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If you would like to get in touch or submit a piece, you can contact us on the journal's email:

llsj@leeds.ac.uk or email directly one of the editors at:

Bettina Hermoso-Gomez: B.Hermoso-Gomez@leeds.ac.uk

Antonio Martinez-Arboleda: A.Martinez-Arboleda@leeds.ac.uk

Sofia Martinho: S.Martinho@leeds.ac.uk

Carolin Schneider: C.Schneider@leeds.ac.uk

The Language Scholar Platform: http://languagescholar.leeds.ac.uk/

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Articles

A Grammatical Error Analysis of Final Year Students Arabic Writing

Hanem El-Farahaty

Centre for Translation Studies, Arabic, Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, School of

Languages, Cultures and Societies, University of Leeds

Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Education, University of Mansoura,

Egypt

This paper focuses on common writing errors in the summative assessments of Arabic as a foreign language at an advanced level. More specifically, the study investigates three Arabic essays written by final year students at the University of Leeds as part of their continuous assessment for *Advanced Skills in Arabic Language* (ARAB3020). The students involved study Arabic as an ab initio language at the Department of Arabic, Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Leeds.
This investigation aims to answer the following research question: How does error analysis help in classifying the common errors in final-year students' writing production and how can this help review the design of teaching materials and the teaching tasks for the *Advanced Skills in Arabic Language* (ARAB3020) module?[1]

1. INTRODUCTION

The Arabic Undergraduate Programme at the University of Leeds involves teaching Arabic to

complete ab initio students who know no Arabic when they start level one. The programme

involves the following degree combinations:

- Single Honours: BA in Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies.

- Single Honours: BA in Arabic and Islamic Studies.

- Joint Honours: BA in Arabic and any other foreign language such as French, Spanish,

    Chinese, Italian.

For all of the above programmes, there is a high number of contact hours in year one, and a compulsory year abroad in year two. In year three, students study two compulsory Arabic modules: *Essential Skills in Arabic* (ARAB2020/2021) and *Advanced Arabic and Grammar* (ARAB2010/11). In their final year, they study one compulsory module: *Advanced Skills in Arabic Language* (ARAB3020). *Arabic Stylistics* (ARAB3010) is only compulsory for Single Honours. Joint Honours students choose to study *Advanced Media Arabic* (ARAB3888) or *Arabic Stylistics* (ARAB3010) as optional modules. Below is a summary of the contact learning hours, including the contact hours for each year:

Year 1: 400 learning hours (including 168 contact hrs)

Year 2: Year Abroad 1200 learning hours (including 464 contact hours)

Year 3: 400 learning hrs (including 84 contact hrs)

Year 4: 200 learning hrs (including 42 contact hrs)[2]

All the students start as complete beginners, and they are taught almost the same number of contact hours throughout their study, therefore they progress at a similar pace. Given, on this basis, that all year-four students can be expected to be at a similar level, this paper will focus on the classification of the most common errors that year-four students make when they write assessed Arabic essays. It will attempt to categorise, describe, and explain these errors and recommend ways to tackle them in designing the teaching materials for ARAB3020, reviewing them and/or their methodology.

Pedagogically, Error Analysis (EA) can be helpful in addressing certain areas:

- weak areas which need to be enhanced by introducing new materials;

- lexical or grammatical items which could need to be taught later;

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[2] For more information on the structure of the programme, refer to this website:
<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/arts/coursefinder/main/20051/arabic_and_middle_eastern_studies>

- missing grammatical elements which lead students to have recourse to alternative structures;

- teaching items which have not been included in the syllabus, but are necessary at this stage;

- lack of organization and gradation in the syllabus or omission of important items;

- weaknesses or errors which may be entirely new to the teacher or of which s/he may be only dimly aware (Etherton, 1977:67-68).

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

Error Analysis (EA) is defined as 'the technique of identifying, classifying and systematically interpreting the unacceptable forms produced by someone learning a foreign language using any of the principles and procedures provided by linguistics' (Crystal, 2003:165). It has been the subject of interest of many scholars since the past century (Corder, 1967, 1971 1981; Richards, 1971, 1984; Richards et al. 1992 and James, 1998, among others). It emerged in the 1960s as a reaction to the Contrastive Analysis (CA) interference hypothesis: 'the novelty of EA, distinguishing it from CA, was that the mother tongue was not supposed to enter the picture. The claim was made that errors could be fully described in terms of the target language (TL), without the need to refer to the L1 of the learners' (James, 1998:5). EA, however, plays a complementary role to CA (Candlin, 1974:9). Thus, the latter highlights the problematic areas which face the students whereas the former provides confirmation for the teacher as regards to what has yet to be learned (Candlin, cited in Jassem, 2000: 43). For the purposes of this study, EA, then, is viewed more in terms of its usefulness as a methodology of analysing data than as a theory of acquisition (Cook, 1993:22). EA has existed in the Arabic tradition for almost 12th centuries, classical Arabic grammarians distinguishing between غلط (mistake or error) and زلة لسان (slip of the tongue). They defined errors as incorrect uses of language due to misperception (Ibn Makkī, cited in Jassem, 2000: 99). 'In the area of EA of language in the

