Innovative language teaching and learning at university: treasuring languages

Edited by

Alessia Plutino,

Kate Borthwick,

Erika Corradini

Research-publishing.net

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Table of contents

v Notes on contributors

ix Acknowledgements

1 Treasuring languages: an introduction
Alessia Plutino, Kate Borthwick, and Erika Corradini

5 Treasuring and preserving languages: how the inclusive design in MOOCs might help
Kate Borthwick

13 Face-to-face to online: PhD academic writing @Maastricht University
Neill Wylie

21 Repurposing virtual reality assets: from health sciences to Italian language learning
Alessia Plutino, Tiziana Cervi-Wilson, and Billy Brick

27 Designing escape game activities for language classes
Sascha Stollhans

33 Head in the clouds – innovating classroom practice using online file sharing for collaboration and feedback
Laura Richards

41 Effective feedback for language assessment
Catherine Franc and Annie Morton

47 Suitable activities for independent learning
Carmen Martín de León and Cristina García Hermoso

53 Developing criticality and critical cultural awareness in modern languages
Elinor Parks

61 Developing intercultural competence: building on the year abroad in oral classes
Vera Castiglione and Stefania Placenti

67 Enabling students to articulate the value of language skills in an ever-changing work environment
Caroline Campbell

75 Author index

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Alessia Plutino, Kate Borthwick, and Erika Corradini

1 Treasuring languages: an introduction

Alessia Plutino[1], Kate Borthwick[2], and Erika Corradini[3]

This volume collects selected papers from the 9th annual conference in the Innovative Language Teaching and Learning at University series (InnoConf), which was hosted by the Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics at the University of Southampton on the 28th of June 2019. The theme of the conference was 'Treasuring languages: innovative and creative approaches in Higher Education (HE)'.

The conference aimed to address the consistent decline in recent years in applications to study languages at UK universities by igniting discussions and seeking innovative and creative approaches to raising awareness about the value of learning languages. Languages allow learners to gain an understanding of other countries and cultures. They matter for trade and business and are an asset to the economy and there is now a focus on seeing language learners as global citizens.

The contributions collected in this peer-reviewed volume aim to reflect on best practice in HE and showcase innovative approaches to supporting and encouraging language learning. They range from collaborative approaches to curriculum design, from critical thinking and creative skills, to intercultural awareness, the use of digital tools and Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL), to employability, independent learning, and innovative assessment.

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The volume opens with a selection of papers focusing on how educators are exploring teaching and learning languages at scale using massive open online courses (MOOCs) and smaller, closed online courses. It reflects on how both can enhance language learning.

MOOCs have been explored within a variety of educational contexts, but some of their intrinsic design features do not seem to follow the 'one fits all' rule. Especially when considering inclusivity, teaching and learning languages at a large scale poses quite a few challenges. **Kate Borthwick** considers how the inclusive design in MOOCs can encourage the treasuring and preserving of languages through global reach and low barriers to access. She presents an example from a MOOC created at the University of Southampton and indicates how its design, conceived for a broader audience, might be relevant in language learning contexts.

Neill Wylie, discusses the challenges of transposing face to face courses into an online modality and discusses the progress made in constructing an advanced online PhD academic writing course to cater for global students situated in diverse time zones and with diverse schedules.

The recent hype around Virtual Reality (VR) has seen an increased interest in language teaching applications. However, practical implications for teachers have slowed down its wider dissemination due to costs and workload issues in designing activities. **Alessia Plutino, Tiziana Cervi-Wilson, and Billy Brick** report on the rationale for repurposing VR assets from other disciplines for language learning, in order to increase sustainability and dissemination of VR in language learning. They argue in favour of the potential pedagogical uses of VR within the modern language curriculum, including emotional language, employability skills, and the year abroad.

Escape games have also been increasingly used in language classrooms, demonstrating an interesting educational potential within the frameworks of gamification, pervasive learning, and 'serious games'. **Sascha Stollhans**

describes his creative project where he evaluates an escape game developed for a grammar class on the idiomatic uses of German modal verbs. He comments on the transferable skills which the game fosters.

A number of papers consider practical and innovative approaches to learning collaboratively or independently and provide feedback in order to help students gain confidence in their skills.

Laura Richards discusses collaborative writing practice using TEL. Her project aimed to create a collaborative and interactive classroom using open access file sharing services. **Catherine Franc** and **Annie Morton** examine the challenges of effective feedback for language assessment and propose an innovative and creative solution to support staff in producing clear and meaningful feedback in a sustainable way, as well as raising students' awareness in becoming efficient language learners. **Carmen Martín de León** and **Cristina García Hermoso** discuss the role that teachers in HE have in facilitating Independent Learning (IL) for their students. They focus on the benefits of using scaffolding strategies for students' IL materials to develop autonomy in learning, as well as developing the higher order skills expected at university level.

Intercultural competence and cultural awareness are two competencies that global graduates should acquire. However, the complexity behind the separation of language and content within modern languages degrees in HE does not always facilitate this. **Elinor Parks**'s paper supports the view that teachers should help modern language students to develop criticality and critical cultural awareness in order to fully grasp and combine both skills. Not only is it difficult to integrate intercultural competence and cultural awareness competencies within the curriculum, but students returning from their year abroad still seem to struggle with making sense of cultural differences. This has inspired **Vera Castiglione** and **Stefania Placenti** to create a speaking activity designed to help modern languages finalists to further develop their intercultural competence. The authors provide a concrete example of how a language curriculum can be adapted to meet the challenges of today's culturally complex and ever-changing world.

Caroline Campbell concludes the volume with a paper that presents the findings around employer expectations of graduates and their perceptions of the value of language skills and cultural awareness. The project proposes an end-of-module reflective task for any language module to enable students to articulate their personal 'brand' based on their knowledge and social capital, thus evidencing the breadth of their employability.

This is the fifth volume in a series of books compiling papers from the InnoConf conferences. It follows from *Enhancing participation and collaboratio*n (Goria, Speicher, & Stollhans, 2016), *Enhancing employability* (Álvarez-Mayo, Gallagher-Brett, & Michel, 2017), *Integrating informal learning into formal language education* (Rosell-Aguilar, Beaven, & Fuertes Gutiérrez, 2018), and *A look at new trends* (Becerra, Biasini, Magedera-Hofhansl, & Reimão, 2019).

We do hope you enjoy this latest volume of short papers from InnoConf19 and that you find some of the innovative approaches showcased here useful for your own research and practice.

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2 Treasuring and preserving languages: how the inclusive design in MOOCs might help

Kate Borthwick[1]

Abstract

This paper reflects on the inclusive design features of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and how these might support and encourage language learning. It considers what inclusivity in the context of MOOCs means, and some of the features of MOOCs which might be inherently inclusive and of value in supporting languages. It presents an example of inclusive design from a MOOC created at the University of Southampton: English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) for Academics, a professional development course for teachers. It shows how this course was particularly designed to appeal to the broadest audience possible, and indicates how this might be relevant in language learning contexts. It considers the challenges of creating inclusive open content, and how MOOC design encourages the treasuring and preserving of languages through global reach and low barriers to access.

Keywords: MOOC, inclusive design, languages, open content.

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1. Introduction

'Inclusive' learning design in digital content is often thought of in relation to the technical usability of web-based materials for the widest possible range of users[2]. However, the vision of inclusive learning design is to create digital materials which attempt to include as many people as possible, taking into consideration individual differences and needs, and reducing barriers to engagement (Sani-Bozkurt, 2018).

The design characteristics of MOOCs may seem to be inherently inclusive: they offer open enrolment to any learner; content is offered for free (money is sometimes involved on an optional basis to pay for certificates or other extra content[3]); the learner is in control of how much of the course content they engage with and also how they engage with the content (some learners may 'lurk' and only read/listen to content, others may take an active part in discussions); they offer flexible learning unlimited by time or location, and they offer community and peer-learning opportunities (Baturay, 2015).

These affordances have the potential to lower barriers to engagement with education, as learners can take a MOOC despite not having appropriate prior learning or entry qualifications; not having enough money, not being geographically located near to an educational institution, or not having time to pursue a full-time course due to work or caring responsibilities.

At the same time, the nature of language learning is characterised by its diversity: language learners study in a wide range of different local contexts with variations in class size, educational sector, class cohort linguistic levels, linguistic homogeneity, cultural background, or motivation for learning. An inclusive approach is essential to cope with such diversity and ensure an effective learning experience which works for the broadest range of learners possible.

2. Website accessibility is rated using the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1) https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/

3. An example is the 'upgrade' model from www.futurelearn.com

Knowledge of languages is also recognised as beneficial, for example offering employment opportunities through demonstration of linguistic skills, enhanced cultural awareness, possession of complex thinking skills, and resilience (British Academy, 2016). Yet often, language knowledge is low and opportunities to learn new languages – or value the languages we already have – can be limited by national or local language education policies (Kelly, 2018).

In these contexts, MOOCs seem to offer an opportunity to respond to the challenges of the diverse language learning landscape and also to support the learning and promotion of languages through open, inclusive design.

2. Case study example: EMI for academics

The MOOC EMI for Academics[4] was developed in 2017 and has since welcomed circa 20,000 learners over six runs. It is a four week professional development course for teachers who do not have English as a native language but have been asked to teach through the medium of English. It is offered on the Futurelearn platform and was created using Futurelearn's design principles[5] which emphasise social learning through discussion and shared experience.

A key early design consideration was the need for the course to be highly inclusive: our target learners would be working in a wide range of different local contexts with variations in class size, educational sector, class cohort linguistic levels, and linguistic homogeneity. How could we deliver a meaningful course of learning which could cope with such a wealth of individual differences?

