESL learners to acquire L2 pragmatics implicitly over the years, it does not seem so for EFL learners due to very limited access to L2 environment. Although this study was the first to investigate persuasion as part of pragmatic development of L2 English learners, there have been different results in the previous research into consciousness-raising activities for L2 pragmatics acquisition. The results of the present study are in line with the previous findings that support the hypothesis and argue that noticing aids in promoting pragmatic structures, leading to their acquisition and extensive use in performance (Fotos, 1993; Norris and Ortega, 2000; Witten, 2004; Narita, 2012; Takimoto, 2012; Abolfathiasl and Abdullah, 2015; Bardovi-Harlig et al., 2015).

In SLA, it seems important to reflect not only on how people express gratefulness, regret, politeness etc, but also what pragmatic routines may be used to enhance persuasiveness in one's speech, if any. Persuasion is a unique, complex speech goal, because it cannot be limited to the use of fixed pragmatic routines, such as

e.g. “I am sorry for your loss” or “please accept my apology” that are commonly considered of ceremonial nature and do not boast a lot of flexibility. It is, on the one hand, an advantage, because the learners of lower levels of proficiency may easily acquire and practice those routines. On the other hand, it may almost feel restricting to have to limit oneself to some predetermined language when it comes to higher level language learners. In the present study, persuasiveness was attempted to be regarded as a platform for creativity in L2 while focusing on a single goal of persuading the audience. It was approached from a traditional standpoint by selecting routine language features/ patterns, but instead of inserting those into a context, language learners were asked to manipulate those patterns more openly.

As was previously mentioned, the qualitative analysis revealed that the juxtaposition of us vs them was the most frequent strategy among those highlighted by the researchers, followed by using positively/ negatively loaded words, and rhetorical questions. These strategies were easily learned by the participants and later implemented in their speeches, because they represent clear concepts that are flexible and not too laborious: using the pronoun “we” or asking several rhetorical questions was most convenient to do as these are common patterns not only when it comes to persuasion, but in everyday conversations, too. The influence of L1 should also be acknowledged: most of these patterns are something the language learners are likely exposed to in their L1 input. However, some researchers previously argued that being aware of an L2 feature does not necessarily lead to acquisition or ability to use the feature effectively (Smith, 1993; Truscott, 1998; Judd, 1999). This statement may be interpreted as another important argument in favour of transferring the L1 skill of using linguistic features into L2: if something is done in one language, it does not mean it is equally done in another, and it should therefore be brought to attention. In contrast, some strategies were not learnt so well, which may have happened because they are not as easy to transfer from L1 into L2. Another reason for that

may be that the intervention did not give enough emphasis to those strategies, and it may be important to consider spending more time practising them in the future research.

6.2 Limitations and Future Directions

The present study has some limitations concerning study design and intervention design. This section also suggests ways how future work could improve in those aspects.

Starting with some sample limitations, although the data from one coder demonstrated that the gains in the experimental group were significant, for the other coder they were only marginally significant; this is probably because the sample was not large enough and the study is underpowered. More data from more participants is needed to be able to make more robust claims, as well as working with more coders. The future research can look at larger samples, which can increase reliability of the results.

Another limitation is that the participants' L1s were not homogeneous. It was at first thought to be an advantage of the study as it enhanced generalisability, but later the participant recruitment issue arose and the data became skewed towards Russian speakers. Additionally, it would be interesting to see if there is any interference with specific L1s, what their ideas of persuasion are, and how those may transfer into their L2 English performance, e.g. countries where citizens have had a long history of protest and active political involvement and have had a tradition of having a chance to voice their opinions. It might be that the participants from countries with more political engagement may be more inclined to use those (or any other) linguistic strategies due to more exposure and a more positive attitude towards expressing their political opinions, but for now this is just speculation. The same applies to coders, because choosing L2 English

speakers as coders may have produced certain results due to culture-specific conceptualisation and attitudes to persuasion. Even though all texts were in English, it does not reflect the culture the coders identify themselves with and from which they would make their assumptions on persuasiveness. Future research could look at how coders with different L1s evaluate persuasive speeches, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