teaching the Arabic language, few attempts have been made, all of which are limited to the area of teaching Arabic language to foreigners' (Jassem, 2000:7).

Although 'errors do not seem to submit themselves to any precise systematic analysis' as Jain (1984:190) argues, one can assume that common errors in Arabic writing can be caused by (i) asymmetry between English and Arabic grammar and stylistics; (ii) lack of focus on Arabic grammar by English students; (iii) lack of motivation and interest in some topics taught (e.g. advanced grammar), which leads to 'incomplete application of the rules and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply' (Richards, 1984:174); and (iv) mother-tongue interference, which is 'ubiquitously and patently obvious' (James, 1998:5). Thus, the reasons for the occurrence of the errors are possibly to do with language one (L1) or language two (L2), there being no clear-cut distinction between these two categories: 'the phenomenon of errors caused by cross-association of both L1 and L2 also seem to exist' (Jain, 1984:190).

2.1 Types of errors

This study is concerned with the systematic errors rather than lapses occurring due to wrong usage or non-systematic mistakes occurring due to bad performance. Applied linguists distinguish between competence and performance errors; the former are caused due to lack of knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and misunderstanding of the appropriate structure of the TL, whereas the latter reflect other aspects such as tiredness, nervousness, or laziness (Corder, 1973). They also distinguish between global and local errors: the former can hinder understanding of the message and include such things as wrong word order, overgeneralising a rule to exceptions, and wrong sentence connectors. The latter, on the other hand, do not affect the overall understanding but involve single constituents (Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982: 191) such as incorrect noun and verb inflections, and concord, among other things (Riddell, 1990:29-30).

In this paper, errors are classified into the following types: grammatical, typographical, discourse-level and lexical (refer to table 1 in section 3 below). Grammatical errors are the

most common errors identified in the data. For the purposes of this paper, I will focus on the grammatical errors occurring in the written production of the student group being analysed.

2.2 Method of analysis

As the study adopts an EA approach, I will know outline the main stages of carrying out such an analysis as identified by Corder (1974) and Ellis (2008) and further explained by James (1998):

- Collection of the data

- Error identification and description

- Explanation of Errors for the purpose of categorising them

- Evaluation of Errors and diagnosis

These elements will be discussed in further detail in sections 3-3.5.

3. ANALYSIS OF DATA

In this section, I will discuss the quantitative and qualitative analysis of data as per the above elements.

3.1 Collection of Data

Formally assessed written productions will be used as sample material. The aim of choosing to analyse assessed writing is to guarantee that students produce roughly the same word count, and for all of the participants to write about the topics allocated to them. Only material from native speakers of English enrolled on Single Honours degree will be analysed to minimize interferences from other foreign languages. Three written Arabic essays, of 500 hundred words each, were collected from twelve students over a number of months during the students' study of *Advanced Skills in Arabic Language* (ARAB3020). Thus, the total number of collected essays is thirty-six, and the overall number of words approximately 18,000.

3.2 Error Identification

As noted in Section 2.1, the study will focus on 'systematic errors' in the final-year students' writing not on 'mistakes' or 'slips' that might occur whilst decoding or articulating speech. One example of 'slips' in final-year students' Arabic writing is misspellings, which tend to occur due to the misuse of dots in Arabic. Students type many words using the wrong dots, which results in meaningless words as in the word 'history' being written as ناريخ instead of تاريخ, or the word 'huts' as اكواخ rather than أكواخ. In the error-identification phase, categories and subcategories of errors will be identified.

