

The Concept Sidelined in Language Policy and in Parctice

This paper questions the role and relevance of the concept of language in documents of language policy. It is based on a literary linguist's research into language, style and the phatic use of English of over fifty years and centres on the teaching of English as a foreign language at university. It questions why the content of the concept of language in education is ignored in language policy while minding its relevance to teachers and other professionals in the humanities. The paper includes a possible supplement to documents of language policy. This paper is an applied work drawing on detailed knowledge of English in use and classroom observations with the aim to define the power and influence of language on its speakers, called the potential meaning of language, on which the proposed supplement is based. Teachers' familiarity with the potential meaning of language is unquestionable but students' famiiasation with it should be cautious if and when explaining the term. The enlightenment that verbal meaning beyond this concept contains is expected to help teachers and guide students in their language studies for life, as knowledge of potentialities of language is attainable only in lifelong learning.

Keywords: *concept of language as meaning, evaluating meaning, contextual meaning, the stylistic value of the word, potential meaning / potentialities of language*

Introduction

This paper purpports to highlight the concept of language, which is missing in documents of language policy, and explain its sense in pedagogy. A review of four documents of language policy includes an overview of their content, speciiically minding how the term language is used in them. A proposed supplement to documents of language policy follows the overview, which requires an explication of the resource of concepts in the proposed supplement. Apart from individual research related to the use of language, this paper includes digressions to sensitive points in language teaching.

In education, the term policy identifies with principles of teaching, or pedagogy, in general agreement. As the principle is „a fundamental truth or proposition serving as the foundation for belief or action“ (COD, p. 1140), language policy is expected not to ignore the central concept, which is language, among truths in language education. To have an idea of the content of and concepts in current language policies, four documents drawn from open access sources are briefly reviewed focusing on their premises.

Review of the Documents of Language Policy which Highlight the Problem

If one starts with what the internet has to offer (www.google.com/search?...), a researcher is served with, „Modern EFL language policy“ (2005) as the first resource for anyone. It is well-structured and formatted and informs on the following.

„*Modern EFL language policy*“ emphasises plurilingualism and interculturalism, integrates other languages alongside with English and promotes cultural sharing. The terms being self-explanatory, it can only be said that teachers of English as a foreign language generally share these directions in practice, especially that there are countries which leave foreign language research to its own devices and fund only the teaching of foreign languages together with research into the native language. But it is also true that it is not all national communities and even teachers who wholly accept these directions to a dot.

English as a foreign language (EFL) in English language teaching (ELT) is not the only linguistic entity in education; other languages have been currently used in and outside the classroom, in accord with the known language policies. A move away from the Native Speaker's model in EFL has been the main change in it since the turn of the twenty-first century. This removed the idea of a standard in EFL and stimulated liberalism in language matters. English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) is another variant of English widely spread and acknowledged by the metropolis, which created the need of and reasons for the abandonment of the Native Speaker's model. The term ELF defines situations when people use multiple non-standard variants of English internationally, which are different from the English of educated native speakers and function on their own.

Finally, there is English as the medium of instruction (EMI) or the language of instruction of all subjects in school, which defines socio-political stance and choices, and creates ideological problems in its choosing.

Key trends in „Modern EFL language policy“ (2025) include the following,

- 1) **Inclusivity and equity**, which means being inclusive language-wise, that is, recognising multiple languages the students might have, and speaker-wise, that is, recognising community languages. This also means giving fair and reasonable access to education to all learners, irrespective of their origin, race, level of literacy and IT, religion or family status. Yet this can create some friction socially.
- 2) **Addressing power dynamics**, which means social and educational moderation toward the potentially hegemonic implications of English. This direction is intended to please minority communities.
- 3) **Systemic integration**, which means international and national guidelines, as well as institutional and school-level practices, together with the provision of „mother tongue instruction to students „who don't have a dedicated language section“ in a particular school.

1 **4) Translanguaging**, which means using and mixing the multiple
 2 languages of the students in an academic group and also „pushing this
 3 usage from being just classroom practice to beoming a formal part of
 4 language policy“ while „valuing and using the student’s entire linguistic
 5 repertoire as a resource for learning“ (Modern EFL language policy,
 6 2025). This practice does not please all members of parents’ community
 7 but it has been reported on and illustrated even at international
 8 conferences, (the 56th IATEFL Annual International Conference 2024 in
 9 Harrogate, for instance; cf.: Block, 2025; Wilson. 2025; Brown, 2025).

10
 11 It is true, the word ‚language‘, but not its content, appears in this document
 12 of language policy (2025), but its key terms, motives and approaches defined, as
 13 well as interpretations implied by the definitions are all socio-cultural, political
 14 and ideological in character. They all are proposed and implemented to preserve
 15 equity and social contentment, personal satisfaction and social cohesion,
 16 wellbeing through inclusivity and equity in and fairness to communities,
 17 especially through power dynamics and respect for the students’ native
 18 languages at the loss of the elevated and earlier accepted linguistic standard of
 19 the native speaker. Thus, the content of the concept of language as key concept
 20 in this document is sidelined without elaborating it.

21 *A Look at language policy in concrete countries* discloses the same focus on
 22 sensitivity to social contentment, political correctness and safety. In Lithuania,
 23 for instance, documents of language policy relate exceptionally to the use of and
 24 catering for the nationl state language (State Language Policy Guidelines, 2022).
 25 It is praiseworthy that language standard is cared for but practices to keep it up
 26 are mostly related to rule-based instruction and, outside school, to observation
 27 of actual usage with comments on it published or aired on the TV and radio. An
 28 analogous investment in England relates to the publishing of dictionaries.
 29 Professionals of Lithuanian are aware of this difference but they find their human
 30 and publising resources severely limited, which is true.

31 Foreign language teaching/learning, which is central in this paper, is not
 32 regulated by local language policy nor is its research state-funded in Lithuania.
 33 Local foreign language teachers orientate themselves by language policy
 34 documents for EFL issued by societies, associations and universities in Great
 35 Britain and the USA.

36 *In Great Britain, one illustrative research document of language policy*
 37 (Humphries and Ayres-Bennett, 2023), which is a case study, also discloses
 38 national sensitivities in this area. The authors of this article use the term
 39 ‘language legislation’, and it means legal regulation in language education.
 40 Questions that lend focus to this case study are those in “which domains and for
 41 which language types does legislation occur”. First, the UK is considered a
 42 country in which “strong public language policy” is lacking. Second, “a lack of
 43 a coherent language policy across the UK” and in the areas of “its devolved
 44 administrations” contribute to conditions without a “strong language policy”.
 45 Third, the same conditions are sustained by “a perceived societal disinterest in
 46 languages”, which is only natural in the mother country of a world language.

1 Wider reading and personal contacts confirm the described circumstances
 2 by such attitudes as British tolerance for the missing verbal standard in foreign
 3 English speech, for occasional errors, if and when a foreign English speaker is
 4 not overconfident, mispronounced words so long as they are not too frequent and
 5 do not hinder understanding (cf.: Janicky, 1981, esp. pp. 61-64). Native English
 6 speakers rationally ascribe their verbal tolerance to the missing Academy in the
 7 UK, as opposed to the influence of the existing French Academy. British, and
 8 American verbal tolerance extends to unaccountable, mostly non-native
 9 language-based variations in foreign English speech, which is due to the state of
 10 English as a world language. There is even a considerable area of study of the
 11 influence of languages in contact with English (Fisiak, 1981) and the relevance
 12 of contrastive studies to the making of language programmes, syllabi and
 13 documents of language policy (Fisiak, 1981a, esp. p.8).

14 “UK language legislation spans multiple domains”, the authors report, such
 15 as “public health and safety, law and crime, transport and the media”. Devolved
 16 national administrations and concrete acts of national authorities pursue their
 17 individual goals and are influenced by national attitudes. For instance, language
 18 questions are said to be “politically sensitive” in Northern Ireland, which is
 19 obvious even internationally. Wales also have their own sensitivities. Legal laws
 20 for national regions may be hidden in other documents. Nevertheless, legal
 21 documents are found to be “important landmarks in the status of languages” in
 22 the UK. Language legislation primarily covers secondary education in the UK.

