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Pop cosmopolitanism and online language learning: findings from a discrete choice experiment

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ABSTRACT

This article considers the burgeoning online market for language learning as representative of an emerging form of Internet-enabled pop cosmopolitanism. The analysis is based upon a survey-experiment conducted on one of the world's largest online language learning platforms. Drawing on theories of media globalization, cosmopolitanism and language ideologies, the study explores the factors that drive participation in online language learning and the attributes students favor in teacher selection. The results suggest that student preferences are closely related to learning motivations and media consumption. Specifically, 'pop cosmopolitan' students are far more likely to favor native speakers than students who are motivated by more mundane instrumental goals (such as career advancement). We attribute these findings to enduring perceptions about native speakers as more authentic representations of a particular language and culture. The implications of these findings for theories of pop cosmopolitanism and online language learning are discussed.

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The rise of social media has accelerated global shifts in media consumption patterns, as users increasingly consume media in languages they do not speak and set in countries they have never visited (see Craig & Cunningham, 2019; Yoon, 2019). Recent examples of successful transnational media content abound, from the globalization of K-Pop music to the rising popularity of foreign-language TV shows offered by the major video streaming platforms (Jones, 2020). In parallel, foreign language proficiency continues to be strongly associated with employment and educational opportunities. In response to these trends, a burgeoning ecosystem of online platforms for language learning has emerged.

This article considers the ecosystem for online language learning as representative of an emerging form of Internet-enabled pop cosmopolitanism (Jenkins, 2004/2006). Drawing on theories of media globalization, cosmopolitanism and language ideologies, it explores the factors that drive participation in online language learning and the attributes students favor in teacher selection. By examining these attributes, the study sheds light on

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the evolving nature of representations about cultural authenticity in an increasingly globalized media environment.

Although Jenkins (2004/2006) proposed the concept of pop cosmopolitanism more than fifteen years ago, it has received relatively little sustained attention in the scholarly literature, with a few notable exceptions (Elkins, 2019; Lee, 2018). Today, transnational content flows are orders of magnitude greater than even a decade ago, and individuals worldwide have increased access to Internet-enabled platforms for media consumption and engagement (Cunningham & Craig, 2016). These changes to the global mediascape suggest the need for renewed scholarly attention to the study of pop cosmopolitanism, and in particular to work that empirically operationalizes and tests the original concept.

This article contributes to this goal by empirically testing a set of hypotheses about student motivation and teacher selection in an online language learning platform. Theoretically, the study seeks to contribute to literature on both media globalization and language ideologies. It is based on a discrete choice experiment (DCE) conducted by the authors on LanguaSpeak (a pseudonym adopted due to the authors' ongoing research on the platform), one of the largest online language learning platforms which at the time of writing had more than 5 million members and more than 10,000 active teachers. DCEs are widely used in health communication, economics and marketing to reveal user preferences (Hauber et al., 2016; Ryan et al., 2007), and have been shown to predict real-world behavior remarkably well (Hainmueller et al., 2015).

The remainder of the article is organized as follows: first, we explicate pop cosmopolitanism and review extant literature on language ideologies. We then present our research hypotheses, describe our methods and present the results of the experiment. We conclude by discussing the implications of the findings for theorizing pop cosmopolitanism and the enduring connections between cultural authenticity and language.

Literature review

Pop cosmopolitanism

The growth of online media has facilitated access to linguistically and culturally diverse media content, which users increasingly consume via mobile devices and share through social media platforms (Jin & Yoon, 2016). Engagement with this content can be understood as an element in a broader process of telemediatization, or the 'increasing implication of electronic communications and media systems in the constitution of everyday experience, and the 'accessing of the world' by locally situated individuals' (Tomlinson, 2006, p. 156). These trends have given rise to what Tomlinson (2000) has termed 'experienced proximity.' Verboord (2017) suggests that the increased consumption of foreign cultural products is also associated with rising interest in 'cosmopolitan orientations' (p. 463).

Cosmopolitanism descends from the Greek *kosmopolitês*, which is usually translated as 'citizen of the world.' The term is generally associated with hospitality and 'an openness to encountering and/or receiving the *Other*' (Christensen, 2017, p. 555, emphasis in the original). The topic of cosmopolitanism has received increased attention by communication and media scholars in recent years (e.g., Christensen, 2017; Georgiou,

2017; Leurs & Georgiou, 2016; McEwan & Sobre-Denton, 2011; Sobré-Denton & Bardhan, 2013; Sobré-Denton, 2016; Verboord, 2017; Zuckerman, 2013).

While the term cosmopolitanism has often been associated with jet-setting elites, Jenkins' work on 'pop cosmopolitans' (2004/2006) discusses the emergence of a broader phenomenon far removed from the 'high culture' with which cosmopolitanism has traditionally been associated. Jenkins (2004/2006) theorizes pop cosmopolitanism as a response 'to the ways that the transcultural flows of popular culture inspire new forms of global consciousness and cultural competency' (p. 156).

The material conditions for pop cosmopolitanism have only improved since Jenkins introduced the term in 2004. Since then, more than three-billion people around the globe have come online (ITU, n.d). Thus, although concerns about a 'participation divide' still merit serious concern (Hargittai & Walejko, 2008), it is clear that there are far more potential pop cosmopolitans today than ever before. Elkins (2019) suggests that streaming platforms such as Spotify and Netflix directly promote themselves as offering 'the possibility of virtual connection with other cultures' and sell audiences 'on the idea that their platforms are resources of pop cosmopolitanism' (p. 379).