As for coding, there were only two coders and the intercoder reliability test suggested that they were inconsistent. It is potentially interesting that for pre-test there was some agreement between the coders, but no evidence for this at post-test. It may have happened because the coders understood persuasion in their own way and it was different for the post-test texts. This may have happened because of subjectivity of the scale, due to which the coders defined persuasion in different ways. Even though it was emphasised that the coders should not focus on language errors and the participants were selected to be of high-level to minimise the occurrence of errors, some qualitative evidence suggests that there were other factors influencing the scores given by the coders, which may have skewed the results and altered the perceived degree of persuasion in the texts. This needs further investigation, and while the easiest way to resolve this issue would be to use more robust scales that break scores down into several categories and training the coders, it poses a threat to the original idea of the project – to capture the reaction on general audience. Even though the coders were selected to be language professionals, they had no prior training in analysing persuasion strategies, which we believe, on the one hand, added to the generalisability of the findings. On the other hand, if more rigorous training had been done, the coders would have probably been more consistent. A way to compromise may be recruiting a larger sample of coders (listeners or readers) and doing statistical analyses that capture the extent to which the effect holds across coders.

Regarding the workshop design and its generalisability, it was designed to be a lecture, so the results may vary if other activities are used during the intervention. A lecture-like design is not common in the modern EFL teaching, so it may be substituted with different teaching methods. Teaching the language of persuasion may be diverse, and it would be interesting to see different adaptations of the idea of teaching to use language to sound persuasive the way it was done in this study. While the previous research has focused on structure, enhancing audience awareness, and many other subcomponents that the field has been investigating in teaching argumentative essays, the present study attempted to tap into focusing on rhetoric language patterns.

It would also be interesting to see how manipulating class methodology would shed light on the most effective teaching methods for complex pragmatics, either looking at some other patterns stemming from the work of other researchers, or by using different types of activities during the intervention(s). As was previously mentioned in the the Literature review, it would be interesting to see a sole focus on metaphors in political discourse, because they represent another important aspect of teaching pragmatics. For the activities, instead of a lecture it would be interesting to see some classic EFL exercises and their effect on the acquisition of pragmatics of persuasion. Extracting other patterns from different types of work on political speech or any other types of discourse and working with them in class may add to the field of L2 pragmatics and broaden its fixated idea of speech acts.

In addition, the intervention was designed to be a single workshop, followed by one post-test, and it did not include a delayed post-test, so there is no evidence to claim that the knowledge was integrated enough to be retained. As was mentioned earlier in the literature review section, there are studies on teaching writing that examine writing development over a long period of time, and it may be potentially interesting to see if the effect of condition is enhanced by a series of interventions or a course in developing persuasion.

Another confounding factor may be the fact that writing is a cognitively demanding process and the fact that some participants did their pre- and post-test the same day, while others did them on different days, may have had some impact on the results. It may have been hard for the participants to write two speeches and to fully engage into reflecting on their language within the space of 3 hours. This adds an advantage to conducting future work following the pre-, post- and delayed post-test design, as well as controlling for when exactly the writing is done.

There are several limitations regarding topic choice as the central element of the task. First, working with the topics may be done in different ways, all revealing their own advantages and disadvantages. An advantage of having to write speeches on different topics, as in our study, is that it reflects the way people use language to express their political opinions in everyday life without being able to correct their statements or work on them for an extended period of time. However, if the main goal is teaching language learners to be persuasive, it may be reasonable to investigate if they get better after an intervention by having them work on the same topic both at pre- and post-test. This may also decrease the cognitive load, allow for more focus on the topic, and help avoid structural, orthographic, and grammatical mistakes.

Second, the participants were instructed to choose the topic that they felt most emotionally involved in. Having done that, their second topic for their post-test was probably less emotionally engaging for them, which may have influenced the results. The participants were not aware that they would have to choose their second topic from the same list, so they were unable to strategically plan their cognitive resource allocation, which is both a strength and a weakness of this design.

Third, while the topics were chosen to reflect some common teething problems all around the world, some participants may have not felt strongly enough about those to enhance their engagement with their language. It would be interesting to investigate if the results would be different when giving participants different writing prompts, or when asking them to think of their own topic. It would allow for more personal experience, although it would also make it harder to generalise as the topics may be completely different, as well as have different influence on the coders.