23 Universities are autonomous in the UK, and language legislation that applies
 24 to them is a thing of choice or preference. To compare, language policy for the
 25 country did not exist in the USA, but now the James G Martin Center for
 26 Academic Renewal is engaged in publishing current documents on National
 27 Language Policy (Less Than Words Can Say, 2026). It is true, quite a few
 28 publications draw on present-day circumstances affecting language programs in
 29 the USA. There are articles about the shrinking of scientific and scholarly
 30 projects because of direct financial cuts in concrete universities or research areas
 31 by the current administration (cf.: Ware, 2026). There have been publications in
 32 print and online in 2025 about scientists and teachers leaving the USA for the
 33 same reasons or for tailored decisions and acts indicting teachers for promoting
 34 DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) policies, which is considered to mean a
 35 “distinct leftist attitude”. There were cases of teachers resigning their posts
 36 because of open criticism of certain courses or decisions or for the most arbitrary,
 37 unexplained reasons. This is not a documented language policy. These are cases
 38 of the abuse of power and law, which affect education and research in the USA.

39 A legal case pursued by the Trump administration announced recently
 40 (Bender and Blinder, 2026) is the case in point: “The Trump administration sued
 41 Harvard University on Friday, accusing the Ivy League school of failing to
 42 produce documents sought as part of a Justice Department investigation into
 43 whether its admissions process discriminates against white applicants.” The
 44 lawsuit is the second government action against Harvard in two weeks. The
 45 president “reversed his position on a potential deal to end the administration’s
 46 pressure campaign on the university” and, at present, his demand for Harvard to

1 pay a \$200 million fine” has increased to “the fine of \$1 billion”, after the
 2 president “called for a criminal investigation of Harvard”. It would be an
 3 understatement to say that President Trump’s action against the first University
 4 in the country and one of top universities in the world is unfair. It is destructive
 5 to scientific research, education and all other functions of the University.
 6 Although the numbers do not compare with finances in European universities,
 7 the Harvard case stoked by a personal spite of the president-businessman, is a
 8 striking background case that describes conditions in the functioning of
 9 universities in the world (cf.: Ware, 2026; Bender, Schmidt, Blinder, 2026). The
 10 rule of power in politics has not bypassed the institutes which educate even the
 11 powerful.

12 Minding interrelatedness in the world, the actions, as described, diminish
 13 the power of the word in language policies. Depending on the erudition of
 14 administrators, language policy happens to be applied in action in Europe and its
 15 key concepts incorporated in actual teaching, in small countries, in the first place.
 16 Academic administrations of universities in Lithuania, for instance, complain
 17 about a modern tendency and recommendations to commercialise the
 18 functioning of universities, which the present governing academic bodies resist
 19 to the best of their ability. This pressure and trends issue partly from the language
 20 policy which contains socio-political and ideological premises rather than
 21 science-bound scholarly or scientific truths, which, in its turn, is due to financial
 22 restraints economically and insufficient funding administratively.

23 The documents of language policy briefly referencing directions and
 24 sensitivities in education in Great Britain and Lithuania are lacking in features
 25 related specifically to language as a socio-cultural phenomenon and a subject in
 26 academic language programmes, which could prospectively encase advanced
 27 goals and practices subject-wise in classroom teaching.

28 “*Language Education Policy – The Council of Europe*”, 2025, is a richer
 29 document in language data and its regulation. This document refers initially to
 30 historical conditions in Europe at two points, (post WWII and in the 1990s), as
 31 reasons for respectively formed language policy for European countries. The
 32 historically born dedication “to lay down strong foundations for a lasting peace
 33 between peoples” influenced the Council of Europe to prioritise “linguistic
 34 diversity and language learning” in education since 1954. Learning “their
 35 respective languages and cultures” in European countries was thought to be one
 36 of the most effective measures” in the preservation of peace, as laid out in the
 37 European Cultural Convention. Article 2 of this Convention obliged the
 38 signatory states “to promote the teaching and learning of their languages”: “to
 39 encourage the study by its own nationals of the languages, history and
 40 civilisation of other Contracting Parties and promote such a study of languages
 41 and civilization “in the territory of other Contracting Parties”. The Convention
 42 obliged European countries to “grant facilities to those and other Contracting
 43 Parties “to promote such studies”, as well as “grant facilities to the nationals of
 44 those parties to pursue such studies in its territory” (Language education policy,

2025)¹. These endeavours encouraged and stimulated reciprocal teaching and learning of languages of European countries (Fisiak, 1983), in some of which, foreign language teaching began only after WWII (cf.: Grigaliūniene, 2019). Linguistic diversity was the order of the day. But the intensity of linguistic diversity accelerated as time ran on.

In the forty years of living history, “the needs and priorities of the member states” have changed because of the enlargement of the EU in 1990 and increased mobility together with migration. Current languages increased in number while small countries and minority languages required protection. In the spirit of the same Article 2 of the European Cultural Convention, the Council of Europe activities not only promoted language learning but also sought “to secure and strengthen language rights, deepen mutual understanding, consolidate democratic citizenship and contribute to social cohesion”. (Language Education Policy, 2025). Plurilingualism (or several languages used in the family), multilingualism (or a number of languages used in an area) and interculturalism “remain the objectives pursued by the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages”, (open for ratification since 1992). This legal stance is supplemented by provisions of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, (in force since 1998), which “considers that a pluralist and genuinely democratic society should respect the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of each person belonging to a national minority.” (Language Education Policy, 2025).

In conditions as described at the end of the twentieth century, approaches of the Council of Europe to language policy changed. The demand “for common European language reference tools” stimulated the issue of The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). This document enabled educators to work out national and local principles for “learning, teaching and assessment, making it possible to compare education systems in terms of foreign language teaching and language certification”, within a unified framework.

The incorporation of foreign language teaching into European education systems has retained “linguistic and cultural plurality as both ends and means”. The acknowledgment of vulnerable groups born in the onslaught of migration, shifted attention from social agents, (teacher and learner), as individuals, to including “adult migrants”, who are learners of any age group, and extending conditions for “linguistic integration” (Language education policy, 2025).

Recognition of the importance of the language of instruction in schools considered the language dimension in the teaching of all subjects and ensured “access to education for all”. This development brought EMI about (see the definition of this term, p.1, above) (cf.: Cinganotto, 2025; Thornbury, 2025). Yet, English selectively as the medium of instruction has drawn criticism for the negative effect of the foreign language while making learning difficult. Some

¹These decisions show that both political will and financing featured all along in language policy documents as decisive factors, while present-day financial problems in education are mainly the causes of economic limitations and power politics.

1 countries in Africa and India resist the implementation of EMI in their schools,
2 which is favoured by educators elsewhere (The perils of learning in English, 2019).

3 The work for the implementation of EMI has not terminated, discussion
4 goes on while activities and involvement of the European Centre for modern
5 Languages (ECML) at the Council of Europe are intensive, support of this Centre
6 for national educational and administrative institutions is considerable and
7 ongoing in the form of workshops, consultations, conferences and publications
8 (www.ecml.at). Problems related to EMI are discussed at some of these events
9 alongside such questions as plurilingual and intercultural education, the use of
10 the newest technology in teaching, language curricular and assessment related to
11 CEFR. A new volume of CEFR related curricular and assessment – The CEFR
12 Companion Volume: Mediation and Other Key Concepts – has been recently
13 announced (www.ecml.at, 2026).

14 Appreciating the effort of the authors who wrote the documents of language
15 policy reviewed above and their perfect formal presentation, it cannot be
16 overlooked that these documents focus on political, ideological, and
17 administrative problems and functions, especially, on financial questions in
18 institutes of education. The concept of language would be required in the
19 documents of language policy as they are and a summary gist of this concept, a
20 word on the content of school programmes and perspectives beyond would also
21 be relevant in them. As this paper draws on and focuses on foreign language
22 learning and teaching at university, the content of the concept of language would
23 be the very concept to be defined and included in documents of language policy
24 in which it is missing and would be desirable.