Writing in the context of online habits among Finnish youth, Leppänen et al. (2009) note that 'mediated cultural products are taken up and engaged with in ways which both enforce their connectedness with aspects of the global and resignify them so that they also index their situatedness' (pp. 1080–1081). They highlight the important role that language plays in this process and draw attention in particular to the importance of multilingual communication via the internet in 'conjur[ing] up dreams and ideals of internationalization and cosmopolitanism' (p. 1087). While they observe this process among Finnish youth who use English online, it is also possible to identify these trends among native English speakers who seek cosmopolitan identification through consumption of non-English media (Jenkins, 2004/2006; Jenkins et al., 2013).

As is likely apparent from the discussion of Leppänen et al.'s (2009) work, pop cosmopolitanism is just one amongst a variety of cosmopolitanisms that have been theorized in response to changes in the global mediascape. Other scholars have theorized about transnational, Internet-mediated 'virtual cosmopolitanism' (McEwan & Sobre-Denton, 2011; Sobré-Denton, 2016) and 'networked cosmopolitanism' (Williamson, 2013). However, pop cosmopolitanism is a particularly fitting term for describing the practices of online language learners, in part because these learners, like the pop cosmopolitans Jenkins describes, seem to purposefully 'seek content which is heavily marked by its national origins' (Jenkins et al., 2013, p. 275).

Language learning motivation

The emergence of pop cosmopolitanism, in addition to the socioeconomic forces associated with globalization, has helped spur the growth of a rapidly expanding ecosystem for online language learning. Much of the demand is for English learning, which reflects English's de facto status as today's *lingua franca* (Crystal, 2003). For example, in 2021, the Chinese English-tutoring company VIPKid had 100,000 instructors teaching English online to more than 800,000 children (VIPKid, n.d.) As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the online language industry seems to have grown even further (Lomas, 2020), in part due to pandemic-related job losses among would-be instructors (Jarvis, 2020).

Despite English commanding the lion's share of demand worldwide, online language learning platforms serve the needs of students learning multiple languages, and it is well-accepted that transnational media flows are catalyzing demand for foreign language learning (e.g., Pickles, 2018). Unsurprisingly, such demand reflects the dominance of cultural products from a relatively small set of countries in North America, Western Europe, and more recently in Northeast Asia (Jenkins et al., 2013; see also Garcia Canclini, 2014).

Previous studies have shown that motivations for language learning vary widely (see Duff, 2017). It is well-recognized that many learners are motivated by the 'imagined community' of speakers of the language they seek to master (Kanno & Norton, 2003; Norton, 2001; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007), and it has also been documented that media play an important role in this process (Leppänen et al., 2009). For example, Lee (2018) draws on Jenkin's notion of pop cosmopolitanism to explore how American fans move from watching Korean TV dramas to a broader engagement with Korean language and culture. Similar findings are reported by Kim (2016a, 2016b) and Mazaná (2014). These learners are *intrinsically* motivated, in the sense that their learning of a foreign language is based on an affective connection with a particular culture and its media products.

In this article we conceptualize these intrinsically motivated language learners as 'pop cosmopolitans,' and contrast them with those who are motivated more *extrinsically* by educational or career-oriented goals. This is of course not a binary distinction, and as our results suggest most language learners are motivated by a combination of both affective motivations and instrumental goals. We elaborate on this point in the methods section below.

Native speakerism

Scholars in linguistics and related fields have long noted that many language learners prefer to study with native speakers. The term 'native speaker' refers to those who grew up speaking a language and/or speak it as their mother tongue. Native speaker status is important in the market for language teaching because of powerful language ideologies, which refer to 'situated and socially established beliefs about the nature, structure, and usage of language' (Park, 2016; Silverstein, 1979). One of the most pervasive language ideologies is that native speakers are, by nature, better teachers of the language (Canagarajah, 1999; Cook, 1999; Phillipson, 1992). This assumption is often referred to as *native speakerism* (Holliday, 2005, 2006; see also Holliday et al., 2015). A related assumption is that everyone is a native speaker of a language, and that this language is that of their country of origin (see Canagarajah, 2012; Park & Wee, 2017).

The close association between country of origin and native language is the result of various historical processes, the full explanation of which lies beyond the purview of this article. Suffice it to say that ideologies of language which portray languages as unitary, countable and nation-bound are in large part the result of particular policies enacted by nation-states since the nineteenth century (see Shohamy, 2006). As Anderson (1983) shows, the shared ideological construct of a national language played a major role in nation-building processes, and this 'national language' is commonly seen as the carrier of the authentic national culture (Park & Wee, 2017). Further, natively speaking the national variety of a particular language is usually seen to index an intimate understanding of the culture and people associated with it (see Canagarajah, 2012).

As a result of these historical processes, it is today considered only natural that citizens of France speak French, that citizens of Japan speak Japanese, and so forth. Just as the fiction of the nation gives way to the very real experience of nationalism, the fiction of languages as single, nation-bound entities gives rise to powerful language ideologies that favor native speakers. Dominant language ideologies represent native speakers as ‘owners’ of a language, and thus the sole arbiters of what is an acceptable use of the language and what counts as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ language (Canagarajah, 2012). One result is that learners often study a language with the goal of approximating a native speaker as closely as possible. Importantly, these powerful ideologies are often canonized into official state policy (e.g., Jenks, 2019).