2.1. Practice sharing: the global and the local

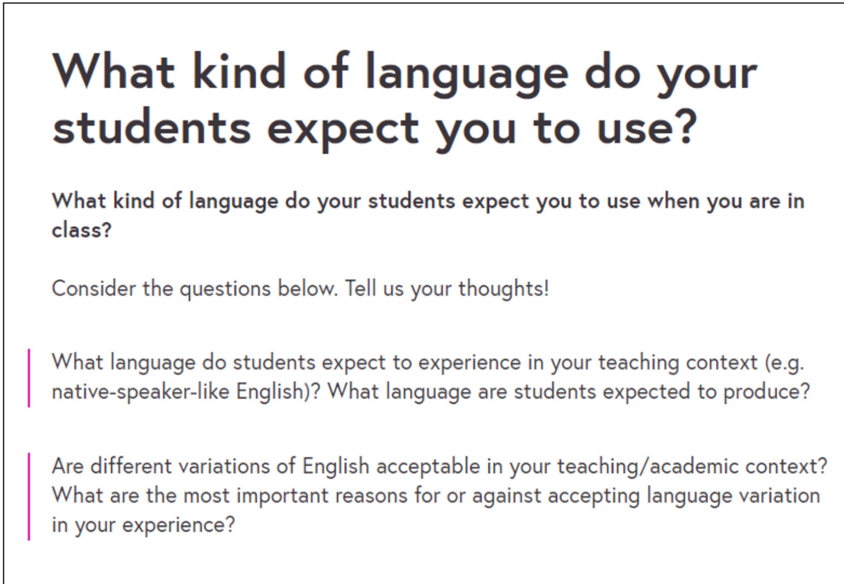
Content on each step of the course is typically presented as a video, text, task, or discussion topic. Each content item has a question for learners to respond to in

4. www.futurelearn.com/courses/emi-academics

5. https://www.futurelearn.com/using-futurelearn/why-it-works

the comments area. These questions are carefully designed to draw out learners' individual, local experiences (e.g. see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Screenshot from EMI for academics, step 1.11



This approach encourages a 'glocal' experience, where learners share their individual, local contexts and ideas, and reflect upon the ideas and experiences of their globally-located peers. The lead educators emphasise throughout that the course offers ideas for reflection, acknowledging that no single approach will be suitable for every EMI context (Baird, Borthwick, & Page, 2017).

2.2. Range of activity types

The course uses a range of ways to present content and invite interaction, including practical tasks, quizzes, reading texts, videoed interviews, or 'talking heads', alongside research activities requiring learners to discover information and share it (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Screenshot from EMI for academics, step 2.5

Task: find an example of a good EMI lecture

There are a tremendous range of good lectures shared and openly available online. These are useful to use in considering your own style and language.

In this task, we would like you to find a good lecture online, share it with us and then tell us why it would work for an EMI audience of learners. Here are some instructions:

1. Search online for a recorded lecture. It can be on any topic, but should be (in your opinion) a good example of a lecture suitable for a higher education EMI audience. The language of the lecture should be in English but it could be delivered by a native speaker of English or a non-native speaker. You may wish to look at websites like TEDtalks or Youtube to find a suitable lecture.

2. Share the link to the lecture in the comments area and tell us why you have selected it. Why is it suitable for an EMI session? What does the speaker say/do which enhances its suitability for an EMI session?

3. Finally, identify language used by the speaker to structure the lecture.

This deliberate variety of task-type enables learners to engage with the course in diverse ways which suit individual needs and preferences. No activity is compulsory and learners have complete freedom over how, and how far, they engage with the course.

2.3. Community-building

The notion that the course is a community of equal learners underpins the framing of all course activities and community-building starts at the outset. This is done in a range of ways including: the use of a Zeemap[6] for learners to plot

6. https://www.zeemaps.com/

location and thereby obtain an immediate, visual sense of the scope of the course 'community', weekly summary emails, weekly video reviews by educators responding to course activity, and a live question-answer session. These activities are intended to create a welcoming community in which educators are both content providers and also learners within the peer group.

The design elements described above align to core principles in the Universal Design for Learning framework in respect of "providing multiple means of engagement, representation, action and expression" (CAST, 2018, n.p.). This framework is intended to assist educators in the creation of inclusive learning materials and environments, which are effective for the broadest range of learners.

3. Challenges to inclusivity

Despite the possibilities for inclusivity afforded by the MOOC design, there are challenges. Ferguson and Sharples (2014) reported that the massive scale of MOOCs can present a frustrating, depersonalised learning experience, where learner comments are lost amongst thousands. They also noted that content is not always accessible to learners with disabilities, or in certain geographical locations (e.g. the use of YouTube in China). Other research reports that high numbers of MOOC learners are well-educated and from socially advantaged groups (van de Oudeweetering & Agirdag, 2018), which suggests that MOOCs may not be realising the potential of their inclusive properties.

4. Conclusions for languages

While the inclusive nature of MOOCs may not be as effective as it appears, design models offered by MOOCs present an opportunity for learning and promoting languages. When languages have small numbers of speakers and learners, they are not taught widely or promoted in different local contexts.

MOOCs have the potential to fill the gap by uniting geographically dispersed linguistic and learning communities. Such groups can learn from each other in a connected, supported, and social way. The low access barriers to MOOCs invite experimentation with new subjects or ideas – or languages – and use of inclusive design principles opens MOOCs to the widest possible audience. So, if treasuring and preserving languages is to use them and encourage others to use them, then MOOCs seem to offer a way to help.

5. Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the EMI course team and all of our EMI learners.

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3 Face-to-face to online: PhD academic writing @Maastricht University

Neill Wylie[1]

Abstract

Maastricht University (UM) has a distinct global perspective and a strong focus on innovation. UM offers an array of PhD courses to distance and campus based students who have access to elective, credit bearing modules and the language needs of these students are catered for by the Language Centre. Many PhD candidates choose to take an academic writing course in their first or second year of their degree. In recent years, demand for a more student focused, flexible academic writing course has grown. In line with UM's policy of supporting innovative teaching practices, the Language Centre's face-to-face PhD academic writing course, PhD Writing 1, has been transformed into a fully online course containing eight interactive webinar sessions named Online PhD Writing, which runs in addition to the face-to-face rendition. On the back of the success of this course, coupled with increased demand for a follow up course, this author was tasked with creating an advanced online PhD academic writing course to cater for global students with diverse time zones and schedules. This paper evaluates the challenges posed and the advances made in constructing both online courses and explores the technologies used in implementing them.

Keywords: digital tools, English for academic purposes, webinar, distance learning.

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1. Introduction

UM is a relatively new internationalised university situated in the south of the Netherlands. UM has 18,000 students, 52% of whom are international and currently enrolled across six faculties and six PhD schools. Furthermore, UM is the European pioneer of Problem Based Learning (PBL) which is currently implemented across all six faculties and involves students collaborating to identify what they need to learn to solve problems (Hmelo-Silver, 2014). Despite UM's commitment to innovation within education, few fully online or blended learning courses currently exist. Based on this author's conversations with lecturers, curriculum designers, and policy makers, plausible reasons for this reticence to embrace the blended or fully online model range from the belief that implementing it would cause a mismatch with the PBL model, to the assumption that faculty courses cannot be modularised and implemented in an online environment.

UM's Language Centre offers embedded language courses within all faculties and PhD schools and has been implementing fully online and blended language courses for over five years. The purpose of this paper is to explore the challenges and processes involved in the development of two fully online PhD Academic Writing courses.

2. Towards the online model

Since 2009, the UM Language Centre has been offering a face-to-face PhD Writing course to UM PhD candidates focusing on the key components of academic writing pertinent to publishing research papers. Many of the participants are part-time PhD candidates living nearby Maastricht. The course includes eight sessions of two hours, incorporates peer review sessions, and is worth two European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). In a view to expand this course to distance students, this author sought to ascertain whether the online or blended model would suit the student demographic. Based on successful meetings with PhD schools and faculty coordinators, Online PhD Writing was created as UM's first fully online credit bearing course.

3. Online PhD Writing

In late 2014, a pilot course was developed and tested in partnership with PhD students from OpenU, the Dutch equivalent to the UK's Open University. The rationale behind using OpenU as a testbed was that their students were already taking some UM modules, were spread over various time zones, tended to be distance based, and were accustomed to taking online modules. Pilot outcomes led to the re-evaluation of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), Blackboard, and the video conferencing tool, Blackboard Collaborate, being implemented in the course. In addition, the peer review logistics were re-evaluated as a result of data obtained from the pilot.

In early 2015, UM's first fully online live-taught academic credit bearing course ran its first iteration. Table 1 details the course.

Table 1. Online PhD Writing course

Participants	**Webinars**	**Duration**	**Content**	**Teleconferencing Tool**	**Fees**	**ECTS**
10 x campus based + distance UM PhD Students	8 x 45 mins	8 weeks	English for Academic Purposes	Blackboard Collaborate Ultra	495 fully funded by faculty	1.5
Content Corpus linguistics, readability, paragraphing, conciseness, sentencing, reporting verbs, limitations, abstract construction						

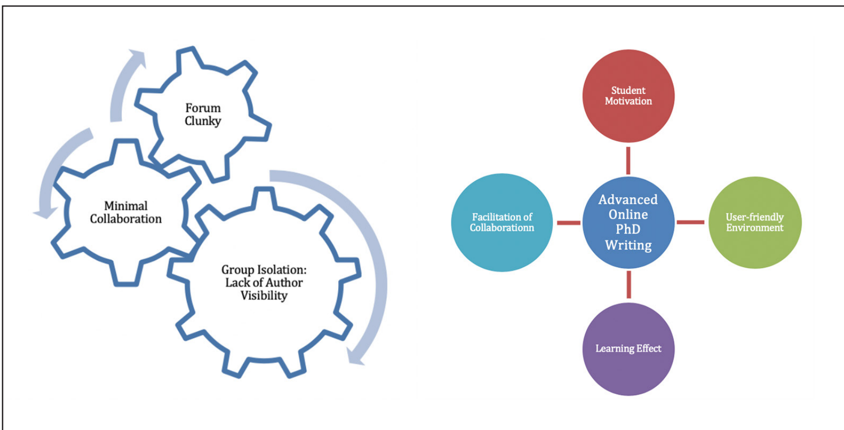
Online PhD Writing has become a stalwart at UM and is offered up to 15 times per academic year. At the time of writing, the course was rated at 8.5/10, making it one of the universities most consistently highly-rated courses, solidifying the UM Language Centre's position as a provider of quality accredited courses. Some reported reasons for the high rating were the user-friendly interface offered by Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, the on demand

tutor led feedback, access to recordings after each session, and the immediate applicability of theory to current context.

4. Developing advanced Online PhD Writing

Having completed Online PhD Writing, many PhD candidates enquired about the possibility of receiving additional writing support. Based on these requests, in the autumn of 2017, the author contacted six past students and ran a four-week pilot advanced Online PhD Writing course. The pilot used Blackboard as the discussion forum, included reduced linguistic theory, and did not include any webinars. Upon analysing the feedback, the following themes emerged detailed on the left side of Figure 1. Before a course could be offered to the PhD schools, these issues had to be addressed. In this regard, the author focused on four main aspects detailed on the right side of Figure 1 below.