25 With respect to language knowledge, the present paper is based on research
26 into language and literature and, specifically, into the phatic use of English and
27 potentialities of its meaning for over fifty years, which is reflected in several
28 publications of the author (Drazdauskiene, 1990, 1992, 2016, 2025 and others).

31 **The Proposed Supplement to Documents of Language Policy**

32
33 Minding the review of a few documents of language policy above and the
34 initially targeted concept ‘language’, the following supplement may be
35 suggested when focusing respectively on the reviewed documents of language
36 policy:

37
38 *In language subjects, students are learning verbal ways of meaning. The goal of*
39 *language learning and studies is the learning and mastery of verbal resources of*
40 *meaning with their permissive and restricting potentialities, both in tandem. The*
41 *learning of permissive resources is long (elementary, primary, secondary and*
42 *higher). The mastery of restricting potentialities of language is endless because it*
43 *draws on social custom, culture and history, encountered in incidents at school,*
44 *mostly in vocabulary, attacked at university and realised as permanent at the*
45 *degree level and, especially, in original writing. This process of teaching and*
46 *learning means a study of the idiomaticity of language (John Lontas, 2025). The*
47 *study and pursuit of the idiomatic expressiveness of language has a long tradition*

in studies of the English language (Firth, 1957; Fowler, 1906/1993; Gowers, 1954/1977; Vallins, 1970; Quirk, 1968, 1974, 1982 and other authors, and the Dictionaries: Weiner, 1984 / Weiner, Delahunty, 1993; Greenbaum, Whitcut, 1988/1996 and others).

Therefore, over and above syllabi and their structure, language courses should indicate a direction which would lead university graduates to the mastery of full potentialities of verbal meaning of their language with the idea of discovering the breadth of meaning of the language, its power and mystery, because university courses take in only a fraction of the meaning potential of a language. Whatever the ways and means of teaching, hints at what meaning potentialities of a language are and how they work can be given to younger students in reading and in a pedagogical engagement with imaginative literature and poetry.

The terms in this gist of the content of language in language programmes proposed for documents of language policy entail familiarity with a theoretical concept of “language as a meaning potential” (Halliday, 1973, 1976) for teachers and for university undergraduates in language programmes. This means a unity of structural and lexical meaning where both are meaningful and not separate. It also means that meaning in language extends beyond the primary meaning of its units and forms latent or potential meaning. It is not easy to illustrate the structural meaning of language to students when meaning extends beyond lexis. A teacher should be well familiar with the concept of grammar as meaning in the functional theory of language and its practical application. The functional applied approach as reflected above has also drawn on individual studies of the potential meaning of language (Drazdauskiene. 1990, 1992, 2016, 2018) and idiomatics or the idiomaticity of language (Liontas, 2025, 2025a).

The proposed supplement and references above require an explanation in a conference paper. The shorthand term ‘the functional theory of language’ refers to Systemic Functional Linguistics founded and developed by the British linguist, Michael AK Halliday (1925 - 2018), who worked in Europe and the USA and who, in later years, was based in Australia and worked at the University of Sydney and Macquarie University. Michael Halliday’s theory was founded on a thorough study of his son’s language development (1975), which was worked out further and presented as Systemic Functional (SF) Theory of Language and published in numerous volumes (Halliday, 1973, 1976, 1978, 2014, and others).

A Gist of the SF Theory

All verbal units, such as words, collocations, word combinations, idioms, grammar structures, intonation, which were formal elements in descriptive grammar, are found to be means of meaning making up language system, which shows three levels of integration in usage: “rank, exponence, and delicacy”, in the Systemic Functional Theory. These terms indicate that all verbal components are united in language system and differentiate by degree of complexity as they are in usage. In spoken and written language, they are united by the significance

of their role in meaning creation in context and in the accuracy and subtlety of their relations within units and text, spoken and written. It is a multi-layered network of relations and significance, and no component is spare in it. That is why vocabulary and grammar are one in language system and should not be divided into separate compartments in instruction and exercise practice in schools.

The system of language in (SF) Theory is determined by three major components of meaning which are functions language or generic meaning categories of language in use: the ideational, the interpersonal and the textual, which are incorporated in units of language and determine their meaning. Every utterance/sentence and all texts, whether spoken or written, thus, incorporate and reflect the meaning of experience/logic, interpersonality and textuality, which shape and complete meaning in language. Units in the system of language are related and intertwined on levels more than one. Relations 'more / less', acceptable / not acceptable, are more widely spread in language in use rather than relations 'one and next' (Halliday, 1976, 81). Every utterance and sentence combines referential meaning with interpersonal and textual meaning through the units and texts. This means that the Functional Theory of Language should not be simplified into a few short quotes and offered to students as the theory. It is important to give the students an idea of the complexity of meaning in this theory and not necessarily its gist for them to remember and forget or to apply it as a primitive label. So, it may be difficult to explain the unity of words and structures to students with only a laconic reference to Systemic Functional Theory. The teacher should find a way of explaining the overall and detailed meaning of language in use together with the unity of lexical and structural meaning to students without making it too elementary or simplifying SF Theory beyond pedagogy to a few quotes.

It is helpful to read the poem, *A Song, (I thought no more was required youth to prolong...)* of eighteen lines, by William Butler Yeats, with the students and get their answer what tells them that the poet is not dying, only thinking conditionally of how he imagined youth and how he had no idea that man grows old emotionally, not only physically. The students' answer should be that it is structural forms on lines 5-6 in stanzas 1 & 2 and lines 3-6 in stanza 3. Incidentally, students find the unity of words and grammar acceptable. They find it easier to learn English when they are taught to use language in collocations, chunks and sentences rather than as words combined by the rule of adjective plus noun. whether countable or uncountable, and respective combination of words in sentence structure. Bypassing the Theory as such at school, it may be easier and more helpful to show the students that both structural and lexical units mean as do punctuation, intonation, facial expression and orderliness in writing. If a teacher can show the students how these features mean in verbal communication, he may not require any more of the Theory.

Operational verbal units become longer than a mere word in this approach, form often stable and recurring units which are idiomatic. Idiomatic here means 'composite' (and acceptable) rather than concealed metaphorically as the informal meaning of "slowly mounting anger or annoyance" in the idiom *slow*

1 *burn*. The informality of this idiom is its contextual meaning, but it is meaning.
 2 Similarly, all stylistically marked words contain contextual meaning, and this
 3 meaning is extremely sensitive. It has the power to expose experience or
 4 ignorance of the speaker in his choice of the word. That is why speakers, who
 5 are sensitive and careful in their choice of words, are subconsciously focused,
 6 which shows how verbal usage forms a spiritual aura over them and marks them
 7 as delicate and cultured speakers rather than otherwise.

8 Verbal units, in links and relations as described, are all units of meaning.
 9 Vocabulary has been defined by Michael Halliday as “the most delicate
 10 grammar”. Text is an operational unit of language in use.

11 Language system is realized in context. It is context that enables speakers to
 12 understand and follow current speech, and ensures understanding of written text
 13 (Halliday, Hasan, 1992). It is also context that determines a sensitive and
 14 knowledgeable speaker’s choice and selection of verbal units in accord with their
 15 stylistic value or acceptability (informal or formal components, including
 16 intonation). A point must be made here that students are rarely that sensitive and
 17 virtually never peruse their initially dropped words in writing. That is why
 18 students’ writing is often killing.

21 **An insight into the formation of potential meaning**

23 Contextual recurrence of verbal units in speech and writing records as their
 24 contextual meaning in respective units. The contextual meaning of words is
 25 recorded in dictionaries but ignored in teaching. The language teacher should
 26 mind that contextual labels, (*formal, informal, disapproving, slang, vulgar, taboo*
 27 and others), are part of the meaning of every word marked so. The teacher is
 28 obliged to find ways of impinging this meaning on the student’s mind if the
 29 teacher minds such matters as culture. Culture is not a separate compartment
 30 which can be separated from language and taught or consumed or applied.
 31 Michael Halliday himself has stated that a child takes culture over in
 32 conversation in the family and later extends and polishes it in broader society
 33 (Halliday, 1975). The choice of any word marks the speaker’s culture.