However, there exists little empirical evidence to support the idea that native speakers are better teachers of a language (Canagarajah, 1999; Phillipson, 1992). In fact, Canagarajah shows that non-native speakers have significant advantages over monolingual native speakers because ‘their proficiency in more than one language system develops a deep metalinguistic knowledge and complex language awareness’ (p. 80). Perhaps surprisingly, there is little evidence that native speakers are better teachers of even pronunciation (Levis, 2015; Levis et al., 2016). Levis et al. conclude that ‘nonnative teachers, as in all language skills, bring tremendous advantages to the teachings of pronunciation’ (p. 918).

At the same time, recent research suggests that native speakerism may be weakening as a result of economic globalization and Internet-driven cultural hybridization. In addition, people increasingly live, work, and visit countries with languages different from their own mother tongue, thus promoting multilingualism. Due to increased human mobility (both physically and virtually), the very notions of ‘native’ and ‘non-native,’ may be becoming more porous. The Internet is an oft-cited actor in this process. For example, citing increased hybridity Leppänen et al. (2009) suggest that in the context of new media, ‘national identity and language may have less significance’ (p. 1080). In the specific context of foreign language learning, Kern observes that traditional notions of cultural authenticity are ‘problematized by the anonymous origin and massive reappropriation of much material available on the Internet’ (Kern, 2014, p. 341; as cited in Kramsch, 2014, p. 300), a point that Kramsch (2014) also echoes.

There are also reasons to believe that online language teachers might benefit less from native-speakerism than offline teachers. Research about hiring in online platforms suggests that many are more comfortable contracting with individuals with whom they share minimal geographical, cultural and linguistic distance (Hong & Pavlou, 2014). Thus, a Korean student may prefer to be taught English online by a fellow Korean, rather than an American, based on cultural similarities and convenience (e.g., same time zone). There is indeed some evidence that learners’ preferences for native versus non-native teachers changes depending on the context (Chun, 2014).

Hypotheses and methods

Hypotheses

Based on the extant studies discussed above, we put forth the following hypotheses:

H1a: More intrinsically motivated learners are more likely to choose a native-speaker teacher.

As noted, native speakers are often perceived as the sole ‘authentic’ representations of a particular language and culture (Canagarajah, 2012, p. 22; Park & Wee, 2012, p. 111). Thus, while language learners are generally expected to favor native speakers, intrinsically motivated learners are expected to favor them to a greater extent than extrinsically motivated learners, who may value other teacher attributes such as teaching experience and training.

H1b: More extrinsically motivated learners are more likely to choose a teacher with language teaching credentials.

Extrinsically motivated language learners are primarily driven by an interest in acquiring or improving their language skills. Because of this instrumental motivation, we hypothesize that learners who are more extrinsically motivated will value teacher qualifications and credentials to a greater extent than those who are more motivated by affective connections with a particular culture and its media products.

H2: Increased consumption of foreign cultural products will correlate with preference for native speaker teachers.

As discussed, one of the key dimensions of pop cosmopolitan as conceptualized by Jenkins (2004/2006) is engagement with foreign-language media products. Following the discussion of language ideologies above, we hypothesize that the consumption of foreign media will strengthen the preference for learning a language from a teacher that is perceived as an authentic representative of the culture that the language is associated with.

Method

This study was approved by a University Institutional Review Board and carried out in collaboration with LanguaSpeak. LanguaSpeak operates as a typical two-sided online market. On the supply side are language teachers who create a personal profile that includes language(s) taught, hourly price, qualifications (if any), and a short bio. As teachers complete lessons, the profile also shows the number of previous classes and students, a summary score from previous students (1–5 scale), and the written reviews posted by previous students. There is no algorithmic matching in LanguaSpeak, so would-be students simply browse through teacher profiles (using filters if so desired) and select with whom they would like to schedule a lesson. It is important to note that LanguaSpeak – unlike other online learning platforms – does not require teachers to have professional credentials to offer their services on the platform. There is therefore great variance in the experience and qualifications, as well as in the country of origin or residence, of the teachers for any given language.

In collaboration with LanguaSpeak, the research team distributed a survey via email to all English-speaking registered users that have engaged in classes for three languages: German, French, and Italian. In total, the survey was sent to 31,617 users, 917 of whom completed at least part of the survey (for a response rate of 2.9%). After data cleaning, our final sample consists of 863 LanguaSpeak users. The sample is roughly gender balanced (female = 54%) and the mean age was 37.6. Further demographic information is provided in Table 1. According to LanguaSpeak, the demographics of survey

respondents are similar to the platform's overall user base. To incentivize participation, five \$25 gift vouchers were raffled among respondents.