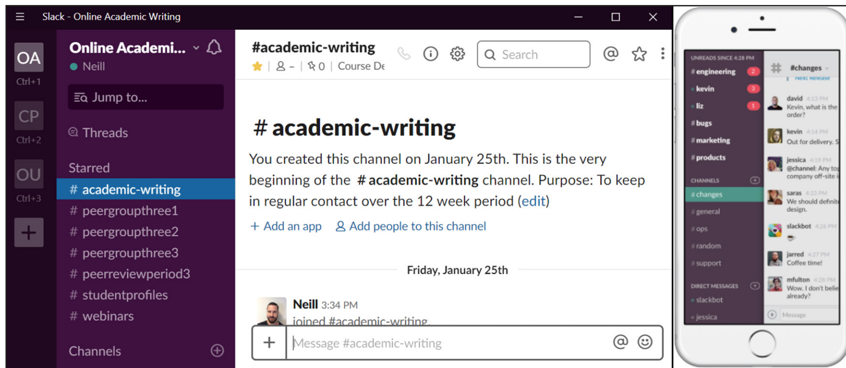
Figure 1. Pilot participants' feedback and considerations



One application seemed to address all of these concerns: the Slack tool. The author implemented Slack into the course design, a freely accessible, smartphone friendly tool, which facilitates many add-ons and caters for the rapid dissemination of information via channels to members. Small groups can be

created which caters for peer review sessions and documents can easily be added via drag and drop. Figure 2 details the interface.

Figure 2. Slack interface



5. Advanced Online PhD Writing

Armed with Slack, the author designed a 12-week advanced Online PhD Writing course and offered it to the PhD schools as a credit bearing course in the spring of 2018, the details of which can be seen in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Advanced Online PhD Writing

Participants	Webinars	Duration	VLE	Fees	ETCS
Campus based + distance UM PhDs who completed Online PhD Writing or equivalent.	c.4 on ad-hoc basis	12 weeks	Blackboard Collaborate Ultra & Slack	450 fully funded by faculty	2
Outline 3 x 4-week peer review periods over 12 weeks; 12 weeks of tutor led feedback on demand; theory presented via ad-hoc webinars and presentations in Slack; student collaboration required.					

At the time of writing, there have been three iterations of the advanced Online PhD Writing course and early feedback suggests that the students enjoy the

collaborative and fluid nature of the course along with access to high quality tutor feedback on demand over a period of 12 weeks. In particular, implementing Slack in the Advanced course has been a significant benefit in terms of collaboration and social presence among the students. It is hoped that this course will have a similar impact as Online PhD Writing and further bolster the UM Language Centre's reputation as a high quality provider of accredited courses.

6. Conclusions

The author experienced several challenges in creating both fully online courses. One of the most difficult aspects was convincing faculty members and managers that the online model had added value. As with many institutions, engendering a culture of change can be a delicate process as many staff who have been performing their duties well in the classroom see little reason to adapt to this model.

Funding was another obstacle that was surmounted by offering free or discounted pilots as a means of attaining high quality feedback to reinforce proposals to management. The author was fortunate to have access to reliable teleconferencing software. Costs involved in acquiring software can pose problems in the early stages of such innovations so identifying freeware, of which there is an abundance, is essential. For example, the author has only ever used the light version of Slack which has been sufficient for running the course.

Finally, as a result of creating the Online PhD Writing and advanced Online PhD Writing courses, an estimated 500 additional PhD students have received high quality instruction in English for academic purposes. This is a small but reliable indicator that greater accessibility to courses should be at the forefront of educational innovations, and while effort is required, the results can be rewarding.

7. Acknowledgements

Special thanks to UM's Language Centre and the associated PhD schools. Without the support of both, these courses would not exist. I would also like to thank my wife, Denise McAllister for her support.

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4 Repurposing virtual reality assets: from health sciences to Italian language learning

Alessia Plutino[1], Tiziana Cervi-Wilson[2], and Billy Brick[3]

Abstract

This paper reports on the rationale for the implementation of a pilot project using a scenario-based Virtual Reality (VR) resource, originally developed by Health Sciences at Coventry University and now being repurposed for Italian language learning as a collaborative project with Modern Languages and Linguistics at the University of Southampton. The original aim of the resource was to prepare health care students for home visits by allowing them to experience a semi-linear conversation with a virtual Non-player Character (NPC). The authors will discuss how they are planning to repurpose the resource for Italian language learning and teaching and will analyse the potential pedagogical uses within the modern language curriculum, including emotional language, employability skills, and the year abroad.

Keywords: virtual reality, Italian, repurposing, emotional language.

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1. Introduction

Declining applications to study languages at UK universities are driving language educators to seek innovative approaches to recruit and retain today's graduates, as well as supporting them in acquiring the multiple skills needed in the new work market. In the last decades, educators' interest in the area of serious games has increased steadily and several successful pedagogic models for training and professional development have been designed. The concept of serious games was first coined by Clark (1970) to describe "games (which) have an explicit and carefully thought-out educational purpose and are not intended to be played primarily for amusement" (p. 9).

The pedagogic approaches used in serious games include problem-based learning, contextual and experiential learning models (Pappa et al., 2011), and more recently, situative and experiential approaches (Hulme et al., 2009), providing learners with a variety of learning experiences.

Serious games have the potential to improve students' learning experience, increase motivation, and diversify the content delivery media (Michael & Chen, 2005). However, the complexity of their design, costs, and time impact on the production of similar approaches in other disciplines. Many studies have indicated repurposing as a potential way to address these issues and enhance the possibilities to respond to a wider public and areas of application. Serious games' repurposing though, is still in its early stages, especially in the area of language teaching, which is the focus of this paper.

2. Repurposing in education

Repurposing is the practice of changing a learning resource or object initially created for a specific educational context, to a new educational context (or contexts) (Kaldoudi, Dovrolis, Konstantinidis, & Bamidis, 2011, p. 165). This practice seems to be particularly effective in educational settings aimed at using serious games. Protopsaltis, Panzoli, Dunwell, and de Freitas (2010)

have developed a theoretical framework for repurposing serious games, whilst a more practical way to simplify serious games repurposing has been provided by the scenario-based games repurposing (Protopsaltis et al., 2011), on which the methodological framework of this pilot is based.

3. Repurposing for language learning

This paper discusses a pilot project, originated from a VR asset built for health care students aimed at practising home visits to patients in a non-threatening environment using a goggle-based VR headset. Students interacted for 15 minutes with an NPC whose emotional state changed based on the students' responses to the NPC. The initial repurposing consisted in translating and recording the conversation between the NPC and the health care visitor from English to Italian as discussed in Brick et al. (2019).

A second repurposing, discussed in this paper and involving both Coventry and Southampton Universities, aims at creating a pedagogical framework supporting the specific use and context of the repurposed asset into Italian language learning and teaching in HE.

4. Practical and theoretical approaches

The original scenario involved learners selecting from a number of possible responses in order to help the virtual character (Eduardo) with his grievances regarding his father's care package (Brick et al., 2019, p. 5). Although the asset has now been translated into Italian, the scenario is based within the realm of health and life sciences and thus is likely to fall outside of learners' experiences. To overcome this, authors are adopting a two-folded approach using a contextualised framework aimed at supporting students to culturally connect with the scenario as well as facilitating empathy. Authentic resources will be integrated into the curriculum using multimodality to provide a historical, cultural, and emotional understanding of the topic, hence bridging the intercultural gap.

As emotions are expressed differently in different cultures, the ability to recognise the emotional state of people and to express one's own emotions appropriately are essential skills of global graduates. Dewaele (2013) has already established that even proficient target language users can still have persistent feelings of detachment and inauthenticity when dealing with situations where they are not confident about the exact emotional weight of certain words and expressions.

In addition, Pavlenko (2012) argued that first and target languages are embodied differently, hence the difficulty in projecting an accurate representation of our sophisticated thoughts and emotions. Could VR cater for these needs? In a recent study from Bertrand et al. (2018) this question was addressed resulting in the development of a framework which highlights the empathy process and its relationship with learning methods and embodied VR. This pilot is an example of how practitioners are trying to address these needs. The authors anticipate a threefold impact of the pilot: (1) evaluate the effectiveness of this technology in the language classroom; (2) evaluate the impact of VR on emotional L2 language acquisition and interaction; and (3) provide feedback for future repurposing in modern languages.

5. Method

The current pilot is being designed to test the repurposed Italian asset with a group of intermediate L2 undergraduate students of Italian at the University of Southampton. Students will complete pre-activities tasks to familiarise themselves with the topic. They will then interact individually with Eduardo, the NPC, using an Oculus headset, which provides a full-immersion experience when responding to Eduardo's various emotional statuses and avoidance techniques.

Students receive two types of feedback, which will form the basis of our data collection. One, provided after completion of the main scenario, is based on the emotional effect and the impact of student choices on Eduardo, for example, "40% Angry – Some of your choices may have annoyed Eduardo".

The second type of feedback is a reflective replay for students to review their choices through the eyes of Eduardo. As the replay progresses, Eduardo's emotional state is plotted on a chart, allowing the students to see how their choices affected Eduardo emotionally. A cooperative metacognitive task includes comparing individual feedback with peers, reflecting on choices made, as well as analysing language usage.

6. Conclusions

This paper has discussed a pedagogical approach for a potential repurposing of a serious game to explore emotional language by engaging with technology in the classroom. The practice of repurposing is proving useful in disseminating innovative approaches of serious games in language learning. With the new focus on language learners as global citizens, there is an increased need for languages to understand the emotional layers of words and expressions as well as how to react to specific and unpredictable situations. These would be useful skills for students to explore before going on their year abroad or work in a different country, etc.

7. Acknowledgements

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5 Designing escape game activities for language classes

Sascha Stollhans[1]

Abstract

Escape games are an increasingly popular leisure activity involving a group of players completing tasks to achieve a pre-defined goal, which is usually escaping from a room. In this chapter, I briefly outline the educational potential of escape game activities in language classes within the frameworks of gamification, pervasive learning, and 'serious games', and in relation to transferable skills. This is followed by a description and evaluation of an escape game I developed for a grammar class on the idiomatic uses of German modal verbs. This was piloted with a first-year undergraduate class at Lancaster University. I conclude by discussing student feedback and considerations for similar activities in the future.

Keywords: gamification, game-based learning, games, transferable skills, educational technology.

1. Introduction

Escape games are "live-action team-based games where players discover clues, solve puzzles, and accomplish tasks in one or more rooms in order to accomplish a specific goal (usually escaping from the room) in a limited amount of time" (Nicholson, 2015, p. 1). According to the Financial Times, this "entertainment trend grows rapidly as numbers of UK venues double every six months since

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2013" (McClean, 2016, n.p.). In the light of gamification theories (Nah et al., 2014), it is not surprising that this trend has been picked up by teachers and educators who may appreciate its potential to increase student engagement, collaboration, and emotional involvement in learning.