34 Contextual and other aspects of evaluating meaning that generalise as
 35 culture in the use of language are not as obvious as the words’ referential
 36 meaning. That is why this meaning is called latent or potential and idiomatic and
 37 it should not be neglected in teaching.

38 Over and above curricula and syllabi and their structure, language courses
 39 in language policy should indicate a direction which would lead university
 40 graduates to the mastery of language and full potentialities of verbal meaning
 41 with the idea to discover the breadth of the meaning potential of a language.
 42 Whatever the means and ways in teaching, hints at what meaning potentialities
 43 of a language are and how they work can be given to younger students in reading
 44 and in a pedagogical engagement with imaginative literature and poetry. Care
 45 must be taken to avoid its primitive and elementary disclosure in language tricks
 46 and traps, which occur in jokes and illustrations for fun, not necessarily in

1 teaching, so as not to turn the wealth of language with its immense difficulties
2 into a laughable matter.

3 Ideas about the pedagogical application of literature in language teaching can
4 be drawn from the dedicated work of a British Professor and poet, Alan Maley
5 (1993; 2009, 2010), and from the journal, Humanising Language Teaching
6 ([www.hltmag](http://www.hltmag.com)), as well as from the Pilgrims' website (www.pilgrims.co.uk).

7 This reasoning must have led the interested readers to the point at which it
8 is becoming obvious how contextual and emotive-evaluating meaning enters the
9 meaning of a concrete unit. It takes us closer to the understanding of what the
10 potential meaning of language is and how it is formed. This process and its covert
11 result can be confirmed by one more obvious example: two words in subscription
12 to letters in correspondence, *Sincerely* and *Yours*, are short and informal. They
13 are a clipped version of a longer and more formal historical subscription, *I*
14 *remain yours most sincerely*. In time and with a change of social custom and
15 context, the phrase was clipped and became *Sincerely yours*, which is a formal
16 subscription to a letter to somebody whom the writer addresses by name. The
17 sense of the meaning of the closure of a letter is part of the meaning of this
18 phrase. The following example confirms that this is true:

19 One of the songs by Leonard Cohen ends in two words: "Sincerely, Alcorn".
20 This mere clipped word implies that the song was meant to be a letter, which can
21 be personal or even intimate, depending on the listener. This illustration
22 confirms how context nests in the meaning of a single word and continues to
23 carry its contextual meaning across texts.

24 25 26 **Activated potential meaning and its perception**

27
28 Contextual meaning, although powerful, is yet a little more material to
29 students than emotive-evaluating meaning, which is the litmus test for words
30 and collocations. Consider highlights in the examples below:

- 31
32 1) In this ***gripping thriller***, truth and justice are called into question
33 (Random House, 17 Jan 26).
- 34 2) ...in ***a riveting series*** from renowned civil rights attorney (Random
35 House, 17 Jan 26)
- 36 3) 'You didn't get ***eloquent silence***, my love (Partridge, 1978)
- 37 4) ... engaged in work of ***national importance***... (Partridge, 1976)
- 38 5) 'They're mired in a never-ending divorce and wouldn't see anyone.
39 ***Stuck-up thing***. (Mr. B)
- 40 6) It's the 2026 version of those ***salacious penny dreadfuls*** and ***news rags***
41 of Victorian London (Observer Daily, 4 Feb 26).
- 42 7) From the ***iconic crime writer*** who inspires "***cultic devotion*** in readers" *
43 (The New Yorker) and has been called "incandescent" by Stephen
44 King... (Random House, 17 Jan 26).
- 45 8) Trump's ***vaunted unpredictability*** has a clear downside... (Foreign
46 Affairs, 3 Feb 26)

- 1 9) ... C's electoral victory... owed much to his anti-Trump "elbows up"
 2 campaign and to voters' perception that his Conservative Party rival was
 3 **Trump lite** (Foreign Affairs, 3 Feb 26)
 4 10) Parents play **a crucial role** in preparing their children for school (OALD,
 5 372)
 6 11) My paper deals with **crucial questions** in communication theory (A
 7 student's paper, 2019)
 8

9 The illustrative examples above include evaluating adjectives of different
 10 stylistic value in word combinations and collocations which likewise differ in
 11 stylistic value. Examples (1) and (2) illustrate the use of two neutral evaluating
 12 adjectives in their regular contexts of the Publisher's advertisements. A delicate
 13 point with these words is their frequent recurrence in American book reviews
 14 and advertisements. Their meaning centres on "stirring excitement and interest"
 15 (1) and "captivating attention completely" (2). Their regular recurrence in these
 16 same contexts and in sometimes identical word combinations that appeal to
 17 emotional perception begin to tire and lose their intended effect. There is no
 18 stronger turn than repeated evaluation to irritate and bore, whether in kitchen
 19 talk or writing². When this sense attaches itself to words, they tend to become
 20 clichés or readily reproduced units which have become trite because of their
 21 evaluating meaning in their recurrent use.

22 These are the highlighted words in examples (3) and (4) that illustrate
 23 precisely trite and tasteless phrases from *A Dictionary of Clichés* by Eric
 24 Partridge (1978). The adjective in example (3) would be neutral but, in this word
 25 combination, it was metaphoric originally and became trite through fixed
 26 recurrence of the metaphorically emotive meaning in it. There is hardly anything
 27 that bores sooner than a repeated reminder of superficial or targeted emotion.

28 The highlighted word combination in (4) would be stylistically neutral but
 29 for the noun which is also tinged with tasteless choice of repeated use in any
 30 context for emphasis. Its exaggerated evaluating sense shows to any reader
 31 because of its frequency³. The adjective *national* in (4) would be and is neutral
 32 in some contexts but for its origin in war context: "*in helping to win the war:*
 33 */cliché/ from mid Sept 1939*" (Partridge, 1978, 256). The explanation in the same
 34 Dictionary runs on: "*A catholic phrase that cloaks many a cynical, many a*
 35 *shameful wangle*" (Ibid). This dictionary definition would keep any user from
 36 picking it in use. Both highlights in (3 & 4) illustrate clichés in their contexts
 37 and their trite meaning that should compel any user to avoid them. This is the
 38 rule on clichés to native speakers. Foreign students escape the grasp of the
 39 strictness of this rule, but they should know it. Foreign students tend to pick up
 40 clichés and units like those in examples (1 & 2). It is also exceedingly difficult

²Regular readers of American book reviews, blurbs and advertisements will agree that these two adjectives (in 1 & 2) read as somewhat lacking in selectivity and taste.

³It was French semioticians who noticed the recurrence of words, *important* and *importance*, and found that they are among the most frequent words in literary reviews and degree dissertations. Although exaggeration is not an evaluating meaning, these overstating words tend to be perceived as trite and meaningless.

1 to make foreign students aware of what clichés are and to forewarn them of
2 pitfalls in usage. Analogous examples in the students' native language can be
3 helpful.

4 Examples (5) and (6) illustrate the use of evaluating words of different
5 stylistic value in the same context. In (5), *mired* is a literary choice and fine as a
6 word. Yet, *stuck-up* is an informal adjective of derogatory meaning. But it is
7 singled out into a separate unit, obviously by intonation, and marked off by a full
8 stop in writing. This implies the sensitivity of the speaker to the stylistic value
9 of the words and his responsibility for the effect of his own speech, which is a
10 bit gossipy in this context. The speaker is British. Students are nowhere that
11 sensitive to the words they use.

12 Formal and informal words come mixed by journalists, especially in
13 present-day political contexts, sometimes with a purpose of effect. Example (6)
14 combines a rare formal adjective⁴. As the meaning of the adjective '*salacious*'
15 (6) names encouragement to sexual desire and ample sex-related detail, the
16 formality of this word is very helpful in covering this up. In the same example
17 (6), two other evaluating words (*penny dreadfuls* & *news rags*) centre on novel
18 nouns, which activate their informality to the tickling effect, especially in
19 contrast to the previous formal adjective. The mixed choice of words suggests
20 intemperance in common talk for a reason: like common people, journalists
21 sometimes let their patience snap in words and show it. This kind of stylistic mix
22 is common in present-day newspapers.