The survey instrument consisted of two parts: (1) a set of questions addressing student motivations, experience with LanguaSpeak, foreign media consumption, and basic demographic information; and (2) a discrete choice experiment (DCE) to assess preferred teacher traits. In a DCE, respondents are asked to complete a set of choice tasks, each of which requires the participants to choose between a set of alternatives. In this case, each task presented respondents with two mock teacher profiles with different attributes. The mock teacher profiles were identical in format to the actual teacher profiles on LanguaSpeak. For example, in the first-choice task respondents were asked to choose between two teachers: (a) a male native speaker without language teaching credentials or (b) a female non-native speaker with language teaching credentials (see Appendix A for details on the choice sets and mock profiles). We opted to present respondents with Spanish-language teacher profiles to avoid potential bias from languages the respondents were currently studying (German, French, and Italian).

Teacher profiles were manipulated across three attributes: native speaker status, teaching credentials, and gender. All three attributes had two levels: native speaker vs. non-

Table 1. Summary statistics.

	<i>N</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean / %</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Independent variables</i>					
Foreign Media Consumption	738	1	5.5	1.65	1.26
Intrinsic Motivation (scale)	794	1	5	4.35	0.54
Intrinsic Motivation (single item)	798	1	7	5.99	1.16
Extrinsic Motivation (scale)	795	1	5	3.60	0.95
Extrinsic Motivation (single item)	799	1	7	3.42	1.94
<i>Control variables</i>					
Age	776	18	85	37.62	14.41
Gender	862				
Female	465			0.54	
Male	397			0.46	
Income	794				
No income	90			0.11	
0–500	82			0.10	
500–1000	87			0.11	
1000–2000	121			0.15	
2000–3000	122			0.15	
3000–5000	124			0.16	
5000–10000	109			0.14	
10000 +	59			0.07	
Education	862				
Less than high school degree	8			0.01	
High school graduate	48			0.06	
Some college but no degree	74			0.09	
Associate degree in college	34			0.04	
Bachelor's degree in college	340			0.39	
Master's degree	273			0.32	
Doctoral degree	37			0.04	
Professional degree (JD, MD)	48			0.06	
Number of Language studied	857	1	10	2.49	1.32
Years on LanguaSpeak	832	0.25	3.5	1.10	1.07
Paying user	833				
Paying users	728			0.87	
Non-paying users	105			0.13	
Weekly hours on LanguaSpeak	832	0.50	8.00	1.29	1.10

native speaker; credentialed vs. non-credentialed; and male vs. female. With eight different profiles paired into two-alternative choice sets, a full factorial design would generate 28 combinations. Therefore, to decrease the cognitive load on participants, we adopted a main effect orthogonal design which assumes no interaction between the three attributes, thus allowing us to use a fraction of these possible combinations. This resulted in each participant being presented with four choice tasks. The choice sets were generated using Stata 16's command *dcreate* without specifying a prior value for attribute estimates.

DCE profile attributes

All profiles contained the same elements, but the elements were varied across the profiles. These elements include: a photo (in this case a pencil sketch), teacher name, nationality (indicated by flag); number of previous lessons; rating; a short bio; educational background; and teaching certificates (when appropriate). The manipulations for native speaker status, teaching credentials, and gender were implemented as follows:

Native speaker status was conveyed through a number of elements, including teachers' names, which were chosen based on common first names in the US and Spain (e.g., Pablo & Jane). Native speaker status was also signaled through the flag on the profile as well as the short bios, which described hometown and home country. In addition, the non-native speaker profile explicitly stated that they had been learning the language since high school.

Teaching credentials were signaled in a variety of ways. First, the profiles were clearly marked as 'professional' or 'community,' a designation used by LanguaSpeak to differentiate between professional teachers and those who lack teaching credentials. In addition, the credentialed profile explicitly stated that the teacher had obtained a Master's degree in language teaching. Finally, the credentialed profile listed three certificates (B.A., M.A., and language teaching certificate), while the non-credentialed profile listed only one (B.A.).

Gender was manipulated through male and female-typed names (e.g., Pablo and Jane). In addition to the names, profile photos featured a pencil sketch obtained by searching a public-domain repository for 'cartoon woman' and 'cartoon man.' This yielded two sketched outlines, both in an identical style.

Other than these three manipulated attributes, all other teacher profile traits were identical, including lesson price and the average rating received from previous students.

Survey measurements

Aside from the DCE, the survey contained questions aimed at capturing other individual attributes of interest. To capture learning motivation, we used two separate 5-point scales. *Intrinsic motivation* was measured using a four-item scale adapted from Liang et al. (2018). This scale included items such as 'learning languages lets me feel a sense of personal achievement' and 'the process of learning languages is very pleasant.' The items yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.64 and a composite reliability estimate of 0.68, which are considered acceptable in the survey literature (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Nunnally, 1967). *Extrinsic motivation* was measured using a three-item scale adapted from Liang et al. (2018). This scale included questions such as 'I would like to get a monetary return

from learning language on LanguaSpeak' and 'LanguaSpeak provides me a chance to improve my skills and resume' (see Appendix B for a full list of questions). The items yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.74 and a composite reliability estimate of 0.78.

As noted, language learners are typically motivated by a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. This is confirmed by our results, as respondents scored relatively high on both the intrinsic ($M = 4.35$, $SD = 0.54$) and the extrinsic ($M = 3.59$, $SD = 0.95$) scales. In order to distinguish between learners that are more *intrinsically* motivated from those that are more *extrinsically* motivated, we created a new variable that computes the difference between the mean score for the intrinsic and extrinsic scales.