It would also be interesting to see how manipulating class methodology would shed light on the most effective teaching methods, either looking at some other patterns stemming from the work of other researchers or by using different types of activities during the intervention(s). As was previously mentioned in Literature review, it would be interesting to see a sole focus on metaphors in political discourse as those represent another important aspect of teaching pragmatics. For the activities, instead of a lecture it would be interesting to see some classic EFL exercises, such as working with definitions, doing some matching, true/ false/ not stated, watching videos and listening to audio recordings and analysing those, etc.

5.3 Pedagogical Implications

There are some points that should be added in regard to pedagogical implications and issues that educators may face when working with language of persuasion. Although some ideas were expressed in the previous section, this section will cover applicability of principles of teaching language of persuasion in a foreign language classroom.

As mentioned previously, although the participants were from different language backgrounds, the material may still be unclear for some L1s that were not

represented. Moreover, about half the participants' L1 were Russian, which may have played a role in how such complex pragmatic speech act as persuasion was retained. When more data is available regarding L1 and L1 culture differences, educators may be able to assess whether it is sensible to raise the issue of persuasion in their classroom. This also has implications for how advanced instruction on persuasion may be: in some contexts, it may be necessary to start with some basic essay writing foundation in order to facilitate it.

A major constraint is that persuasion based on elements of political discourse may not be used with young learners, which is a serious limitation as a lot of L2 English learning happens at schools in under-age contexts, nor does it seem possible to use this type of material for lower-level L2 English learners. As mentioned above, working on basic writing (and later on essay writing) may be a good starting point for these age groups, because the educators will first need to make sure their students understand how to structure their essays and how to approach different types of formal writing.

Another important point is that even with adult learners, language instructors may also want to reflect on their students' personality: some people may not be ready and open to provoking discussions, so this has to be treated with caution. Language teachers also have to be mindful of the fact that some topics may be upsetting and may cause frustration in class, so they will have to test the ground before introducing emotional topics.

As for teachers, while the researcher delivered the workshop herself, educators should still be able to easily adapt or use this material in the classroom. Some training may be important in order to cover persuasion as an aspect of L2 pragmatics, but it does not seem to be extensive. Most of the expertise in persuasion stems from L1, so the educators may be trained on isolating language strategies in their L1 speech, and may want to use certain language references to

their L1. While this was not done during the intervention in the present study, it would probably enhance comprehension of the idea of using persuasive language strategies.

Finally, the use of persuasion in L2 pragmatics suggested in the study (speech as a writing task) is very task-specific, so the task range may seem too narrow. Educators may want to experiment with applying this idea of focusing on language strategies in other areas of language development, such as speaking, reading and listening.

Conclusion

The present study drew on the previous scholarly work in a number of areas in an attempt to suggest an addition to the framework of speech acts in L2 pragmatics. We aimed to investigate on what grounds persuasion can be considered a component of L2 pragmatics, as well as whether it may be teachable. It also examined what linguistic features may contribute to being persuasive. Based on the above discussed further research directions and implications, it may be concluded that persuasion has some potential and may contribute to teaching and learning of foreign languages, EFL in case of this study. The data analysis has demonstrated tentative evidence that suggests we should consider persuasion teachable with the help of consciousness-raising activities, or at least those employed in the study. It still remains unknown whether this claim will hold after a number of limitations are improved, but it seems natural for any concept on its early stage. The paper calls for more research to be conducted in the area of persuasion not only in the field of theoretical linguistics, but also among applied linguists interested in L2 acquisition of pragmatics. The researcher believes that by extrapolating the concept of focusing on linguistic features on the general process of language acquisition, language learners may increase their linguistic awareness, which is an essential component of successful language learning.

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Appendix A - CUREC approval

SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES
INTERDIVISIONAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
DEPARTMENTAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Department of Education
15 Norham Gardens, Oxford OX2 6PY
student.curec@education.ox.ac.uk; staff.curec@education.ox.ac.uk



Department of Education, Social Sciences Division

University of Oxford

22 March 2023

Dear

Research ethics approval

Research title: Can persuasion be a teachable component of EFL pragmatics?