23 Examples (7) and (8) also illustrate the use of words of different stylistic
24 values. Adjectives *iconic* and *cultic* would be neutral but contextually they are
25 not that plain. Meaning so famous that people admire, *iconic* also implies people
26 of stars and celebrities' circles and so suggests form rather than content. Thus,
27 *iconic crime writer* lays stress on popularity rather than quality of his works.
28 The adjective *cultic* in (7) is informal and sounds American⁵. In the highlighted
29 word combination in (7), the adjective tends to imply not only popularity "with
30 a particular group of people" but also group-shared emotions. In the word
31 combination, *cultic devotion*, the suggested meaning of the adjective is stronger:
32 contextually, this word combination means emotion-marked attachment to
33 group- or cult-beliefs which are not original. The highlighted adjective
34 *incandescent* (7) is formal and emphasises strong emotion, but it was a writer's
35 choice. Evaluating meaning is strong and negative in (6) and (7).

36 Examples (8) and (9) also illustrate the use of evaluating words of different
37 stylistic values.

38 (8) *vaunted*, adj, (*formal*) – proudly talked about or praised as very good,
39 esp. when this is not deserved (OALD, 1732).

40 The context of use: a prestigious journal for foreign affairs.

⁴Formal words and units are rarer and vaguer in meaning to some speakers and readers, and their meaning simply slips by some eyes and ears. So, evaluation in formal words fails to strike and this is helpful when it is negative. Judging by current usage, the cover-up role of formal words makes these words among the choice options by cultured politicians and other refined people.

⁵A British dictionary of usage – OALD, 2020 – includes only the noun form 'cult' for noun and adjective entries and does not record the form 'cultic' at all.

The choice of this formal adjective is exact in both linguistic and extralinguistic contexts. The choice is also appropriate as the formality of the word agrees with the context. The choice is a tribute to the writer who made it.

(9) *lite*, *n* (*disapproving*) – used to say that a thing is similar to something else but lacks many of its serious or important qualities (OALD, 918).

The context of use: the same prestigious journal for foreign affairs.

The choice of this short noun, *disapproving* in meaning, is exact in linguistic and extralinguistic contexts and striking, especially that this noun ends the sentence⁶.

Both highlighted adjectives (in 8 & 9) imply seriousness and composure of the writer or stern determination because of their stylistic value and sentence structure. The readers cannot miss these senses.

Examples (10) and (11) illustrate the students' curious choices of the words they favour in use for long. (10) illustrates the appropriate use of the same adjective. The highlighted adjective in (11) is a fixed favourite in students' writing but it is too strong even in its neutral meaning in students' mediocre writing: 'crucial' means something so essential that that it "will affect other things" (OALD, 372). The choice of this adjective is appropriate in problematic political contexts, in government matters or in dealing with disasters and in similar situations. In students' use, it is funny or irritating, especially when it recurs permanently.

The comments on the illustrative examples listed above must have indicated that the exact meaning of the word is pivotal in its choice, but the choice depends on and is meaningful only in the context. The comments were intended to expose how delicate, intertwining and obliging stylistic values of words are. But, mostly, the analytic treatment of the examples listed above had to show how contextual and evaluating meaning of words forms a body of invisible meaning until it is activated in context, how it is perceived and how stylistic values combine over time into a body of invisible or potential meaning, how strong this meaning or the power of language is.

Discussion

This power affects and handicaps every speaker or writer while restricting his choices. The poet T S Eliot assessed the power of this meaning as "the intolerable wrestle with words and meanings." Every user of any human language will agree with this statement if he has ever tried to write something. This power of language can expose the speaker to laughter or ridicule if he misses the right word in a public context, because the speaker cannot suffer such verbal slips in private. It is the contextual meaning of words that creates this expository power, and contextual meaning is open access. The potential meaning of language is the power of language that governs every speaker even if the person is ignorant and unaware of it.

⁶"The most emphatic place in the English sentence is its end"; "...the most important part is sentence end, next – its beginning" (Lucas, 1955, 39-41).

1 It is the stylistic value or evaluating meaning of words, which is part of the
 2 idiomaticity of language that exercises a test on the speaker's verbal knowledge
 3 and intelligence or his verbal vulnerability. Familiarity with units which create
 4 potential meaning, such as calls, response utterances, formulae, forms of
 5 address, stereotypes, collocations and clichés, idioms, quotations and all fixed
 6 major units of meaning, even text and genre forms, standard sections of standard
 7 publications may help the speaker as guide-markers in dealing with potential
 8 meaning. But familiarity or learning can be effective only if done in context,
 9 methodologically and mentally - the human brain functions with reference to
 10 context⁷. It is profound knowledge of the language in use that can help the
 11 speaker mostly in wrestling with the potential meaning of language. When words
 12 and other units of meaning that recur in multiple contexts are committed to
 13 memory and become something like running text in the mind, the speaker finds
 14 himself an empowered master of the language. This would also be relevant to
 15 the proposed supplement of language to documents of language policy (see pp.
 16 6-7, above).

17 Familiarization of students with the sensitivity and power of contextual and
 18 evaluating meaning of words and so with the potential meaning of language this
 19 way through concrete comments on the meaning of concrete words in context
 20 while even bypassing the term may be more useful and effective than an attempt
 21 to instruct them in the SF Theory of language. The theory and theoretical
 22 knowledge should remain the teacher's province, while students should benefit
 23 from lively and engaging comments of the teacher on concrete words in their
 24 contexts.

25 An analogous view of the multiple meaning of verbal units and their
 26 potential meaning may be drawn from Doctor Lontas's theory of idiomaticity
 27 (Lontas, 2025, 2025a). Doctor Lontas envisages the development of the study
 28 of idiomatic and figurative language as an academic discipline "for improving
 29 language instruction, research and policy-making". But idiomatics is typical of
 30 language overall and is significant for understanding speech, "human behavior,
 31 language development and technological advancement". Fair knowledge of
 32 idiomatics can help in effective instruction and teaching, classroom communication
 33 and in "opening perspectives to the students' learning and effective
 34 communication." Doctor Lontas aims at putting forward a comprehensive theory
 35 of idiomatics, which would encompass the breadth of meaning in language,
 36 including its potential meaning.

37 This interpretation of the concept of the potential meaning of language is
 38 not complete here. It is clearly applied and must be sufficient for the teacher.
 39 Even so, this interpretation should not be copied and pasted on to the students'
 40 minds: as a concept, it would be wasted on teenagers. BA and MA students
 41 would understand this concept in this interpretation, but the term 'potential
 42 meaning' should be clarified accessibly to students if they choose to introduce

⁷The human brain is not of the design of a dictionary or computer engine: "The brain is not a circuit board. ...the brain is more like a forest than a circuit board. /.../ Experience is a major force in shaping the nervous system. ... it always works in context..." – (Can you rewire your brain? 2026).

1 the term. Otherwise, it would be a spare part as they wrestle with their problems
2 in EFL in graduation papers⁸.

3 Yet, as stated in the two-paragraph proposal on language subjects for the
4 document of language policy (see: pp. 6-7, above), university undergraduates in
5 language programmes should be made aware of and given a guiding idea on
6 language and its meaning potential before they graduate. This is to give them
7 orientation in their relation to language for life. The use of language and
8 especially writing will challenge them continually and the guiding principle may
9 come necessary in their social and professional functions and as they engage,
10 hopefully with language “for life”.

11 The problem is that language is a vocal composite of meaning that is ever
12 evolving and changing in human interaction⁹. That is why “lifelong learning”
13 means being aware of and sensitive to this novelty and complexity of language,
14 its continuous flow and change, and keeping up with it. The point of
15 potentialities of language would be especially useful in a young person’s
16 encounters with the ever changing English or their own language¹⁰. Learning for
17 life is living with the body and flow of a language in one’s own mind, talk and
18 work and keeping up with this body’s daily change, which forms its potential
19 meaning in the speaker’s presence.