In addition to the two scales adapted from previous studies, we also included two single-item measures of language learning motivation. Participants were asked to rate (using a 7-point Likert scale) their agreement with the following statements: 'I study on LanguaSpeak primary because language learning is interesting' (intrinsic motivation) and 'I study on LanguaSpeak primarily to help my employment prospects' (extrinsic motivation).

As discussed, foreign media consumption is an important dimension of pop cosmopolitanism. We captured this dimension by asking participants the average number of hours per week spent consuming media from the country associated with the foreign language that respondents were studying on LanguaSpeak. This operationalization is closely tied to Jenkins' original conceptualization of pop cosmopolitanism as reflected in increased consumption of foreign media products among Western audiences (Jenkins, 2004/2006).

The survey also included a series of demographic items (income, educational attainment, gender, and age) and variables related to LanguaSpeak engagement (number of languages studied; months since joining LanguaSpeak; weekly hours spent learning on LanguaSpeak) that are used as controls in the estimation models. Summary statistics for all variables are presented in Table 1.

Empirical strategy

In order to understand the factors that drive teacher selection, we used Stata16 to fit three separate mixed logit models (MLM). In a traditional multinomial logit model, alternative choices or preferences are modeled with respect to the characteristics of individuals choosing between the alternatives. McFadden (1973) proposed that, in a discrete choice context where alternatives have different attributes, individual preference could also be modeled on the attributes of the choices rather than on the characteristics of individuals. Mixed logit models extend McFadden's original strategy by modeling discrete choices on both the attributes of the alternatives and the characteristics of individuals (McFadden & Train, 2000).

We fit three distinct mixed logit models, one for each of the manipulated teacher traits (native speaker status, credentials and gender). Since these traits or attributes only have two levels, each model estimates the probability of choosing one attribute (e.g., native speaker teacher) over the alternative (e.g., non-native speaker teacher), conditional on the other teacher traits (e.g., teacher credentials and gender) and individual characteristics (income, gender, languages studied, etc.). Given the focus of the study and for the sake of brevity, we do not present results for the gender manipulation models, which are discussed in a separate study.

Results

Preference for native speakers

Table 2 shows the exponentiated MLM coefficients when native speaker status is specified as the outcome variable. Two models are presented, which differ only in how student motivation is measured. While Model 1a uses the difference between the intrinsic and extrinsic scales, Model 1b uses the difference between the motivation single items. As shown, the results are consistent across models and support H1a. They suggest that the more intrinsically motivated students are more likely to choose a native speaker over a non-native speaker teacher. The magnitude of the effect (for every point increase in the difference) is also consistent across models, ranging from 15% in Model 1b ($RR = 1.15, p < .001$) to 17% in Model 1a ($RR = 1.17, p < .05$).

Turning to the effect of foreign media consumption on teacher selection, Model 1a indicates that respondents who spend more time-consuming foreign media are more likely to select native-speaker language teachers over non-native teachers. Each one hour increase in foreign media consumption per week contributes to a 19% increase in the likelihood of choosing a native speaker over a non-native speaker ($RR = 1.19, p < .001$). The results are similar in Model 1b, with a slightly lower coefficient of 1.18 ($p < .001$). Thus, H2 is also supported.

Based on Model 1a, Figure 1 plots the predicted probabilities of choosing a native or a non-native teacher over the difference between the intrinsic and extrinsic scales. Thus, larger negative values on the x-axis represent students who are more extrinsically motivated while larger positive values represent students who are more intrinsically motivated. As shown, whereas native speakers are generally preferred over non-native speakers, this

Table 2. Mixed logit exponentiated estimates for choosing native speaker teacher (yes = 1).

	Model 1a		Model 1b	
	Exponentiated coefficient	SE	Exponentiated coefficient	SE
<i>Choice Attributes</i>				
Teaching credentials (yes = 1)	3.27***	0.25	3.30***	0.25
Female (yes = 1)	1.18**	0.07	1.17**	0.07
<i>Motivation</i>				
Intrinsic – Extrinsic motivation scale	1.17*	0.08		
Intrinsic – Extrinsic motivation (single item)			1.15***	0.03
<i>Media Consumption</i>				
Foreign language media (in hours <i>p</i> /week)	1.19***	0.06	1.18***	0.06
<i>User Characteristics</i>				
Number of languages studied	0.99	0.05	0.98	0.05
Years on LanguaSpeak	1.11	0.07	1.11	0.07
Paying user (yes = 1)	0.93	0.19	0.90	0.18
Weekly hours on LanguaSpeak	1.01	0.06	1.00	0.06
<i>Demographics</i>				
Age	1.01	0.01	1.00	0.01
Gender (female = 1)	0.95	0.11	0.93	0.11
Education control	yes	yes	yes	yes
Income control	yes	yes	yes	yes
Constant	4.30**	1.55	4.35**	1.55
AIC	1916.05		1906.38	
BIC	2059.31		2049.86	
Log Likelihood	–933.03		–928.19	

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$. Exponentiated coefficients represent odds ratios for alternative-specific variables (teacher attributes) and relative-risk ratios for individual-specific variables.