Research ethics reference: EDUC_C1A_23_089

The above application has been considered on behalf of the Education Departmental Research Ethics Committee (DREC) in accordance with the University's procedures for ethical approval of all research involving human participants.

I am pleased to confirm that, on the basis of the information provided to the DREC, ethics approval has now been granted for this study.

Appendix B - CUREC amendment

SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES
INTERDIVISIONAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
DEPARTMENTAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Department of Education
15 Norham Gardens, Oxford OX2 6PY
student.curec@education.ox.ac.uk; staff.curec@education.ox.ac.uk



Department of Education, Social Sciences Division
University of Oxford

2 June 2023

Dear

Research ethics approval

Research title: Can persuasion be a teachable component of EFL pragmatics?

Research ethics reference: EDUC_C1A_23_089; Amendment 1

Date of amendment: 30 May 2023

The above amendment has been considered on behalf of the Department of Education Departmental Research Ethics Committee (DREC) in accordance with the University's procedures for ethical approval of all research involving human participants.

I am pleased to confirm that, on the basis of the information provided to the DREC, ethics approval has now been granted for this amendment.

Appendix C - Recruitment emails

Recruitment email to language schools:

"Dear ,

My name is……. and I am reading for MSc in Applied Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition at the University of Oxford. I am currently working on my dissertation which focuses on the teaching of *persuasive language* in foreign language classrooms. I am currently looking for participants for my intervention, and I would be very grateful if your school might be able to help with my research.

Briefly, I would like to recruit students to take part in an [online] class taught by myself – which focuses on strategies that can be used to make writing more persuasive, for example in writing a public speech. Students will write a short text both before and after the class which will later be analysed. Another group of students will undertake the writing tasks but will not get the teaching intervention (as a control group). I cannot provide individual feedback on the writing, however the class will be designed to be engaging and interesting and we hope the participants will benefit from taking part.

I am looking for around 20 adult participants of Upper-Intermediate and/or Advanced levels of proficiency in English to be randomly split into two groups: one receiving the intervention and the other not. However, if you had smaller numbers of students willing to take part, then I would be happy to run the study with 10 or more students.

In terms of practicalities, I would need your help in distributing information sheets and consent forms. I have attached copies of this to this email. I could then run this free session at your school, working around your timetable.

This study has received approval from the Oxfords Central Ethics Committee EDUC_CIA_23_089.

Please let me know if you would like any further information. I look forward to hearing from you."

Recruitment email to individuals (from contacts, or who expressed an interest via social media):

"Hello ,

As you may know, I am currently reading for my MSc degree in Applied Linguistics and Second language acquisition at University of Oxford, and I was wondering if you would be interested in taking part in my study. I am currently working on my dissertation which focuses on the teaching of persuasive language in foreign language classrooms.

Briefly, I would like to recruit people to take part in an online class – taught by myself – which focuses on strategies that can be used to make writing more persuasive, for example in writing a public speech. You may be allocated into one of the groups, experimental or control. If you are allocated into an experimental group, you will write a short text before the class, take part in the workshop and then write another short text, which will later be analysed. If you are allocated into control group, you will undertake the writing task but will not get the teaching intervention. I cannot provide individual feedback on the writing, however the class will be designed to be engaging and interesting and we hope you will benefit from taking part.

I need to make sure if you meet the criteria: I am looking for adults (18+ years old) of B2-C1 English proficiency level. Please confirm that you meet these criteria.

I am attaching a consent form that I would like you to fill in and return to me, and a participant information sheet with more details.

This study has received approval from the Oxfords Central Ethics Committee EDUC_CIA_23_089.

Please let me know if you would like any further information. I look forward to hearing from you."

Appendix D - Participant information sheet

Participant Information Sheet:

Hello, my name is …….. and I am conducting a study to add something exciting to your English language journey! I am reading for MSc in Applied Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition at University of Oxford, and I am currently working on my MSc thesis that is dedicated to whether and how we can teach students strategies to use language persuasively.