20 If the proposed gist of a couple of paragraphs on the potential meaning of
21 language and perspectives in language programmes is included in language
22 policy documents, teachers, (EFL teachers in the first place), would be obliged
23 to work with these perspectives in mind. These perspectives are based on
24 advanced language knowledge (B2+/C1) at university, and project on to expert
25 knowledge to be acquired in life-long learning. Teachers would also be obliged
26 to remind their students of contextual senses of the words as they come,
27 especially of the positive senses, which stick readier, psychologically.

28 Language knowledge can be achieved in its use, sometimes only through
29 reading or listening to radio or television talk. Psychologically sound teaching
30 facilitates the process of acquiring language knowledge in the use of language.
31 Familiarity with spoken language is helpful in understanding and even in further
32 development of written language. Language learning to the level of expertise
33 requires familiarity with and sensitivity to the potentialities of language. It
34 cannot be done through instruction or rule-based teaching. Exposure to,
35 immersion in and browsing quality language, as processes rather than methods,

⁸The term, ‘the potential meaning of a language’ may be replaced by the term ‘the latent meaning of language’ if this makes sense to the teacher or is easier to understand, as both these terms mean the same phenomenon of the contextual and historical idiomaticity of language. A study which argues consecutively with reference to SF Linguistics of Michael A Halliday, would use the term ‘the potential meaning of language’ as consecutively, but ‘the latent meaning of language’ is as good with reference to the idiomaticity of language (Liontas, 2025), and Doctor Liontas found this term acceptable.

⁹The late Polish Professor of English Jacek Fisiak once said: “The language we are using is about four-to-five years older compared to that spoken in London or New York”.

¹⁰Indeed, an extinct language is not one that somebody banned or denied publishing in. It is the one of which there are no living speakers.

1 are required for learners because their voluntary immersion into internet English
2 is not always beneficial.

3 Postgraduate expertise in language means such a level of language
4 knowledge which permits subconscious insights and operation with it and
5 sensitivity to meaning in use. To achieve this level of expertise, in individual
6 learning as a rule, effort, focus, noticing and time are required. Praise or positive
7 responses facilitate language learning at any stage. Teachers, who do not miss a
8 chance to acknowledge the positive in the students' use of language, help them
9 and themselves. It is relevant to mention here what could be pointed out in
10 teaching at the advanced or university level. What matters at school in addition
11 to materials and methods is the teacher's individual culture, which is reflected in
12 his language first. Real expertise in a foreign and even in the native language is
13 unthinkable without close reading of imaginative literature and poetry, reading
14 for its meaning and senses. People who excel in academy, politics and
15 administration often have this level of expertise with language¹¹.

16 Making students aware of language and its potentialities should be done
17 earlier than their graduation years. It can be done in school, ("culture is taken
18 over in conversation in the family", see p.9, above), but not through definitions,
19 strict reminders or prescriptions. The most useful touch is through students' own
20 language. The problem in school and later is writing. Politeness and
21 sophistication in speech, created in the family, no longer has appropriate contexts
22 in extralinguistic reality for most of the speakers. Students will have to take over
23 this polish as contexts of their interaction will demand. But writing is a need and
24 a problem at school and university, and it is hard to tackle.

25 Turning to students' own papers in class, the first step is to question their
26 thoughts in writing when they are facing their marked works. Yet, this is an old
27 approach and may have been dead in effect through routinised repetition. But the
28 rule, "Think before you write", runs in and out of British and American
29 textbooks. "As you write listen" (Pinckert, 1981) is another rule, which is
30 extremely helpful and should remind the students of the role of intonation in
31 language in its relation to rhythm and syntax. Both these and other rules direct
32 attention to the structure of the sentence. Sentence length also matters in English
33 writing. The recommended medium sentence length is 20 words in English, but
34 the number of words in the sentence differs depending on the writer of original
35 prose¹².

36 Teaching the structure of the sentence is not a crime, even when some people
37 may suppose that the SF theory of language tends to throw out this concept. It
38 does not. I will permit myself the sacrilege of saying that "A sentence is
39 (expected) to mean a finished thought", which is an old definition that was

¹¹"What matters at school, at the university and in after-life is not new interpretations of Shakespeare – they are usually false; not new ideas of criticism – they are usually futile; but a knowledge of the best that has been said or written, and the power – I admit the limited extent to which this can be taught – to speak and write" (Lucas, 1955, 26-27).

¹²A recent quiz question on one BBC website gave the following numbers: Jane Austen's sentences are 44 words, Charles Dickens's – 20 and JK Rowling's – 12.

1 thrown out with the coming of descriptive and structural linguistics, and our
2 present-day knowledge finds it helpful.

3 All learners and teachers will gain if they know what Sir Winston said about
4 the English sentence: as a pupil of a lower level of knowledge at school, he was
5 sent to the group learning English rather than the group of gifted boys learning
6 Latin and Greek. Compelled to focus on English, he studied it so well that he got
7 “into my bones the essential structure of the ordinary British sentence”, “which
8 is a noble thing”. Sir Winston earned the Nobel Prize for Literature for his
9 English later (Winston Churchill’s school days, 1930/2026). The moral of this
10 story is simple: excellent knowledge of English syntax is key in success with this
11 language. The English sentence means both the clarity of thought, an exercise in
12 classical logic and a way to perfection in language, and perfection is no fault in
13 this case.

14 Additionally, a recent message of Haruki Murakami online was that he
15 learned how to write when he started writing in English, which evolved into his
16 “sparse and..... disciplined writing”, “simple, even apparently casual, on the
17 surface”, which is part of his engagement with language: “I like to write. I like
18 to choose the right word, I like to write the right sentence” (Murakami, 2014).
19 Although Murakami’s writing style was found elementary and was criticized by
20 the Japanese, many a foreign reader of his works in English and French expects
21 the Nobel for him. In other words, it is required to teach learners the structure of
22 the English sentence or how to construct one’s intended thought in English, and
23 nobody has yet forbidden that. The methods of teaching differ as to the teacher,
24 and teachers are free to choose with the purpose in mind, because, in Wilga
25 Rivers’ words, “eclecticism is acceptable in methods”.

26 Turning to the exploitation of students’ own writing, it is helpful to resort to
27 middling or better papers rather than the worst.

28 In this case, I show them the work of fragments and carelessly dropped
29 words and say: “When I was reading this, I felt as if you were teasing or mocking
30 me, really”. BA and MA students get the meaning here and shake their heads
31 sadly. This is the moment to catch on. Students do improve if they focus and
32 think. But short and quick writing is not helpful in subsequent practice, even in
33 the classroom. Short and slow writing is. Again, the help is in the ability “to think
34 before you write”.

35 This is not denying that university undergraduates require a course in style,
36 which should also be practical. It is exercise rather than rules that help. Style is
37 relevant because style deals with meaning, primarily contextual and evaluating,
38 highlighted above in illustrative examples (see p. 10, above) and generalised as
39 potential meaning in language accumulated from contextual and emotive-
40 evaluating meaning in adjectives, verbs and nouns. It likewise accumulates from
41 complete and incomplete, clipped or unfinished fragments and structures in
42 speech and in students’ writing. Aspects of style feature even in a recent major

1 grammar of English¹³ (Carter, McCarthy, 2007), which is a research grammar,
2 acknowledged by American professors too.

3 As has been mentioned above, vocabulary and structure are one in the SF
4 theory of language. There is no ignoring of the English vocabulary. Teaching
5 through example is the best way. It is true to fact and helpful when the teacher
6 does not prescribe rigid theoretical terminology to the students when teaching
7 vocabulary in its structural contexts, the way it was done at the time of
8 descriptive and structural linguistics, as if their authors had prescribed the use of
9 terminology in language practice exercises. Students should be thinking of
10 meaning rather than theoretical labels.