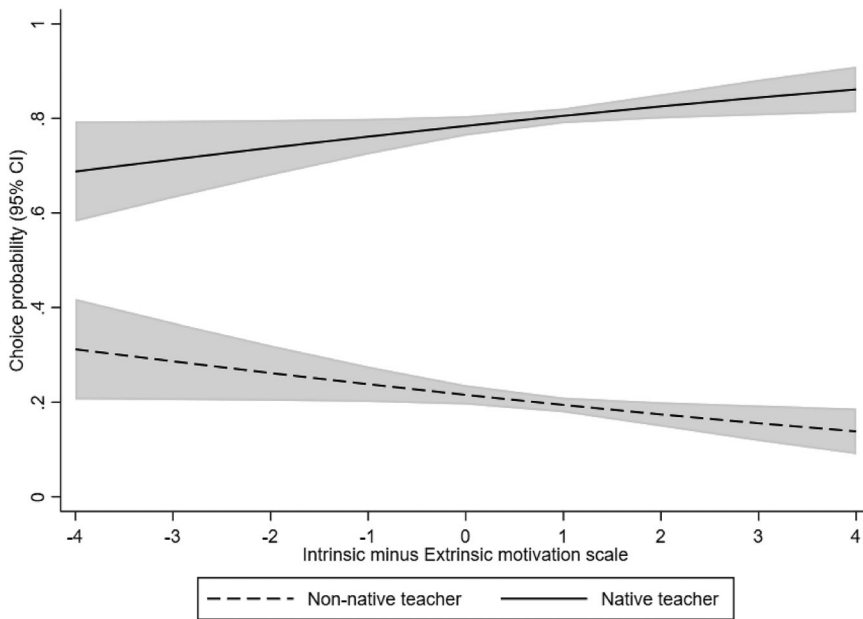


Figure 1. Predicted probabilities (Model 1a) of choosing native speaker and non-native speaker teachers at different levels of difference in intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

preference is stronger among students more motivated by cultural affinity with the language, and conversely is weaker for those more motivated by career or economic goals (and the reverse is true for non-native teachers).

Figure 2 offers the same graphical representation of results with respect to the number of hours of foreign media consumption per week. As shown, controlling for teacher credentials and gender as well as individual student characteristics, the preference for native speakers is stronger as consumption of foreign-language media increases, as predicted in H2.

Preference for credentialed teachers

Table 3 shows the MLM coefficient estimates when teaching credentials is specified as the outcome variable. As before, Model 2a uses the difference between the intrinsic and extrinsic scales whereas Model 2b uses the difference between motivation single items as covariates. The results in Model 2a suggest that student motivation is not correlated with preference for teaching credentials, thus contradicting H1b. However, when measuring student motivation through the single items in Model 2b we find that for every point increase in the difference between the intrinsic and the extrinsic single items, the preference for credentialed teachers decreases by 11% ($RR = 0.89, p < .001$). In other words, this suggests that preference for native speaking teachers weakens as extrinsic motivation increases. Overall, our findings provide only partial support for H1b, as results are model dependent and differ according to how student motivation is measured.

Interestingly, we note that foreign-language media consumption is negatively associated with preference for credentialed teachers in both model specifications (Model 2a:

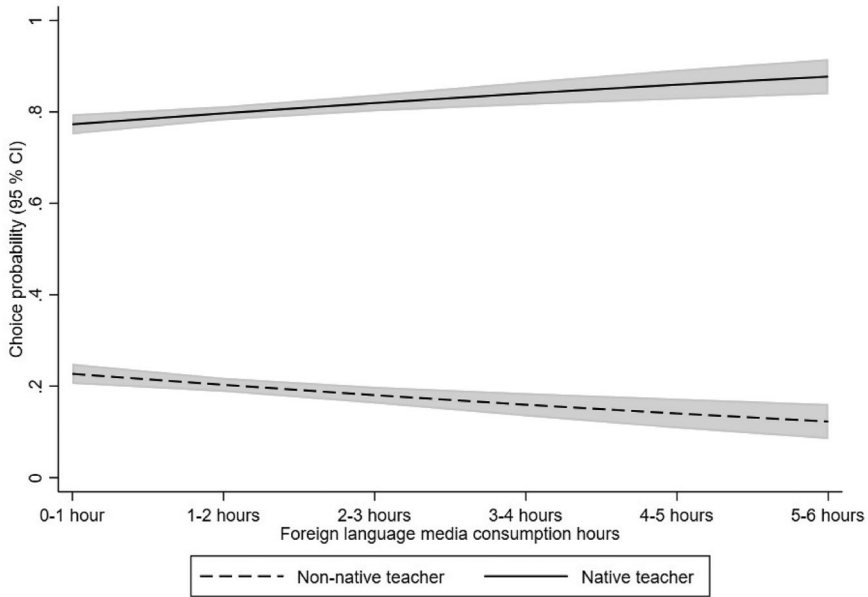


Figure 2. Predicted probabilities (Model 1a) of choosing native speaker and non-native speaker teachers at different levels of foreign media consumption.

Table 3. Mixed logit exponentiated estimates for credentialed teachers (yes = 1).