What is the purpose of the study?
The study aims to investigate teachability of persuasive language strategies in a foreign language classroom by looking at it from the perspective of pragmatics (the context) and semantics (the meaning). This is not something regularly covered in EFL books, even though it is one of the essential skills that every language learner should have. I hope that this research will provide insight into whether it is useful to include this in EFL curricula.

What happens if I take part?
There will be two conditions and you will be randomly allocated into either of them. Those allocated into one condition will write a piece of public speech on the topic you will be able to select from the list. Those allocated into the other condition will take part in a free 2-hour English class, taught by myself. The goal of the class would be teaching you the types of persuasive techniques that are widely used in public speeches by influencers, politicians and many more. I will teach you how to recognise these techniques and strategies, what they do to our perception of a speech and a speaker, and also how you can be more persuasive when speaking a different language. You will practice it right away by writing your own sample of a public speech at the end of the class.

What are the risks and benefits?
These are essentially the same as for any English class you might take part in. In your writing you will get to choose between different topics. It is possible that you may find some topics distressing, and in this case you can choose to write on a different topic. You can withdraw from the study at any time.

How will your data be used?
Your writing will be collected at the end of the class and later transcribed and coded. Your data will be fully anonymized. Some of you may be asked to do a follow-up interview about your attitude towards the material covered in class and the activity in general.

Who is organizing the study?

The study is undertaken by me, Anna Viatova, an MSc student in the Department of Education at the University of Oxford, as part of my MSc dissertation. I am an experienced English teacher and have substantial experience in working with high-level learners. My project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Oxford Central University Ethics Committee (CUREC) EDUC_CIA_23_089.

What should I do if I have concerns or complaints?

If you have any concerns, please contact the researcher, who will be more than happy to answer your query, as soon as possible. If you remain unhappy, or have further queries, you can contact the researcher's supervisor (see 'Contact Information').

If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the chair of the Central University Research Ethics Committee at the University of Oxford (using the contact details below) who will seek to resolve the matter as soon as possible.

Chair, Social Sciences and Humanities Inter-Divisional Research Ethics Committee;
Email: ethics@socsci.ox.ac.uk;
Address: Research Services, University of Oxford, Wellington Square, Oxford, OX1 2JD.

Contact Information

….……

Appendix E - Participant consent forms

Participant Consent form

Your language school has agreed to help recruit participants for a study undertaken by …… as part of MSc dissertation in the Department of Education at the University of Oxford. The study will take place at your school on [insert date] at [insert time]. Information about the study is in the attached information sheet.

If you are happy to take part, please fill in the form and return to the language school.

Name_____(surname)_____

Date of birth_____(DD/MM/YY)

I have read and understood the details of the study. I understand that the project has received ethics clearance through CUREC and understand who will have access to the data, how it will be stored and what will happen at the end of the study. I also understand how to raise a concern or make a complaint.

☐ I confirm that I have read the information available in this information sheet. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	
☐ I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. I understand that in that case my data will not be used. However I understand that I will not be able to withdraw my data at a later date once it has been fully anonymized.	
☐ I understand that relevant sections of the data collected during the study may be looked at by individuals from University of Oxford and from regulatory authorities. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my records.	

Signature_____Date_____

Participant Consent Form for individuals

You have agreed to take part in a study undertaken by …… as part of MSc dissertation in the Department of Education at the University of Oxford. The study will take place online on [insert date] at [insert time].

Information about the study is in the attached information sheet.

If you are happy to take part, please fill in the form and return to….

Name_____(surname)_____

Date of birth _____(DD/MM/YY)

I have read and understood the details of the study. I understand that the project has received ethics clearance through CUREC and understand who will have access to the data, how it will be stored and what will happen at the end of the study. I also understand how to raise a concern or make a complaint.

☐ I confirm that I have read the information available in this information sheet. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	
☐ I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. I understand that in that case my data will not be used. However I understand that I will not be able to withdraw my data at a later date once it has been fully anonymized.	
☐ I understand that relevant sections of the data collected during the study may be looked at by individuals from University of Oxford and from regulatory authorities. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my records.	

Signature_____Date_____

Appendix F - Certificate of appreciation