In this chapter, I briefly discuss the potential educational value of escape games, taking into consideration gamification theory and transferable skills. I then describe an escape game activity I developed for a group of first-year students at an English university, working towards consolidating level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR). The activity focuses on idiomatic uses of modal verbs in German and is meant to serve as an example of how escape game activities could be used in language classes. To conclude, I discuss student feedback and potential areas for improvement to keep in mind when designing similar activities in the future.

2. All fun and games… but where is the learning?

2.1. Serious games

Gamification, "the careful and considered application of game thinking to solving problems and encouraging learning using all the elements of games that are appropriate" (Kapp, 2012, p. 12), and game-based learning in the wider field of education, have been a point of discussion for several years (Pivec, 2009; Shelton, Satwicz, & Caswell, 2011). While games in education can increase engagement, enjoyment, and enthusiasm, their actual educational value is sometimes called into question (see Hung, 2017, for an overview of the debate). It is worth exploring the potential of escape games by considering them to be 'serious games' within a framework of pervasive learning, i.e. "learning at the speed of need through formal, informal and social learning modalities" (Pontefract, 2013, p. 187). Serious games are defined as "[g]ames that do not have entertainment, enjoyment or fun as their primary purpose" (Michael & Chen, 2006, p. 21). In the case of escape games in language classes, the primary purpose is language learning. For the activity presented below, the specific learning goals were for students to

familiarise themselves with idiomatic uses of German modal verbs. The jigsaw puzzles used (see Section 3) required students to correctly interpret the use of modal verbs; the escape game activity provided the setting and could only be completed once students had accurately completed the linguistic games. Another purpose of using escape game activities can be the development of transferable skills, some examples of which are given in the next section.

2.2. Transferable skills

Apart from language learning, escape games are a great way to support students in developing a number of employability and transferable skills which include, among others, the list below.

- **Team work**: in order to complete the mission as quickly as possible, good team work is essential. Students need to distribute tasks and then bring the results back together in an efficient way.

- **Time management**: as there is a time limit in escape games, good time management is vital.

- **Communication skills**: this goes hand in hand with teamwork.

- **Technological skills**: if digital tools are involved in the game, these will require technological skills.

- **Problem-solving and analytical skills**: as escape games usually involve a number of puzzles and an overall mission (e.g. to work out a password), students need to apply problem-solving and analytical skills.

3. The activity: 'Die Modalverben-Mission'

The escape game activity I developed for first-year students deals with idiomatic uses of modal verbs in German. As the subtle nuances of these are often difficult

to grasp for learners and take some time to develop an intuition for, I decided to include lots of meaningful input, and the exercises focused mainly on reception rather than production.

The overall activity took 50 minutes and was structured in the following way.

Students formed groups of three to four players. The activity was introduced with a video that I had created using the free online tool Powtoon (www.powtoon.com, see Figure 1). The video explained that students needed to complete three stages, which will each give them a hint to help them work out a secret password.

Figure 1. Screenshots of introductory video explaining the 'mission' (the first one reads 'Welcome to this mission' and the second one reads 'Your mission: complete the tasks and work out the ^password^!')

The three activities were jigsaw puzzles which involved matching sentences with their translations or with a description of their idiomatic use of modal verbs. Students could check whether they had solved the puzzle correctly by turning it around to see if a meaningful image had been put together. Each image gave a clue for the final password. Students needed to work this out to complete the mission successfully and be able to 'escape' from the room (of course they were not actually physically locked in!).

Each group had only two attempts at guessing the password. This was done via a Google Form, which I had created in such a way that it would only accept the correct password as an answer. The three images were outlines of German, Austrian, and Swiss maps and also showed a car licence plate each; the final

password was DACH (the international vehicle registration codes for Germany (D), Austria (A), and Switzerland (CH) put together; the German word ‘Dach’ also means ‘roof’). Another clue was hidden in the video: the word ‘Passwort’ (‘password’) was bracketed by carets, which resemble a roof (see Figure 1). The first group who worked this out ‘escaped’ from the game and won a small prize.

4. Discussion and conclusions

Student feedback about this activity, collected via a paper-based questionnaire (n=19), was very positive, describing it as “fun and engaging”. The students liked the idea of working on a grammar topic in such a contextualised way, and enjoyed the competitive and yet collaborative nature of the game. Seven students (36.8 %) commented on transferable skills, e.g. by highlighting that this type of activity requires being able to work as part of a team and to manage one’s time efficiently.

During the workshop at InnoConf2019, a number of ways to improve the activity were discussed. One issue mentioned was to find ways to encourage the use of the target language: the students resorted to using English a lot when communicating in their groups. I did not intervene on this occasion, as I had decided not to intervene at all during the game and the activity was mainly focused on acquiring grammatical knowledge. Another aspect was to consider making use of more digital tools to support the actual activities, for example QR codes could be used to guide students and lead them to interactive online exercises. This is something I will try to implement in the future.

The activity described in this chapter shows that escape game activities do not have to be very complex and difficult to design. Many exercises can be easily transformed into escape games by contextualising them and defining a specific goal that has to be achieved within a certain amount of time. Episode eight of the #MFLTwitterati Podcast (Dale & Geisel, 2019) is dedicated to escape game activities and provides many hands-on and easy-to-implement ideas.

5. Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the participants of my workshop at InnoConf2019 for contributing to a lively discussion about escape game activities in language teaching and for sharing some wonderful ideas.

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6 Head in the clouds – innovating classroom practice using online file sharing for collaboration and feedback

Laura Richards[1]

Abstract

Navigating the shift towards blended learning in Higher Education (HE) provides opportunities for enhancing language teaching in the classroom. This paper will present a Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) -based project which aims to create a more collaborative and interactive classroom using open access file sharing services which focuses on developing collaborative writing practices and enhancing feedback loops. Using a Synchronous Computer-Mediated Communication (SCMC) approach to co-creating texts, students participated in a series of related in-class group writing tasks where feedback was recorded digitally. Both a survey and focus group were used to assess students' experience and use of the texts and feedback created. Results revealed a positive response to the use of SCMC for collaborative writing stemming from easier text manipulation and greater discussion of both textual and linguistic features, which is crucial to collaborative writing.

Keywords: technology-enhanced learning, feedback, collaborative writing, EAP.

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1. Introduction

As HE practitioners navigate the shift towards blended learning (Porter, Graham, Spring, & Welch, 2014) opportunities arise for enhancing language teaching in the classroom. At the same time, the increasing internationalisation of universities (Harvey, 2016) has prompted institutions to search for ways to support international students and fulfil their duty to create a hospitable academic environment (Ploner, 2018). With a strong indicator of success for international students being English proficiency (Trenkic & Warmingham, 2019), practitioners are constantly searching for new ways to support them which may include specialised software or digital services.

This paper will present a TEL-based project aimed at creating a more collaborative and interactive classroom using open access file sharing services. This project focused on developing collaborative writing practices and enhancing peer and teacher-learner feedback loops.

2. Method

2.1. Procedure

An action research methodology was used (Norton, 2009) to investigate the effect of activities based around the use of shared and editable files on Microsoft OneDrive (part of Office 365). Using a SCMC approach (Lin, Huang, & Liou, 2013) to co-creating texts, students participated in a series of related in-class group writing tasks that were conducted in shared online files. These activities included writing a report methodology (Figure 1), improving an abstract, and correcting an isolated sentence. Following this, the texts produced were anonymously displayed and analysed by the group, allowing both participants and tutor to analyse features of language produced by other groups, recording the feedback directly on to the shared document (Figure 2). Students were also invited to present and comment on individual pieces of writing shared in online documents (Figure 3).

Figure 1. Example of collaborative student writing shared online

Group 1:
Firstly, the oven was preheated to 180°C. Then, a 20 cm square tin was greased and lined to prevent the mixture from sticking to the tin. The 125g butter or margarine was then melted with the 125g Shamrock demerara sugar and the 75g golden syrup. After that, 225g of Odlums porridge oats was stirred into the mixture. The mixture was then poured into the square tin and smoothed out. Next, the mixture was put into the oven and baked for 25 minutes. Finally, the tin was cooled for 5 minutes before being cut into pieces.

Group 2:
First, we preheated an oven to 180°C. Next, we greased and lined an 20cm square tin. Then, we melted 125g of butter with 125g of Shamrock Demerara Sugar and 75g Golden Syrup. After that, we stirred the ingredients in 225g of Odlum's Porridge Oats. Further, we turned it into the prepared tin, smoothed top and pressed down well. Next step was baking it for 27 minutes. Finally, we cooled the flapjacks in tin for 5 minutes and cut them into pieces.

Group 3:
Preheated the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas 4. An 8''/20cm square was greased and lined on the tin. 125g/4oz sugar and 75g/3oz syrup were melted with 125g/4oz butter or margarine., then stirred with the oats. Turned the mixture into the prepared tin and smooth top and pressed down well. After baking it for 20-30 mins, it was cooled in tin for 5 mins and it could be served.

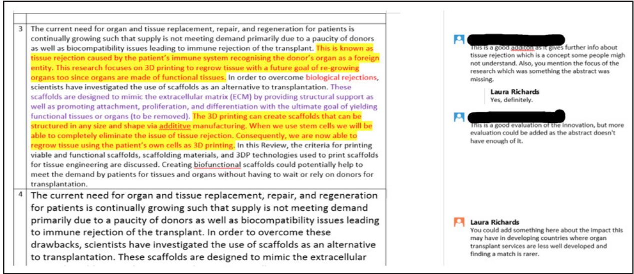
Figure 2. Example of annotated student writing

Group 1:
Firstly, the oven was preheated to 180°C. Then, a 20 cm square tin was greased and lined to prevent the mixture from sticking to the tin. The 125g butter or margarine was then melted with the 125g Shamrock demerara sugar and the 75g golden syrup. After that, 225g of Odlums porridge oats was stirred into the mixture. The mixture was then poured into the square tin and smoothed out. Next, the mixture was put into the oven and baked for 25 minutes. Finally, the tin was cooled for 5 minutes before being cut into pieces.

Group 2:
First, we preheated an oven to 180°C. Next, we greased and lined an 20cm square tin. Then, we melted 125g of butter with 125g of Shamrock Demerara Sugar and 75g Golden Syrup. After that, we stirred the ingredients in 225g of Odlum's Porridge Oats. Further, we turned it into the prepared tin, smoothed top and pressed down well. Next step was baking it for 27 minutes. Finally, we cooled the flapjacks in tin for 5 minutes and cut them into pieces.

Group 3:
Preheated the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas 4. An 8''/20cm square was greased and lined on the tin. 125g/4oz sugar and 75g/3oz syrup were melted with 125g/4oz butter or margarine., then stirred with the oats. Turned the mixture into the prepared tin and smooth top and pressed down well. After baking it for 20-30 mins, it was cooled in tin for 5 mins and it could be served.