	Model 2a		Model 2b	
	Exponentiated coefficient	SE	Exponentiated coefficient	SE
<i>Choice Attribute</i>				
Native speaker (yes = 1)	6.13***	0.46	6.30***	0.48
Female (yes = 1)	1.18**	0.07	1.17***	0.07
<i>Motivation</i>				
Intrinsic – Extrinsic motivation scale	0.92	0.06		
Intrinsic – Extrinsic motivation (single item)			0.89***	0.02
<i>Media Consumption</i>				
Foreign language media (in hours p/week)	0.89*	0.04	0.89*	0.04
<i>User Characteristics</i>				
Number of Language studied	1.07	0.05	1.09	0.05
Years on LanguaSpeak	1.01	0.06	1.01	0.06
Paying user (yes = 1)	0.97	0.20	1.07	0.21
Weekly hours on LanguaSpeak	1.00	0.06	1.00	0.06
<i>Demographics</i>				
Age	0.99	0.01	1.00	0.00
Gender (female = 1)	1.21	0.14	1.25	0.15
Education control	no	no	no	no
Income control	no	no	yes	yes
Constant	3.63***	1.29	3.45***	1.21
AIC	1939.72		1933.99	
BIC	2082.97		2077.46	
Log Likelihood	-944.86		-941.99	

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$. Exponentiated coefficients represent odds ratios for alternative-specific variables (teacher attributes) and relative-risk ratios for individual-specific variables.

$RR = 0.89, p < .05$; Model 2b: $RR = 0.89, p < .05$). This further suggests that affective motivations for language acquisition related to cultural affinity with foreign media products tend to weaken the salience of teacher qualifications. Generally speaking, this will

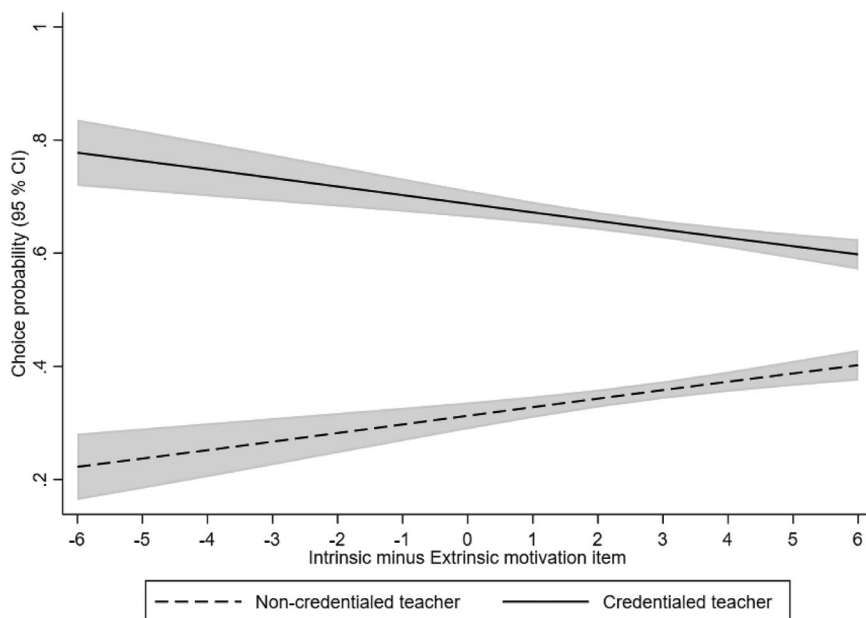


Figure 3. Predicted probabilities (Model 2b) of choosing professional and non-professional teachers at different levels of difference in single-item intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

tend to work against non-native teachers who often compete for students with native speakers on the basis of their teaching experience and credentials.

Figure 3 presents the conditional probabilities of choosing credentialed and non-credentialed teachers based on Model 2b (which uses the difference between the single item motivation measures). As shown, whereas respondents generally prefer credentialed over non-credentialed teachers (*ceteris paribus*), such preference is positively associated with extrinsic learning motivations but negatively associated with intrinsic learning motivations.

Discussion and conclusion

Until recently, competency in multiple languages has been closely associated with social status, a type of cultural capital reserved to the economic and cosmopolitan elites (see De Costa, 2019). This began to change with the acceleration of economic globalization in the postwar period, which coupled with the expansion of educational opportunities created a global market for language learning that favored English as the *de facto* lingua franca for those seeking to advance their educational and employment opportunities (Crystal, 2003). Scholars theorize that the dramatic increase in transnational media flows in recent decades has broadened the motivations for language learning to include those related to cultural affinity embodied in foreign media products (e.g., Kim, 2016a, 2016b). Pop cosmopolitanism, as this is often referred to, has been the subject of much academic debate since first proposed by Jenkins (2004/2006). However, we are not aware of attempts to operationalize this concept and explore its value in an empirical study.

This study provides such an attempt by examining the motivations and preferences of online language learners through the lenses of pop cosmopolitanism. It puts forth three

interrelated hypotheses that operationalize this concept and theorizes how variations in motivation and media consumption influence preferences for teacher attributes. Overall, we argue that language learners motivated primarily by cultural empathy will favor teacher traits that signal cultural authenticity, while those primarily motivated by instrumental goals will favor credentials and other signals of teaching proficiency.

Overall, we find support for our main hypotheses. As expected, native speaker status and teaching credentials are strongly favored by all students. However, when confronted with tradeoffs between these traits, students who are more intrinsically motivated and those who consume more foreign-language media have a stronger preference for native speaking teachers. The premium that native speakers command suggests that traditional language ideologies remain strong in the global market for language learning. Further, it may be the case that online language platforms such as LanguaSpeak that do not require or validate teacher credentials may be reinforcing this premium, though this will require further research for corroboration.