I have undertaken a quantitative frequency analysis of the errors, using simple statistical methods for identifying and categorising the errors, counting them and calculating the percentages for each category as in the following table:

Type of Errors	Number of Errors	Percentage
Grammatical Errors	315	60%
Typographical Errors	95	18%
Discourse-Level Errors	66	13%
Lexical-Level Errors	48	9%
Total	**524**	**100%**

Table 1: Quantitative Analysis of Final Year Students' Errors

As shown in Table 1, grammatical errors are the most frequent types: 60% of all errors. In second place come typographical errors (e.g. spelling errors) at 18%, followed by discourse-level errors, i.e. the textual and stylistic errors at 13%. Finally lexical-level errors (e.g. the choice of inappropriate terms, incorrect collocations) are 9% of the total. This article will only discuss errors at the grammatical level. The grammatical subcategories analysed in this paper include:

1. **Agreement: Gender agreement**:

   a. Subject-verb

   b. Subject-adjective

2. **Agreement: Number agreement**:

   a. Subject-verb

   b. Subject-adjective

3. **Agreement**: Definiteness

4. **Wrong grammatical structures**:

   (a) Use of a nominal form instead of the past tense or the passive participle instead

   of the past tense;

   (b) Omission of the imperfect verb after the infinitival particle '*an;*

   (c) Structure of modal-verb phrases;

   (d) Passive

5. **Idafa construction**

6. **Case&Mood**

7. **Number specification**

8. **Word order** (these categories will be explained further in section 3.3.1 below)

3.3 Error Description and Explanation

The purpose of this stage is to describe errors and attempt to answer questions on how and why certain errors are committed and possibly trace the sources of these errors, this last goal being 'the ultimate object of EA' (Corder, 1981:24). Analysis will be based on the figures presented in Table 1 above.

3.3.1 The Level of Grammar

In this section, I will analyse the common errors on the grammatical level and will attempt to explain the reasons behind them. Table 2 below provides the frequency analysis of the errors:

The Grammatical Errors		
Error Type	**Number of Errors**	**Percentage**
Agreement	116	37%
Wrong Grammatical Structure	78	25%
Prepositions	44	14%
Idafa Construction	32	10%
Case&mood	21	7%
Number Specification	14	4%
Word Order	10	3%
Total	**315**	**100%**

Table 2: Frequency Analysis of the Final year students' Grammatical Errors

As the above table shows, agreement (37%) and wrong grammatical structure (25%) are the most frequent areas in the final-year students' writing. Prepositions (14%) and the idafa construction (10%) are the second most frequent areas. Other less frequent areas are case&mood (7%), number specification (4%) and finally word order (3%). These grammatical subcategories will be discussed below.

3.3.1.1 Agreement

This category involved the highest percentage of grammatical errors in final-year students' writing. There are a number of agreement types in Arabic; this paper will only focus on the common errors involving certain types of agreement identified in the data: gender, number, and definiteness. Below is a brief explanation of these types:

- **Subject-verb agreement**: In Arabic, verbs must agree with the subject in number, i.e. (singular, dual or plural) and in gender (i.e. masculine or feminine). In the case of verbal sentences (when the verb precedes the subject), verbs must agree with the subject in gender only but not in number, all post-verbal subjects being in the singular.

- **Noun-Adjective agreement**: In an Arabic noun phrase a noun may be followed by one or more adjectives (attribution). Adjectives may also be related to noun-phrases in verbless predicand-predicate (topic-comment) sentences (predication) (Dickins, 2010:240). Adjectives modifying a noun in both attribution and predication structures agree in gender (i.e. both are masculine or feminine), number (both are singular, dual or plural), definiteness (i.e. both are definite or indefinite) and case (i.e. both are nominative, accusative or genitive). In a demonstrative phrase which consists of demonstrative pronoun, a noun and possibly an adjective, all of these elements agree in gender, number, definiteness, and case (although case, in particular, is not marked on most demonstratives) (Alhawary, 2011:76).[3]

- **Deflected agreement**: In Arabic, inanimate plural nouns follow feminine singular agreement in both subject-verb agreement and noun-adjective agreement.

Common agreement errors in students' writing can be divided into gender, number and definiteness as in the table below:

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[3] For more information and examples on adjective-noun agreement, refer to (Ryding, 2005 and Alhawary, 2011:64-70)

Agreement	Number of errors	Percentage
Gender agreement:	**74 out of 315**	**22%**
(1) Subject-verb agreement	*37 out of 74*	*50% out of 22%*
(2) Adjective-noun agreement	*37 out of 74*	*50% out of 22%*
Number agreement:	**24 out of 315**	**7%**
(1) Subject-verb agreement	*24 out of 24*	*100% out of 7%*
Definiteness	**18 out of 315**	**5%**
Total	**116 out of 315**	**34%**