Figure 3. Student and tutor comments on individual student writing



3 The current need for organ and tissue replacement, repair, and regeneration for patients is continually growing such that supply is not meeting demand primarily due to a paucity of donors as well as biocompatibility issues leading to immune rejection of the transplant. This is known as tissue rejection caused by the patient's immune system recognising the donor's organ as a foreign entity. This research focuses on 3D printing to regrow tissue with a future goal of re-growing organs too since organs are made of functional tissues. In order to overcome biological rejections, scientists have investigated the use of scaffolds as an alternative to transplantation. These scaffolds are designed to mimic the extracellular matrix (ECM) by providing structural support as well as promoting attachment, proliferation, and differentiation with the ultimate goal of yielding functional tissues or organs (to be removed). The 3D printing can create scaffolds that can be structured in any size and shape via addititve manufacturing. When we use stem cells we will be able to completely eliminate the issue of tissue rejection. Consequently, we are now able to regrow tissue using the patient's own cells as 3D printing. In this Review, the criteria for printing viable and functional scaffolds, scaffolding materials, and 3DP technologies used to print scaffolds for tissue engineering are discussed. Creating biofunctional scaffolds could potentially help to meet the demand by patients for tissues and organs without having to wait or rely on donors for transplantation.

4 The current need for organ and tissue replacement, repair, and regeneration for patients is continually growing such that supply is not meeting demand primarily due to a paucity of donors as well as biocompatibility issues leading to immune rejection of the transplant. In order to overcome these drawbacks, scientists have investigated the use of scaffolds as an alternative to transplantation. These scaffolds are designed to mimic the extracellular

This is a good additon as it gives further info about tissue rejection which is a concept some people migh not understand. Also, you mention the focus of the research which was something the abstract was missing.

Laura Richards
Yes, definitely.

This is a good evaluation of the innovation, but more evaluation could be added as the abstract doesn't have enough of it.

Laura Richards
You could add something here about the impact this may have in developing countries where organ transplant services are less well developed and finding a match is rarer.

2.2. Participants

The participants were a mixed-gender class of 16 pre-undergraduate foundation year students all going into Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) subjects and aged between 16 and 23 who had already studied at the university for a semester. They attended 8 hours of study skills classes per week and all regarded themselves as competent digital users.

2.3. Data collection

Quantitative data collected in an online survey (of 11 respondents) (see Supplementary materials, Appendix 1) was initially used to inform questions used to collect qualitative data in a semi-structured student focus group (of 3 respondents) which were recorded and transcribed (Supplementary materials, Appendix 2). Comparison was drawn with similar traditional group writing activities to determine whether or not students felt the process was enhanced through SCMC and how comfortable they felt writing in this way. A thematic analysis (Norton, 2009) was then conducted to analyse the data.

3. Results and discussion

Preliminary results revealed a positive response to the use of SCMC for collaborative writing, stemming from easier text manipulation and greater

discussion of both the textual and linguistic features which are crucial to collaborative writing (Storch, 2019). Viewing and analysing multiple texts in real-time (Fagan, 2015) allowed participants to notice – and then later review – features of language and genre in a way previously impossible. Data from the survey suggested a largely positive response to the use of SCMC in the classroom. All students found Microsoft OneDrive easy to access and 9 of 11 said it was easy to share files.

All students said they used the feedback created in class to help them understand assignments and 73% said they looked at the specific feedback they received in class. Just over half of students said they looked at feedback given to other students. Feedback from the focus group supported these findings and provided clarification and insight into the results. Students commented that it was much easier to review work through OneDrive and believed they would not have done some if they had relied on paper. They also commented on the speed and volume of feedback that was created during classes and how this helped them to understand their assignments much better as a result of having annotated writing tasks to refer to. One student also commented that being able to see other student's mistakes gave him confidence and perspective in reflecting on his own work.

4. Conclusions and limitations

In line with previous studies, perceived benefit of blended learning was high (López-Pérez, López-Pérez, & Rodríguez-Ariza, 2011). Despite the preliminary nature of these findings, use of SCMC in this form appears to be welcomed by learners and most certainly provided opportunities for interaction with each other and interaction with the texts created in a way that students found beneficial. For the practitioner, the capacity to give more dynamic and responsive feedback captured and stored in real-time provided versatility and utility in classroom interaction. Future research may not only seek to determine the impact of this feedback and collaborative writing method on more quantitative outcomes such as assessment performance, but also investigate approaches to increasing student

engagement and utility. As suggested in the focus group, learner training may increase uptake and utilisation. However, this is not only an issue for learners but also a barrier to practitioner adoption. If this form of classroom interaction is to be deployed beyond isolated individuals, the conceptual, practical, and epistemological barriers must be overcome; as must the stability of institutional internet connections.

5. Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the students and tutors of the International Foundation Year at the University of Leeds for their feedback and support. I would also like to thank Joy Robbins for acting as my mentor for this project.

6. Supplementary materials

https://research-publishing.box.com/s/fvew84qtk2fbqv1yi16ptxdepga4kczs

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7 Effective feedback for language assessment

Catherine Franc[1] and Annie Morton[2]

Abstract

The provision of effective feedback is challenging and remains a much-criticised element of the Higher Education (HE) student experience. This case study examines innovative approaches to providing feedback for modern foreign language assessment, based upon a small scale study at the University of Manchester (UoM). We identify problematic areas in current practice, and propose creative solutions not only to help staff produce clear, useful feedback in a sustainable way, but also to raise student's awareness and guide them in how to make the most of our provision, in turn becoming efficient language learners.

Keywords: feedback, intercultural competencies, language, sustainability.

1. Introduction

Providing effective feedback remains a much-criticised element of the HE student experience. Feedback generally comprises: indicating errors, correcting errors, recognising progress and mastery of skills tested, indicating ways to progress and resources to consult, providing encouragement, enabling self-reflection, and action planning. This article examines feedback for language assessment, based upon a small scale study at the UoM. Problematic areas in language practice

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were identified, and solutions based on the self-regulated model (Carless, Salter, Yang, & Lam, 2011) proposed. These were tested in French studies to help staff produce clear, useful, and sustainable feedback and guide students to become efficient learners.

2. Challenges and context

With an overall score of 3.7/5, feedback at the UoM shows low National Student Survey (NSS) results. The fact that this reflects a national phenomenon demonstrates the problematic nature of this area of HE teaching and learning (Carless et al., 2011; HEFCE, 2018; Morris, 2017).

Providing feedback is all more challenging in academic departments where the staff make-up is inherently multicultural. The staff body in the School of Arts, Languages, and Cultures is made up of 27 language tutors, ten nationalities, and a mainly British student cohort; in this scenario, providing feedback becomes an exercise in intercultural competency. Time constraints imposed by the departmental work allocation model and the time brackets within which feedback must be released to the students add to the challenge.

This study is underpinned by a notion articulated in Carless et al. (2011) according to which feedback must be sustainable: it must have an impact beyond the task and help students become self-regulated learners. This idea that to develop 'internal feedback' (self-reflection enabling action and progression) students need to understand 'external feedback' is echoed in Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006). Furthermore, writing feedback has to be 'sustainable' for tutors. French tutors at UoM have thus produced a series of feedback forms containing task-tailored grading criteria and ready-made comments to be highlighted as appropriate to allow for faster turnover. These provide advice on how to improve in particular areas and include references to where students can find information and improvement activities and are centred on Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick's (2006) advice to orientate feedback towards the task, not the person.

French Language Teachers (LTs) employ error indication as opposed to correction at advanced levels. After returning an assignment, students are invited to rewrite in light of the feedback received. Students return the corrected version to be marked a second time and are asked to complete a self-reflection including an action plan. In this multi-stage approach, feedback is dialogic and interactive (Carless et al., 2011).

This approach can only work if students are guided to receive this feedback, however. To prepare students, we have systematically embedded a variety of exercises into the language curriculum, as it is vital that students understand exactly what is expected of them, and also how they are marked (Ivanic, Clarck, & Rimmershaw, 2000; Higgins, Hartley, & Skelton, 2001).

These include self-correction techniques designed to enable students acquire effective reflexes with systematic checking. This can be done by students independently but also in dialogic, class situations: students exchange written productions and discuss their work in relation to the marking criteria. They thus engage in understanding the assessment criteria and in applying this knowledge to their own work.

3. Method

In order to better understand notions of good feedback practice, we conducted semi-structured interviews with seven international LTs and nine British students. We invited all participants to reflect upon the following themes: language used, length, format, and the role of positive and personal comments.

4. Findings

Our goal is to enable tutors to write useful feedback and to guide students in understanding and acting upon feedforward provided; the emerging points from the interviews are summarised below.

- **Language**: both staff and students expressed a preference for receiving feedback in the target language. Staff feel more comfortable expressing nuance in their own language. Students appreciate the extra comprehension practice provided, and report that critical comments feel more acceptable when filtered through a foreign idiom. All concede that English comments are more helpful at lower levels.

- **Length**: all agreed that comments should be between three and eight lines; any less suggests a lack of care and more might not be read.

- **Format**: whilst students prefer comments to be typed for legibility, staff mostly prefer to handwrite feedback, particularly as language corrections involve much annotation, including underlining, arrows etc. Word processing packages do not allow such flexibility and clarity. Marking language papers electronically is also more time-consuming.

- **Positive comments**: all agree upon the role of praise with tutors attempting to strike a balance between praise for achievements and clear indication of work still required. Most use the 'sandwich' method of positive, negative, positive comments, leaving the students on a good note. Students appreciate this method, reporting feeling disheartened when comments focus purely on mistakes.

- **Personalised feedback**: all appreciate the efficiency of ready-made feedback and feedforward comments (to be underlined or highlighted) but students also want personalised comments, especially on how to improve, perceiving this as quality assurance, yet also confidence boosting.

5. Conclusions

This article has used the idea of a self-regulated model as defined by Carless et al. (2011) as a basis to explain the work done in UoM to improve feedback

and enable students to become independent learners. Staff and students have commented positively on the gradual modifications implemented, stating they are helping students to become effective and responsible learners (2018 end of year questionnaires and semi-formal discussions). For example, this method helps students to become self-efficient by comparing individual performance with a standard (Sadler, 1989) and then taking action to close the gap.

This case study shows promising developments in the area of feedback for language assessment which will be taken forward in further trials.