Our findings regarding teacher credentials are mixed and depend on how student motivation is measured. We believe that there are several reasons for this mixed result. First, the baseline for teacher education in the experimental manipulation was rather high, regardless of specific language teaching credentials (more specifically, the ‘unqualified’ teacher in our DCE had a bachelor’s degree, while the ‘qualified’ teacher had an additional master’s degree related to language education). We believe this difference in the experimental manipulation may not have been large enough to capture the effects of teacher credentials. Second, because teachers’ credentials are difficult to verify by students even after completing lessons (compared for example to native speaker status), students might assign relatively less weight to this trait. Whether our experiment failed to capture the true effects of credentials will need to be corroborated in further studies.

In general, the findings offer quantitative support for Curran’s (2020) qualitative examination of teachers’ online self-presentation strategies. Based on an examination of American and Filipino teachers’ profiles, that study found that self-presentation by native-speaking teachers often relied on claims to cultural authenticity, while non-native speaking teachers were likelier to instead highlight their experience and pedagogical qualification. However, because that study was based on the examination of teachers’ online profiles, it could not provide evidence about how these differences in self-presentation correlate with students’ preferences. Our study goes one step further by offering evidence that native speakerism is an important factor in teacher selection among pop cosmopolitan students.

When theorizing pop cosmopolitanism, Jenkins (2006) warned that the pop cosmopolitan ‘walks a thin line between ... orientalist fantasies and a desire to honestly connect and understand an alien culture, between assertion of mastery and surrender to cultural difference’ (p. 164). This ‘thin line’ is arguably made thinner by the ease with which people can today connect with other people and cultures through online platforms. Overall, our findings suggest that equivalencies between languages, nations and cultures remain strong in virtual contexts, and perhaps are reinforced by online platforms that greatly facilitate casual, non-instrumental language learning.

It is important to note the limitations of this study. First, our sample is comprised of English speakers learning a European language, and thus the findings may not extend to other populations of language learners. Second, because little empirical research has been

conducted on the topic, this study relies on different measures of student motivation and untested operationalizations of pop cosmopolitanism. As noted, some results are sensitive to how these variables are operationalized. Third, there is potential for alternative interpretations of the link between pop cosmopolitanism and foreign-language media use. For example, it is possible that extrinsically motivated learners consume foreign media as a way of improving their language skills. More research is needed to fully disentangle the factors that drive foreign media consumption among online language learners.

Finally, while we empirically demonstrate the association between learning motivation, foreign media consumption and teacher preferences, our findings are unable to fully capture the nuanced and complex motivations that drive millions of students to online language learning platforms. Further research inquiry, in particular qualitative work that engages directly with users, is needed to better understand how these platforms bear on notions of language authenticity and whether traditional equivalences between language and nation will ultimately be reinforced or challenged by pop cosmopolitan language learners.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Table A1. Full list of DCE choice sets.

	Profile A	Profile B
Task 1	Female, Professional, Native speaker	Male, Non-professional, Non-native speaker
Task 2	Male, Non-professional, Native speaker	Female, Professional, Non-native speaker
Task 3	Female, Non-professional, Non-native speaker	Male, Professional, Native speaker
Task 4	Male, Professional, Non-native speaker	Female, Non-professional, Native speaker

Note: Profiles are randomized within each task. Tasks are not randomized.

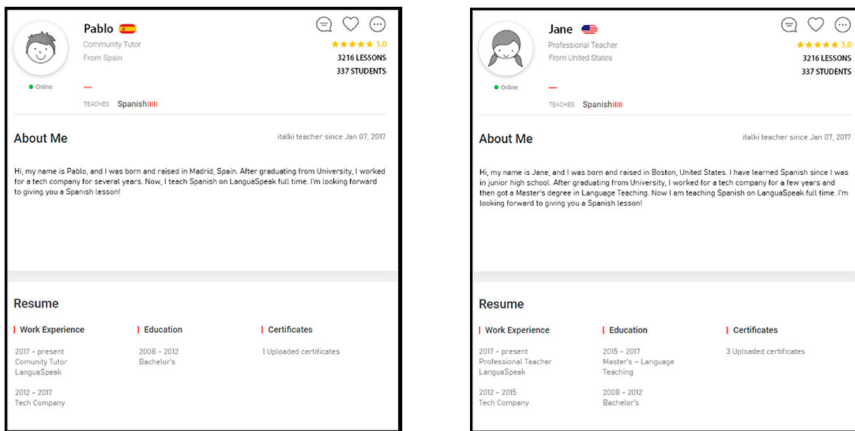


Figure A1. An example of a choice task (Pablo vs. Jane).

Appendix B

The following are the items used in the extrinsic and intrinsic learning motivation scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree):

Extrinsic motivation scale

- (1) I would like to get a monetary return from learning language on LanguaSpeak.
- (2) Learning language(s) on LanguaSpeak can help me earn money someday.
- (3) LanguaSpeak provides me a chance to improve my skills and resume.

Intrinsic motivation scale

- (1) Learning languages gives me a chance to do things I am good at.
- (2) Learning languages provides me with opportunities for increasing my knowledge and skills.
- (3) Learning languages lets me feel a sense of personal achievement.
- (4) The process of learning languages is very pleasant.