11 Words should not be excluded when teaching the structure of the English
12 sentence. The current practice in teaching chunks rather than individual words is
13 a praised and tested practice. The focus on individual words comes in alongside,
14 especially when recurrent words or terms are required. Again, the methods may
15 differ as to the teacher. There are pitfalls, too. An American author quoted a
16 happening in class when he was explaining the meaning of the term *cliché* and
17 saying, “It is trite, a tired expression”, which belongs in this paper, too. On
18 finishing, the teacher asked the students to use the word in sentences of their
19 own. One boy said: “He came home with cliché on his face”. The student clearly
20 listened semi-focused and heard what the teacher was saying but picked
21 subconsciously a clipped phrase from the teacher’s words and applied it in his
22 own context.

23 With senior, BA and MA students, different mishaps strike. With reference
24 to the illustrative examples used in this paper (see p. 10, above), a warning is
25 due. It is not advisable to quote these examples in class completely, especially
26 those with political messages and personal names included. Personal names can
27 be cut, yet political evaluations in illustrations should be avoided with students
28 for the sake of peace of their minds. Learners attach themselves enthusiastically
29 to statements so strong in words and evaluations as those used above and no
30 good can come of it. Illustrations in teaching university students are safer when
31 pointed evaluations, alliterative effects or assonance are missing, unless the
32 teacher draws attention to the role of alliteration and assonance as a help in
33 memorizing the words. But burning political problems and disagreements,
34 although catching, especially when related to some notoriety, may be put aside
35 together with their strong words¹⁴.

36 If students’ reactions mean anything and may be taken into consideration,
37 active teaching gives ideas. As has been mentioned and known, chunks are more
38 useful in learning vocabulary than individual words. A case in class of a teacher
39 who was teaching political vocabulary at university is indicative of quite clever
40 reactions. The chunks taught included the following:

¹³A classicist assessed the value of style in a simple way: “Style – a means by which a human being gains contact with others”. “Language cannot be left to be looking after itself.” This author differentiated between “things to be taught and fought” (Lucas, 1955, 49, 42).

¹⁴In my personal experience, groups of cultured university students avoided political, tragic and sex-related crime discussions in class, as they did the words, and the teacher followed in their wake.

1 to have a better grasp of the topic of innovation
 2 to compete in the business world
 3 Innovation is what drives us forward.
 4 the removal of trade barriers
 5 the loss and damage fund to be administered first.
 6 a wave of industrial renewal

7
 8 When a list of units of this kind is rehearsed in sentences of their own at the
 9 end of a class, the teacher may not be surprised to hear something like the
 10 following (in a whisper): ‘Let’s do pedagogical removal!’ from a senior student,
 11 with the group leaving the room, laughing. Or, in a more personal context in
 12 class, openly: “That’s cool! Do you study papers for us every day?”

13 The utterances as quoted also imply how suggestive the meaning of the
 14 words is to the teacher. The overheard remarks mean how careful the teacher
 15 should be when selecting and listing the words. Some catch spare words and put
 16 them into their own context, when advanced. Some get the general idea and don’t
 17 care for more. And most of them happen to be impatient with the teacher’s
 18 obvious readiness for the class and being even too conscientious about the
 19 sources and the topics. Finally, it means that language has an extraordinarily rich
 20 potential of meaning, which cannot be used absent-mindedly. It also means the
 21 value of the word: “For one word man is deemed wise and for one word foolish.
 22 We ought indeed to be careful what we say.” The conclusion is about the price
 23 of education and teaching and the content of language programmes and policies
 24 if they are viewed and treated with knowledge.

25 26 27 **Conclusions**

28
 29 1. Making a critical conclusion to the reviews of the chosen documents of
 30 language policy, this applied paper claims that these documents focus on
 31 organisational, financial, administrative, political and ideological questions
 32 rather than on language as the key concept in language programmes. An
 33 extended statement on language of two paragraphs was proposed as a
 34 supplement to documents of language policy (p. 6, above).

35 2. The proposed supplement makes the point of meaning in language and its
 36 sensitive aspects to lead to the introduction of the concept of the potential
 37 meaning of language. This concept, which means historical, contextual and
 38 emotive=evaluating meaning and is latent or potential in language can project
 39 language courses to the acquisition of the knowledge and mastery of
 40 potentialities of language with its power and difficulties to university
 41 undergraduates. They would have to pursue it to perfection in life-long learning.
 42 Insights into this concept can enlighten students in language and literature
 43 programmes toward the breadth of their vision about language beyond university
 44 courses. The terms in the proposed supplement entail a lengthy explanation of
 45 the Theory of SF Linguistics in its basic concepts and premises, touching upon
 46 the theory of idiomaticity.

3. This paper is based on hopefully, sufficient illustrative material in explaining potentialities of and difficulties with language to the teacher, which can be exploited in teaching. Digressions on the relevance of imaginative literature and poetry, together with methodological vagaries were briefly made to give ideas to teachers of what may work in the classroom if the guiding idea of the potential meaning of language is accepted officially and personally.

Abbreviations

COD – The Concise Oxford Dictionary. Edited by Angus Stevenson, Maurice Waite. Twelfth Edition. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

OALD – The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary. Edited by Diana Lea, Jennifer Bradbery et al. Tenth Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

References

- Bender, Michael C., Schmidt, Michael S., Blinder, Alan (2026) *Trump Is Said to Have Dropped Demand for Cash from Harvard*. DOI: www.nytimes.com/2026/02/02/us/politics/trump-harvard-payments.html 24 Feb 2026.
- Bender, Michael S., and Blinder, Alan (2026) *The Trump administration appears to have renewed its pressure campaign against Harvard*. The New York Times – Breaking News, 13 February 2026.
- Block, Josianne (2025) Empowering migrant learners: insights into translanguaging in the classroom. In: Bullock (Ed.) (2025) 95-97.
- Brown, Steve (2025) Global Englishes, local materials. In: Bullock (Ed.) (2025) 136-138.
- Bullock, Deborah (Ed.) (2025) IATEFL 2024 Brighton Conference Selections / Edited by Deborah Bullock. Totton, Hampshire, Great Britain: Hobbs the Printers Ltd.
- Can you rewire your brain?* (2026) DOI: https://aeon.co/essays/what-the-metaphor-of-rewiring-gets-wrong-about-neuroplasticity?status=none&utm_source=CampaignMonitor 28 April 2026.
- Carter, Ronald, McCarthy, Michael (2007) *The Cambridge Grammar of English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cinganotto, Letizia (2025) Plenary: *Teaching English and teaching other subjects: what's new?* In: Bullock (Ed.) (2025) 161-169.
- Drazdauskiene, Marija L. (1990) *The potential meaning of language and its development*. Studia Anglica Posnaniensia, 1990, 23, 73-83.
- Drazdauskiene, Marija L. (1992) *The Phatic Use of English: Meaning and Style*. Abstract of the Doctor habilitatus dissertation. Vilnius: The Institute of Information of Lithuania.
- Drazdauskiene, Marija L. (2016) *Language and Usage: Potentialities and Problems*. Warszawa: Wszechnica Polska, Szkoła Wyższa w Warszawie.
- Drazdauskiene, Marija L. (2018) *Toward a Discovery of Truth in the Study of Verbal Meaning*. Paper presented at the 10th Annual International Conference on Languages and Linguistics, organised by the Athens Institute for Education and