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8 Suitable activities for independent learning

Carmen Martín de León[1] and Cristina García Hermoso[2]

Abstract

Working independently helps students develop a series of skills and strategies that will continue to be useful in their future professional careers. Teachers in Higher Education (HE) have a role in facilitating Independent Learning (IL) for their students. When creating opportunities for students to develop autonomy in learning, teachers may wish to provide learners with the appropriate resources by offering adequate bibliographies, finding and adapting existing resources to their needs, or even creating their own materials. Learning materials that teachers make available for their students' IL should meet the learning outcomes of the course, both in terms of the content they present and the skills to which they contribute. Teachers will, thus, be helping students use resources that enhance targeted learning while working independently, as well as developing the higher order skills expected at university level. In this article, we report on our research study that focuses on the benefits of using scaffolding strategies for students' IL materials. Such strategies overcome some of the problems usually linked to conventional resources designed for IL, namely loss of students' confidence in themselves and lack of room for creativity.

Keywords: creating teaching and learning materials, independent learning, scaffolding, creativity.

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1. Introduction

The importance of encouraging HE students to undertake IL has long been recognised and studied. It improves students' motivation and confidence (Meyer, 2008) and contributes positively to their future success in life as effective lifelong learners (Marshall & Rowland, 2014).

In HE, we aim for students to develop higher order thinking skills, such as those present in Bloom's (1956) taxonomy: synthesising, analysing, evaluating, and creating (as revised by Anderson et al., 2001), but we also target the development of communication skills required for understanding and expressing complex ideas (Littlewood, 1996). To this end, we have tested with undergraduate students of Spanish a series of scaffolding activities that progressively reduce the support offered (allowing progressive learning) while expanding the range of possible responses (giving room for creativity).

By scaffolding activities in IL materials, it is possible to offer guidance to students, helping them to take risks in completing tasks that would otherwise be beyond their unassisted capabilities (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976).

2. Building confidence towards independence

Holec (1981) defines 'autonomy' as the ability to take charge of one's own learning. However, autonomy is not an absolute concept, since there are different levels of autonomy (Benson & Voller, 1997, p. 193).

For this reason, teachers cannot assume nor control the type of IL that students might embrace autonomously when studying a second language. Students are guided and supported to reach their potential development level (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86), and teachers facilitate this process by scaffolding learning materials, since "it is the function of the materials augmentation […] to develop skills and knowledge in learners which ultimately will leave them in apposition where they know what is best" (Benson & Voller, 1997, p. 193).

In line with this theoretical approach, authors have adopted three scaffolding strategies that facilitate gradual development of learners' independent study skills:

- (I) moving gradually from activities that require the use of lower order skills towards activities that require higher level skills (Edwards & Mercer, 1987, p. 193);
- (II) providing support systems such as missing words, illustrations (boxes, maps, images…), the first letter for the answer, etc. (Hammond & Gibbons, 2001. pp. 13-15); and
- (III) widening the range of answers to promote autonomy with activities which progressively expand the range of responses leading to a final open activity (Hammond & Gibbons, 2001, pp. 13-15).

3. Hypothesis

Research by Senninger (2000) shows that efficient student learning takes place if students' independence is encouraged and supported**,** so that they feel prepared to take risks when they are challenged. This avoids them crashing into the 'panic zone' – Senninger (2000) envisioned learning in three zones: panic zone, learning zone, and comfort zone. By using scaffolding strategies, we can help students to remain in the 'learning zone', so that by gaining confidence and progressing in their learning, they will feel capable and comfortable when undertaking the kind of activities that promote deep learning approaches (Biggs & Moore, 1993). Our hypothesis was that using the three strategies mentioned above would enable independent learners to feel confident and motivated.

4. Method

We have carried out a study to test the three scaffolding strategies. We asked 40 undergraduate students of Spanish, level B2-C1 (Common European

Framework of Reference for languages) to complete four activities. We divided them into three groups: G1, G2, and G3 to evaluate the impact of implementing different levels of scaffolding.

- G1 completed activities using strategies I, II, and III.
- G2 completed activities using strategies II, III.
- G3 completed activities using strategies I, III.

We expected G1 participants to feel more confident than G2 and G3 participants, so we asked them all to rate their confidence when completing activities according to Senninger's (2000) learning zone model categories.

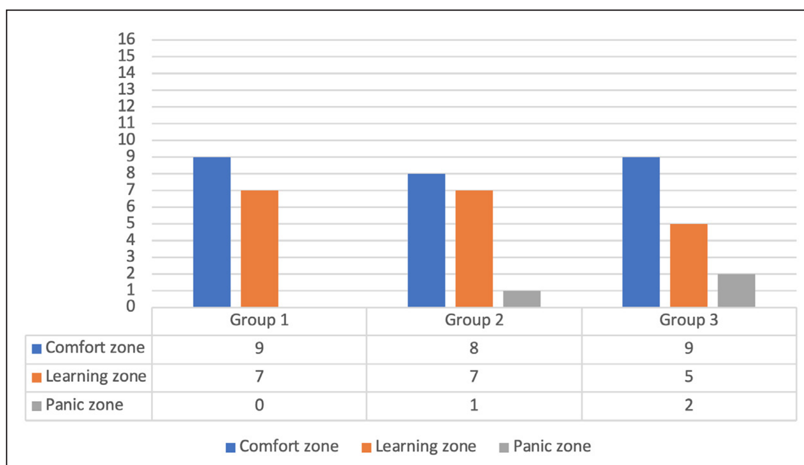
5. Results and discussion

We had responses from 12 participants, four in each group. In total, each participant gave us four answers, one for each activity, making 16 possible responses for each group (see Figure 1).

The data analysis shows that participants in G1 and G3 ticked the comfort zone the same number of times. This indicates that participants in G1 and G3 felt more confident overall when working with the materials than participants in G2. The difference confirms that the order in which activities are presented is relevant to participants' perceptions, as a progressive order allows students to build blocks of knowledge and skills step by step. In our case, the order we presented the activities was on the one hand, increasing the level of difficulty and, on the other, widening the range of answers. On the other hand, participants in G2 showed a lower level of panic than participants in G3, thanks to the clues and other support systems which had been added (strategy II). However, participants in G2 felt too challenged when lack of progression made them aware of some gaps in knowledge and skills that challenged them when facing activities with a wider range of possible responses. We noticed, though, that participants in G2 felt they

were within the learning zone as much as participants in G1. This confirms that activities were appropriate for their level, although they showed a lower level of comfort combined with some panic levels.

Figure 1. Participants' confidence when completing the activities



It was reassuring to see high levels of comfort zone in G3 with some of the activities, but it did not come as a surprise that as the difficulty of the activities increased and the range of answers widened, G3 participants were challenged to the point that levels of panic were felt or they did not feel they were learning.

Finally, it is worth highlighting that in G1 none of the participants indicated they felt themselves within the panic zone. This demonstrates that by adopting the three scaffolding strategies described in this study we have successfully enabled students to avoid the panic zone and this is in line with our initial hypothesis.

6. Conclusions

Our aim in preparing IL material has been to support learners' autonomy. To that end, we have used different strategies that facilitated sustaining development

in terms of autonomy, skills, and creativity. Those strategies not only enabled a smooth progression, building and keeping participants' confidence in their abilities, but they also proved to be effective at helping prevent students from crashing into the panic zone, and consequently, enabling their learning. Our findings will be of help in informing the practice of teachers who wish to create their own materials for IL using scaffolding strategies. More practical examples can be found in Duque, Martín de León, and García Hermoso (2019).

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9 Developing criticality and critical cultural awareness in modern languages

Elinor Parks[1]

Abstract

The chapter reports on a doctoral study exploring the complexity behind the separation of language and content within modern language degree programmes, placing particular focus on implications for students' development of criticality (Barnett, 1997) and intercultural competence (Byram, 1997). The study investigated implications of the division as experienced by German studies staff and students in two American and two British universities. The findings suggest that students who are prompted to critically reflect upon both the target language and the target culture have greater opportunities to develop into 'good' interculturalists in line with the view that students require an 'intercultural education' in order to maximise the benefits (Holmes, Bavieri, & Ganassin, 2015).

Keywords: language degrees, higher education, criticality, intercultural competence, critical cultural awareness.

1. Introduction

In the UK, modern languages in Higher Education (HE) have experienced a sharp decline in degree applicants over the years, resulting in department closures and a fall in the number of universities offering language degrees

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(Polisca, Wright, Álvarez, & Montoro, 2019). According to the recent University Council of Modern Languages report (see Polisca et al., 2019), the number of universities offering language degrees in the UK fell from 69 to 64 in the course of the 2018-19 academic year. While it has been suggested that the global spread of English could in part be associated with a reduced interest in foreign languages (Lanvers, Doughty, & Thompson, 2018), others have argued that the current curriculum needs to be revisited in order to make it more relevant to 21st century students (Worton, 2009). While the decline in language degree applicants may be more pronounced in the UK, the MLA (2007) report highlights some similar concerns with reference to the US context. The report, for instance, stresses the importance of a curriculum which holistically encompasses both language and content. Reports issued in both countries furthermore stress the importance of developing language graduates who are interculturally/transculturally competent (MLA, 2007; QAA, 2019; Worton, 2009).

One of the barriers to developing a holistic curriculum lies within the very structure of the curriculum. While in the UK the separation of language and content is manifested through the parallel teaching of language modules alongside content, in the US the separation of the two strands can be recognised in what is known as a 'two-tiered structure'. This means that lower-level language courses (generally taken by first and second year students), which focus on language practice, are "disconnected from upper-level courses in literature, culture and linguistics that focus on *content* rather than language" (Brown & Thompson, 2018, p. 7). This structure is strongly criticised in the MLA (2007) report, which suggests that it "impedes the development of a unified curriculum" (p. 4). With regards to the UK context, Gieve and Cunico (2012) found that students' studying a modern languages degree in the UK had a "weak appreciation of connections between language form, language use […] and intercultural communication, […] which appeared to be associated with a curriculum that does not promote integrating and content and language" (p. 273). The aim of the study was hence to explore the implications of the separation of content and language, as manifested in four very diverse German departments, two based in the UK and two in the US, for students' development of criticality and intercultural competence.

2. Criticality and critical cultural awareness

While the term 'criticality' is increasingly used in HE, particularly in the context of academic writing, here the term is understood according to Barnett's (1997) conceptualisation of criticality. This model was also the basis for the Southampton criticality project (Johnston, Mitchell, Myles, & Ford, 2011), which highlights the relevance of Barnett's (1997) work to foreign language education. Barnett's (1997) conceptualisation of criticality consists of four ascending levels of criticality: (1) critical skills, (2) reflexivity, (3) refashioning of traditions, and (4) transformatory critique (the highest level). Barnett (1997) argues that criticality is developed across three domains – (1) knowledge, (2) self, and (3) world (see Figure in Barnett, 1997, p. 103) – and suggests that "a curriculum for critical being [...] has to be one that exposes students to criticality in the three domains and at the highest level in each" (p. 102).