- 1 Research (ATINER), in Athens on the 3rd of July 2017. - <https://www.athensjournals.gr/ajp> 11 April 2018.
- 2
- 3 Drazdauskiene, Marija L. (2025). *Insights into the Development of Meaning in*
- 4 *Language*. Athens Journals (forthcoming).
- 5 Firth, J.R. (1957) *Papers in Linguistics 1934-1951*. London: Oxford University Press.
- 6 Fisiak, Jacek (1981) *Some introductory remarks concerning contrastive linguistics*. In:
- 7 Fisiak (Ed.) (1981a) 1-12.
- 8 Fisiak (Ed.) (1981a) *Contrastive Linguistics and the Language Teacher*. Oxford, New
- 9 York, etc: Pergamon.
- 10 Fisiak, Jacek (1983) *English Studies in Poland: A Historical Survey*. Poznań: UAM.
- 11 Fisiak, Jacek (2004) *An Outline History of English. Volume One: External History*.
- 12 Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie.
- 13 Fowler, H.W. & E.G. (1906/1993) *The King's English*. Wordsworth Editions Ltd.
- 14 Gowers, Sir Ernest (1954/1977) *The Complete Plain Words*. Revised by Sir Bruce
- 15 Fraser. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office.
- 16 Greenbaum, Sidney, Whitcut, Janet. Introduction by Randolph Quirk (1988/1996) *The*
- 17 *Longman Guide to English Usage*. Longman.
- 18 Grigaliūnienė, Jonė (2019) *Anglų kalbos studijų raida Vilniaus Universitete*. In:
- 19 Šeškauskienė, Inesa, Grigaliūnienė, Jonė (Eds) (2019) 11-59.
- 20 Halliday, Michael AK (1973) *Explorations in the Functions of Language*. London:
- 21 Arnold.
- 22 Halliday, Michael AK (1975) *Learning How to Mean*. London: Arnold.
- 23 Halliday, Michael AK (1976) *System and Function in Language* / Edited by Gunther
- 24 Kress. London: Oxford University Press.
- 25 Halliday, Michael AK (1978) *Language as Social Semiotic*. London: Arnold.
- 26 Halliday, Michael AK, Ruqaiya Hasan (1992) *Language, Context and Text*. Oxford:
- 27 Oxford University Press.
- 28 Halliday, Michal AK (2014) *Introduction to Functional Grammar*. Revised by Christian
- 29 Matthiessen. London and New York: Routledge.
- 30 Humphries, Emma & Wendy Ayres-Bennett (2023) *The hidden face of public language*
- 31 *policy: a case study from the UK*. Open access In: *Current Issues in Language*
- 32 *Planning*, Volume 24 (2023) – Issue 5.
- 33 Janicki, Karol (1981) *The Foreigner's Language in a Sociolinguistic Perspective*.
- 34 Poznań: UAM
- 35 *Language Education Policy – The Council of Europe* (2025) DOI: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/language-policy/languagepolicies> 1 December 2025
- 36
- 37 *Less Than Words Can Say. Core Arguments on Language Policies* (2026) DOI:
- 38 <https://jamesgmartin.center/2026/02/less-than-words-can-say/> August 17, 2026
- 39 Liontas, John (2026) *The Ethos, Pathos and Logos of Idiomatics Proper*. Athens Journal
- 40 of Education, 2025, 12: 1-26. DOI: <https://doi.oeg/10.3958/aje.XYZ> 4 February
- 41 2025
- 42 Liontas, John (2025a) *Cultivating ISI: Shaping the Future of Idiomatics in Language*
- 43 *Education and Research*. Presentation at the 18th Annual International Conference
- 44 on Languages and Linguistics, 7 July 2025.
- 45 Lucas, F.L. (1955) *Style*. London: Cassell.
- 46 Maley, Alan (1993) *Short and Sweet. Short texts and how to use them*. Penguin Books.
- 47 Maley, Alan (2009) *Towards an aesthetics of ELT*. Folio 13/2, 4-11.
- 48 Maley, Alan (2010) *Towards an aesthetics of ELT* (Part 2). Folio 14/1, 7-12.
- 49 *Modern EFL Language Policy* (2005) DOI: [www.google.com/search?q=language-](http://www.google.com/search?q=language-policy-in-elf-for-today)
- 50 [policy-in-elf-for-today](http://www.google.com/search?q=language-policy-in-elf-for-today) 1 December 2025

- 1 Murakami, Haruki (2014) *Haruki Murakami: 'I'm an outcast of the Japanese literary*
- 2 *world*. DOI: [https://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/sep/13/haruki-murakami-](https://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/sep/13/haruki-murakami-interview-colorless-tsukur-tazaki-and-his-years-of-pilgimage)
- 3 [interview-colorless-tsukur-tazaki-and-his-years-of-pilgimage](https://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/sep/13/haruki-murakami-interview-colorless-tsukur-tazaki-and-his-years-of-pilgimage) 7 March 2026
- 4 Partridge, Eric, (1940/1978) *A Dictionary of Clichés*. London, Boston and Henley:
- 5 Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- 6 Pinckert, Richard C. (1981) *The Truth About English: How to write, speak and think*
- 7 *with the language*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
- 8 Quirk, Sir Randolph (1968) *The Use of English*. London: Longman.
- 9 Quirk, Sir Randolph (1974) *The Linguist and the English Language*. London: Arnold.
- 10 Quirk, Sir Randolph (1982) *Style and Communication in the English Language*.
- 11 London: Edward Arnold.
- 12 Saul, Stephen, Blinder, Alan (2025) *Trump Officials Press Case Against Harvard and*
- 13 *Add a New Investigation*. DOI: [www.nytimes.com/2025/08/us/trump-harvard-pat-](https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/us/trump-harvard-pat-ent-investigation-international-students.html)
- 14 [ent-investigation-international-students.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/us/trump-harvard-pat-ent-investigation-international-students.html) 24 February 2026
- 15 State Language Policy Guidelines (2022) *State Language Policy Guidelines 2018–2022*
- 16 Valstybinė lietuvių kalbos komisija DOI: <https://www.vlkk.lt> › public › file › Angliski
- 17 › Ga... DOC
- 18 Subhan, Zarina (2024) *Because you're all worth it!* Plenary presentation at the 57th
- 19 IATEFL Annual International Conference, Brighton, 2024. In: Bullock, Deborah
- 20 (Ed.) (2025) 113-122.
- 21 Šeškauskienė, Inesa and Jonė Grigaliūnienė (Eds) (2019) *Anglų kalbos slėpinių*
- 22 *pavilioti. Prisiminimų kaleidoskopas*. Vilnius: Vilnius University Publishers.
- 23 *The Perils of Learning in English* (2019) DOI: [https://www.economist.com/leaders](https://www.economist.com/leaders/2019/02/23/the-perils-of-learning-in-english)
- 24 [/2019/02/23/the-perils-of-learning-in-english](https://www.economist.com/leaders/2019/02/23/the-perils-of-learning-in-english) 28 February 2019
- 25 Thornbury, Scott (2025) *Teaching EFL and teaching modern languages: same or*
- 26 *different?* In: Bullock (Ed.) (2025) 169-170.
- 27 Vallins, G.H. (1960/1970) *The Best English*. London: Pan Books.
- 28 Ware, Gemma (2026) *Three scientists speak about what it's like to have research*
- 29 *funding cut by the Trump administration*. DOI: [https://www.theconversation.com/](https://www.theconversation.com/three-scientists-speak-about-what-its-like-to-have-research-funding-cut-by-the-trump-administration-255459)
- 30 [three-scientists-speak](https://www.theconversation.com/three-scientists-speak-about-what-its-like-to-have-research-funding-cut-by-the-trump-administration-255459) [about-what-its-like-to-have-research-funding-cut-by-the-](https://www.theconversation.com/three-scientists-speak-about-what-its-like-to-have-research-funding-cut-by-the-trump-administration-255459)
- 31 [trump-administration-255459](https://www.theconversation.com/three-scientists-speak-about-what-its-like-to-have-research-funding-cut-by-the-trump-administration-255459) 24 February 2026
- 32 Weiner, Edward S.C. (1984) *The Oxford Guide to English Usage*. Oxford: At the
- 33 Clarendon Press.
- 34 Weiner, Edward S.C., Delahunty, Andrew (1993) *The Oxford Guide to English Usage*.
- 35 Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 36 Wilson, George (2025) *Innovation for survival: what can the ELT community learn from*
- 37 *regional-language teaching initiatives?* In: Bullock Ed.) (2025) 132-134.
- 38 *Winston Churchill's school days* (1930/2026) DOI: [https://newlearningonline.com/new-](https://newlearningonline.com/new-learning/chapter-2/supporting-material/Winston-churchills-school-days)
- 39 [learning/chapter-2/supporting-material/Winston-churchills-school-days](https://newlearningonline.com/new-learning/chapter-2/supporting-material/Winston-churchills-school-days)