Similarly, the concept of intercultural competence is understood here in Byram's (1997) terms. Byram's (1997) intercultural communicative competence model consists of five *savoirs* (skills), however particular emphasis is placed on the fifth savoir, described as *savoir s'engager* (critical cultural awareness). This refers to one's "ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries" (Byram, 1997, p. 63). Byram (2012) argued that critical cultural awareness "embodies the educational dimension of language teaching" (p. 9) and stressed the importance of the 'notion of criticality'.

3. Methodology

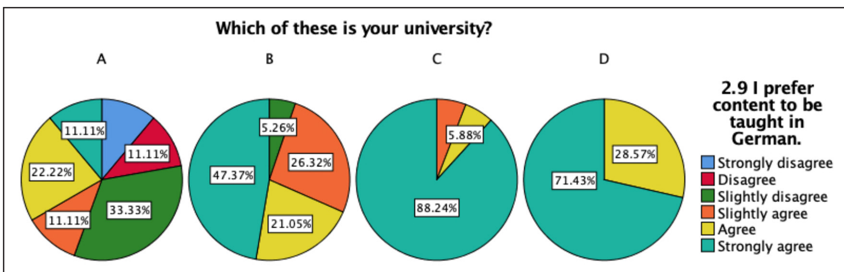
The investigation adopted a mixed-methods design consisting of a student questionnaire with follow-up interviews and separate interviews with faculty members. Fifty-six students responded to the questionnaire and 21 took part in the follow-up interview. The participants were all finalist students of German (or joint-honours), in the UK (Universities A and B), and students taking upper-level courses in the US (Universities C and D). Seven faculty members took part in

the interview, which helped inform my understanding of the curriculum as well as generate rich qualitative data.

4. Key findings

There were observable differences in the ways language and content was more or less integrated across the four universities. University A represented the least integrated model, since all content was taught in English. At University B, some content modules were taught in German, allowing relevant links to be established between the two. University C represented the most integrated model, as the German curriculum had been entirely reshaped to adopt a genre-oriented content-based teaching approach across the degree. At University D, the department had introduced content-based upper-level language modules, which provided a good example of integrating the two areas at modular level. Students who studied in programmes where there was greater use of the target language across the curriculum generally expressed a stronger preference for being taught in German (see Figure 1).

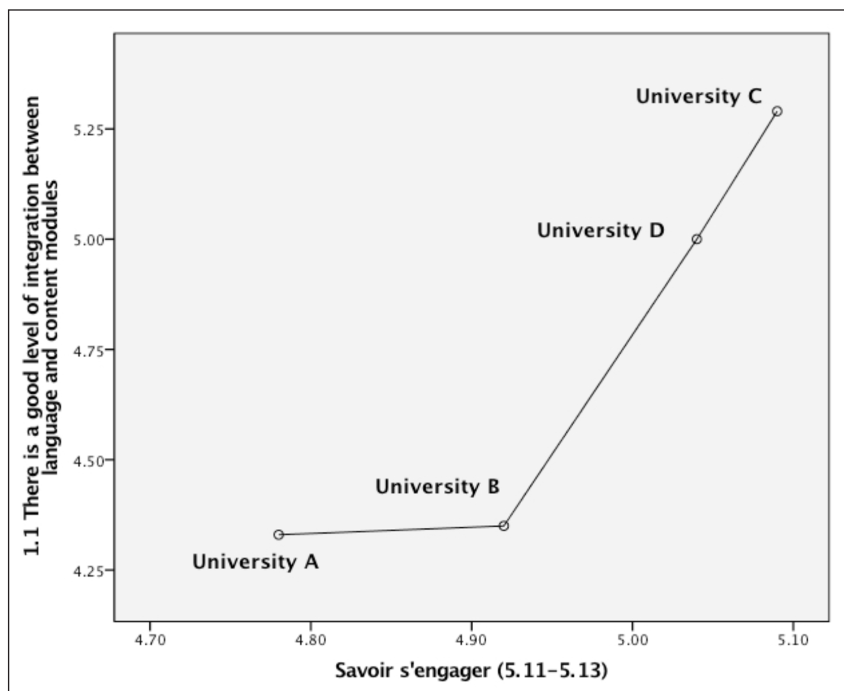
Figure 1. Preference for being taught content in the target language



Across all four universities, there was evidence that students had developed aspects of intercultural competence and criticality, yet a minority of students illustrated examples in interviews that could be coded as 'transformatory critique', the highest level of criticality. Similarly, fewer students illustrated examples of *critical cultural awareness*. Both staff and student interviews

suggested that upper-level content-based language modules (US) and content modules (UK and US) played a key role in fostering students' development of these competencies. The year abroad assessment task (UK universities, in particular University B) also emerged as effectively fostering students' criticality. Scores for savoir s'engager obtained from the two US universities were slightly higher than those obtained from the UK universities. These also correlated with the level of integration (see Figure 2). The relationship between degree of integration and scores for savoir s'engager was statistically significant at r=.250 with a p value of p=.041.

Figure 2. Integration and savoir s'engager



The language coordinator at University B made specific reference to the importance of prompting students to move beyond observation of culture and develop a more critical perspective on the differences they observed while on

their year abroad. The Head of German at University B also made reference to the explicit coaching, arguing that criticality development is more something that happens in the modules, rather than developing independently. Student interviews similarly suggested that the constant challenge of justifying arguments and researching information themselves helped them develop a more critical perspective on beliefs and practices established both in their own culture(s) and in the one(s) studied.

5. Conclusion

In interviews, students most often made reference to content or upper-level content-based language modules when describing how lecturers helped prompt them to develop a more critical perspective on the cultural products they were studying, and the different viewpoints portrayed in texts.

The findings also highlight an association between the use of the target language across the curriculum and a greater degree of integration. Students studying in more integrated programmes generally had stronger preferences for being taught in the target language and slightly higher scores for *critical cultural awareness*, suggesting that greater collaboration across the department and ability to establish links between the curriculum could result in greater opportunities for students to be 'coached' to develop more critical perspectives towards both the foreign culture(s) and their own. Language coordinators and heads of department should thus work collaboratively to develop a curriculum which effectively develops students' criticality and critical cultural awareness across all strands of the degree: language, content, and the year abroad.

6. Acknowledgements

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10 Developing intercultural competence: building on the year abroad in oral classes

Vera Castiglione[1] and Stefania Placenti[2]

Abstract

This paper provides an analytical account of a speaking activity, which was designed and delivered by the authors in order to help modern languages finalist students to further develop their intercultural competence. It argues that even finalists coming back from their year abroad might struggle with making sense of cultural differences. The paper presents an activity that builds on their year abroad to facilitate deeper cultural understanding. Through an interdisciplinary approach that incorporates recent recommendations of the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR) as well as scholarly work on cultural studies and intercultural pedagogy, this paper offers a concrete example of how a language curriculum can be adapted to meet the challenges of today's culturally complex and ever changing world.

Keywords: speaking, intercultural competence, year abroad, employability.

1. Introduction

Opportunities to incorporate intercultural competence among learning objectives are often missed. As language teachers, we may draw attention to some of the cultural differences, for instance in ways of greeting, but rarely dwell on the why and how of these differences.

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This approach to language teaching is at odds with the changes afoot today. Educational aims are increasingly ambitious, and utilitarian purposes are no longer the sole focus of language learning. Since the CEFR was first published in 2001, the Council of Europe has produced several documents promoting a more holistic approach to language teaching (Council of Europe, 2015, 2016, 2018). These documents highlight the need for a plurilingual and intercultural education equipping students with the ability to mediate between cultures as well as languages. In the labour market, candidates with intercultural skills are sought-after as companies seek to meet the challenges of a globalised market. A survey of 367 companies conducted by the British Council in nine countries has revealed that "HR managers associate intercultural skills with significant business benefits", with the ability "to understand different cultural contexts and viewpoints" and "respect for others" mentioned as key qualities (British Council, 2013, pp. 3, 12).

This paper explores a practical way in which teachers can help students reflecting on and deepening their intercultural competence, building on their year abroad experience. It implies a shift from 'linguistic' to 'linguistic *and* intercultural' education, achievable with minimal adjustments to the curriculum.

2. Method

2.1. Settings

The activity was delivered to two groups of finalists during a 50-minute oral class at the University of Bristol as part of the Bachelor of Arts in Italian. The final-year language course is structured over three weekly hours, each developing a different skill – speaking, writing, and translating. The hour dedicated to improving speaking skills revolves around activities designed with a blended learning approach whereby the class discussion often follows online homework. In line with the central principles of intercultural pedagogy (Loewen, 2013, p. 33), the activity described below encouraged students to question national stereotypes and reflect critically on the culture in which

they were immersed during their year abroad. According to cultural theorist Stuart Hall (1997), "culture is concerned with the production and exchange of meanings" (p. 2). In other words, culture is the lens we use to read the world around us. Therefore, students participating in the activity were invited to 'wear and see through others' lens' to make sense of the differences encountered abroad.

2.2. Oral class on cultural differences

The activity was divided into three steps: description, discussion, and analysis. Each step addressed essential aspects of intercultural competence, namely self-awareness, deep knowledge of the other's culture, and respect for it (Deardorff, 2004; Lustig & Koester, 2010).

2.2.1. Description

As part of their homework, students were required to brainstorm some of the situations experienced during their placement in Italy, where cultural differences had emerged. They were asked to list them on the online platform Padlet, on this occasion utilised as a virtual 'blackboard'. Some examples were provided by the tutor, such as: 'at work', 'at school', 'at home', and 'at university'.

2.2.2. Discussion

In class, the students were allowed ten minutes for discussing the content generated at home on Padlet. They were encouraged to reflect on their experience and make hypotheses on the reasons behind the cultural differences occurring in those situations.

2.2.3. Analysis

In the remaining part of the lesson, the tutor gathered the students' thoughts *in plenum* and guided deeper reflection on the main themes that emerged from the discussions.

3. Results and discussion

Students found it difficult to analyse 'cultural differences' at a deeper level. Many tended to articulate these differences as 'things I don't like about Italians'. The role of the tutor was crucial to help the students rethink differences from different angles. To this end, strategies deployed by the tutor included a number of methods recommended in CEFR: thought-provoking questions, links to students' existing cultural knowledge, and the breaking down of complex issues (Council of Europe, 2018). It is noteworthy that when students were given the choice between discussing the examples provided by the tutor on Padlet ('at home', 'at work', etc.) and providing new situations, most students preferred to use the examples already provided. This indicates that the process that leads to recognising certain behaviours as 'culturally different' is other than straightforward.

The most significant example addressed as part of this activity concerned the domestic environment. In the discussion phase, the students claimed that 'Italians don't give their children strict rules'. As a result, 'Italian children are unruly'. Interestingly, when the tutor invited the groups to analyse the reasons why this was the case, the students realised that Italian children do have rules. Only, the students judged them as 'unimportant', even 'stupid'. One group provided the example of Italian children being taught to 'tidy up their rooms' but not being told off when it came to 'more important' issues. A lack of self-awareness which is a key aspect of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2004) was at play. The tutor guided students towards recognising the non-neutral nature of their own cultural practices by asking rhetorical questions, such as:

- Do you agree with all the rules you had as children?
- Were they all important?

A discussion on what the two cultures deem as 'important' followed, allowing students to see the differences no longer as 'weird things Italians do' but rather as something relatable and deserving respect, thus demonstrating another key quality of the interculturally competent individual (Lustig & Koester, 2010).

An analysis about social contexts and backgrounds also emerged. Encouraged by the tutor to build on their previous knowledge of British upbringing, students reached the conclusion that there can be similarities and differences that transcend nationalities. For example, students noticed that British and Italian families sharing socio-economic backgrounds may also share similar family rules, irrespective of their nationalities. This debate enabled students to explore interculturality beyond national borders (Partoune, 1999).

4. Conclusions

This case-study shows that even Year 4 students who are expected to have well-informed views about the culture that they study, having spent a year abroad in their target language country, can hold stereotypes attached to nationalities. There is still great need to design activities guiding them through the transition from intercultural awareness, acquired during the year abroad, to intercultural competence.

Two groups are certainly not an exhaustive sample to allow definitive statements about the success of the oral activity herein taken into consideration. Further research to collect additional evidence in this direction is therefore necessary. Nevertheless, this case-study offers insights on the fruitful intertwining between the acquisition of intercultural competence and that of linguistic skills. As they were practising their speaking skill, students in the two groups were developing key aspects of intercultural competence, such as self-awareness, deep intercultural knowledge, and respect of the other. At the same time, the high level of engagement with the debate helped remove some of the anxiety about the language production. This case also shows that linguistic and intercultural learning objectives can be addressed during the same lesson.

At a time when universities try to boost students' employability skills and companies seek interculturally competent graduates, modern languages departments that can adapt to these changes have a real opportunity to lead, not just to witness change, without necessarily revolutionising their courses.

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11 Enabling students to articulate the value of language skills in an ever-changing work environment

Caroline Campbell[1]

Abstract

This paper shares some of the findings of an evaluative research project funded by the Leeds Institute of Teaching Excellence (Brown et al., 2018). The project explored the value of 'Broadening' as part of the Leeds Curriculum and the value of language learning in the context of Institution-Wide Language Provision (IWLP). The paper focuses on the data gathered from interviews with employers and presents the findings around employer expectations of graduates and their perceptions of the value of language skills and cultural awareness. It considers how to enable students to articulate the knowledge, skills, and experience gained during their undergraduate journey. It identifies the value of language skills beyond linguistic competence and maps this to employer expectations. It proposes an end-of-module reflective task for any language module to enable students to articulate their personal 'brand' based on their knowledge and social capital, thus evidencing the breadth of their employability.

Keywords: employer expectations, personal 'brand', language learning, employability.

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1. Introduction

The Leeds Curriculum has three elements: Research-based Learning, Core Programme Threads, and Broadening. 'Broadening' is described in this context as encouraging students to "broaden their intellectual horizons outside or within their subject areas" (University of Leeds, 2019, n.p.) through taking Discovery modules (offered institution-wide) and fostering participation in extra-curricular opportunities made available to them (University of Leeds, 2019). Our project explored student and employer perceptions of the value of Broadening in terms of developing knowledge, skills, and attributes and how this helps students become well-rounded graduates. It also explored student and employer perceptions of the value of language learning and cultural awareness as developed by students across the institution through taking language Discovery modules.

2. Methodology

Twenty-five students and 15 employers were interviewed. The employers were selected based on existing contacts (Leeds University Business School, Alumni) and were from UK-based organisations, operating at local, national, and/or international level, across a range of industry sectors. Data collection was via semi-structured interviews. Informed by a developmental utilisation-focused approach (Patton, 2008; Saunders, 2012), the method used to analyse the qualitative data was inductive analysis rooted in grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). This was followed by a systematic process of coding which revealed key categories and sub-categories emerging from the data.

3. Findings

3.1. Building a brand

A key category that emerged from the data is the idea of building a brand, i.e. students developing their 'brand', which includes their academic and personal

experience (Brown et al., 2018). The interviews revealed that a student's discipline is just one part of the jigsaw for an employer – "[t]he discipline is not important, especially if the student demonstrates the necessary attributes" (Brown et al., 2018, p. 20). With the exception of specific roles and professions, for example Food Science and Law, little emphasis was placed on the discipline. More important is the breadth of the individual's knowledge and skills, their motivation, and their life experience (see Table 1). The student's ability to articulate their identity in terms of their choice of pathway, i.e. the modules they had chosen to study, their motivation, and their passion was found to be critical to employers.

3.2. Knowledge and social capital

Table 1. Building a brand – key categories and sub-categories emerging from data analysis in the project

Knowledge	Social capital
• Lifelong learners • Breadth of interest/knowledge beyond the core discipline **Attributes** • A strong work ethic • Willing to learn new things, take on new roles and be adaptable/flexible • Transferable skills • Breadth of experience • Motivated and passionate	• Emotional intelligence • Able to build rapport and work with others • Self-awareness • Agents of change – able to influence and shape an organisation and show leadership • Resilience • Intercultural awareness • Interconnectedness – networking • Values-driven – cultural fit • Commercial awareness

This key category is composed of two sub-categories: knowledge and social capital. Knowledge – defined as a broad interest and a willingness to learn new things – is increasingly important to employers. With rapidly developing technologies and a changing work environment, graduates need to have a variety

of skills and demonstrate flexibility and a willingness to take on new roles. Social capital – defined as the ability to build relationships – was identified by some employers as a crucial characteristic and one that can predict an employee's success at work. Table 1 shows a breakdown of the sub-categories that emerged from the data analysis. As it is not possible to know which roles will be needed in the future, graduates need to be flexible and adaptable, able to work across disciplinary boundaries and across roles in an organisation.

4. Discussion

All the employers interviewed perceived Broadening, whether in academic terms or via extra-curricular activities, as very valuable: "in a competitive market, anything that can give students extra skills and additional knowledge to their degree is positive" (Employer Interviewee 4). However, while there was an acceptance that language learning was valuable, it was not seen as essential by all employers. Of those who did value language skills, one employer in the recruitment sector reported that a premium is paid for graduates with fluency in another language; another mentioned seeking graduates with two languages when recruiting for the role of buyer; a third commented that language skills might be the differentiator when placing graduates with clients (Brown et al., 2018, p. 22). It was clear from the interviews that there are more opportunities for graduates who have language skills and they are regarded favourably as being very deployable.

The findings highlight a gap between recent publications such as Born Global (British Academy, 2016), Celebrating Skills in the Arts, Humanities and Sciences (British Academy, 2017), and Languages in the UK (British Academy, 2019) and employer awareness. These publications provide the arguments as well as the facts and figures in evidencing the need for language skills not only for employability purposes but for society generally. It was surprising that some employers seemed unaware of the opportunity cost of employees not having language skills. This might reflect a limitation of the employer sample, being mainly drawn from UK-based organisations.

Therefore, mapping the knowledge and skills developed via language modules with employer expectations responds to this gap in knowledge by helping students to appreciate the added value of language skills and by providing employers with evidence of being well-rounded, transnational, highly employable graduates.

Below is an example of an end-of-module reflective task designed to help students map and articulate their knowledge and skills as part of developing their brand. In addition to outlining roles and responsibilities on their curriculum vitae, identifying the skills they have developed makes it easier for employers to see the student's articulation of their social capital and this helps differentiate the individual.

Reflective Task

Looking at the items listed under 'knowledge' and 'social capital', which ones have you developed as a result of taking this language module? Think about your academic and personal development.

- **Breadth of interest:** Studying X was a complete contrast to [core discipline]/further developed my knowledge of…
- **Willingness to learn new things:** Studying X shows that I have the confidence to try new things and to learn in a way that is different to the learning for my discipline.
- **Transferable skills:** I used my knowledge/experience of X when…
- Learning about X has made me realise that…/has developed my awareness of… /has broadened my understanding of…
- The group task/presentation…
- The experience of X has developed my confidence in…/my ability to…

- **Showing resilience/commitment:** While it was not easy to…, I…
- **Showing initiative:** For the group task, I took the lead on...
- **Developing my emotional intelligence:** While working in a group, I realised that…
- **Intercultural awareness:** From studying X,…

5. Conclusion

Students should be encouraged to develop their personal 'brand' through their academic and personal choices. They need to articulate the added value of their language skills and cultural awareness. Similarly, staff need to make visible in the curriculum the knowledge, skills, and attributes developed via language modules. An end-of-module reflective task is a useful way of enabling students to reflect on and articulate the broader benefits of the module. There is work to do to ensure that more employers are aware of the multiple benefits of employees who have language skills and the added dimension which this affords any organisation. Engaging in dialogue with employers will help ensure that the curriculum is relevant and the skills and attributes developed continue to meet the diverse needs of an ever-changing work environment.

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Author index

B

Borthwick, Kate v, vi, 1, 2, 5

Brick, Billy vi, 2, 21

C

Campbell, Caroline vii, 4, 67

Castiglione, Vera vii, 3, 61

Cervi-Wilson, Tiziana vii, 2, 21

Corradini, Erika v, 1

F

Franc, Catherine vii, 3, 41

G

García Hermoso, Cristina vii, 3, 47

M

Martín de León, Carmen vii, 3, 47

Morton, Annie viii, 3, 41

P

Parks, Elinor viii, 3, 53

Placenti, Stefania viii, 3, 61

Plutino, Alessia v, viii, 1, 2, 21

R

Richards, Laura viii, 3, 33

S

Stollhans, Sascha viii, 2, 27

W

Wylie, Neill viii, 2, 13

The present volume collects papers from InnoConf19, which took place at the University of Southampton on the 28th of June 2019. The theme of the conference was ‘Treasuring languages: innovative and creative approaches in HE’.

The contributions collected in this peer-reviewed volume aim to reflect on best practice in higher education. They showcase innovative approaches to support the multiple skills needed in our society whilst fighting a decline in students wanting to learn languages.

The short papers selected for this volume display examples of innovative curriculum design; enhancement of critical thinking, creative skills, and intercultural awareness; the use of digital tools and technology-enhanced learning, employability, innovative assessment, and collaborative and independent learning. We believe this volume will be of use to language teachers and practitioners in higher education and beyond.

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