Table 3: Agreement errors in final year students' writing

Table 3 above gives three types of agreement errors: gender agreement errors constituted 22% of agreement errors (these constituting 34% of errors overall), number agreement errors constituted 7% of agreement errors and definiteness errors constituted 5%. Below are examples of subject-adjective agreement errors (first example) and subject-verb gender agreement errors (second example):

Error	Correct form	Translation
و المعروف ان الأنظمة **العربي** سيطرت على وسائل الاعلام	و المعروف أن الأنظمة **العربية** سيطرت على وسائل الاعلام	It is known that the Arabic regimes have controlled the Mass Media
الاشعار **يؤكد** على روح و النفس	الأشعار **تؤكد** على الروح و النفس	Poetry focuses on the soul and self

Table 4: Gender agreement errors

The above two errors have the same cause. According to Ryding (2005:243) 'non-human plural nouns require feminine singular agreement' or as she calls it 'deflected agreement'. Thus the broken non-human plural noun الأنظمة / *regimes*, in the first example above, should take the singular feminine adjective العربية /*the Arabic* and noun الأشعار / *poetry (plural)*, *in the*

second example, should take a singular feminine verb تؤكد/ *it confirms* rather than a masculine

singular verb يؤكد/ *it confirms*. It is worth mentioning that both these examples involve gender

and number agreement, the latter will be discussed further in the following section.

Number agreement

Arabic grammar identifies two types of sentences, verbal sentences (starting with a verb) and

nominal sentences (starting with the 'predicand' (as a translation of المبتدأ) and a 'predicate' as

a translation of الخبر. This provides distinct terminology in English for what are distinct terms in

Arabic (Dickins, 2010). In verbal sentences, the verb agrees in gender but not in number

(verbs in verbal sentences are always in the singular). However in nominal sentences, the

verb that follows the subject must agree in both number (singular, dual and plural) and gender

(masculine or feminine), except in cases of 'deflected agreement' (see above). This is

explained in the table below:

Sentence Type + Gender (M/F)	Number		
	Singular	**Dual**	**Plural**
Verb-Subject (M)	قال الرجل (said + the man)	قال الرجلان (said+ the two men)	قال الرجال (said + the men)
Subject-Verb (M)	الرجل قال (the man + said)	الرجلان قالا (the two men + said)	الرجال قالوا (the men + said)
Verb-Subject (F)	قالت الفتاة (said +the girl)	قالت الفتاتان (said +the two girls)	قالت الفتيات (said + the girls)
Subject-Verb (F)	الفتاة قالت (the girl + said)	الفتاتان قالتا (the two girls + said)	الفتيات قلن (the girls + said)

Table 5: Number agreement in Arabic

Below are two examples of the errors identified in the data:

Error	Correct form	Translation
الدروز [...] لم **يشارك** في الاشتباكات	الدروز لم **يشاركوا** في الاشتباكات	Druze did not participate in the clashes
أعلنوا اليهود الاساس من دولة إسرائيل	**أعلن** اليهود تأسيس دولة إسرائيل	The Jews declared founding the State of Israel

Table 6: Number agreement errors

In the first example, the verb should agree in number with the predicand الدروز / *Druze* by adding a plural pronominal suffix to the verb: لم يشاركوا/ *they did not participate*. In the second example, there is no agreement required (the verb should be in the 3rd person masculine singular) because the sentence starts with the verb, أعلن/ *declared*, but students did not apply this rule and followed the common rules of subject-verb agreement.

Definiteness:

As mentioned above in agreement, the subject agrees with the adjective (s) in definiteness (i.e. both are definite or indefinite): بيت أبيض كبير / *a big white house* or البيت الأبيض الكبير/ *the big white house*. Below is an example of this subcategory in the data analysed:

Error	Correct form	Translation
المواطن مصري و سوري	المواطن المصري و السوري	The Egyptian and Syrian citizen

Table 7: Definiteness errors

In the above example, the noun phrase consists of a definite head noun المواطن / *the citizen* followed by two adjectives: مصري/ *Egyptian* an سوري / *Syrian*. Both adjectives are indefinite,

but should be definite to agree with the definite noun. That is, they should be المصري/ *the Egyptian* and the السوري / *the Syrian*.

3.3.1.2 Wrong grammatical structures

Errors in this category can be further classified into a number of subcategories. The first sub-category is the replacement of a **verb phrase by a verbal noun** and the use of the **passive participle instead of the past tense** form of the verb:

Error	Correct form	Translation
يعتقد اصحاب البلد أن المهاجرين **سرقة** وظائف	يعتقد أصحاب البلد أن المهاجرين **سرقوا** وظائفهم	Citizens believe that immigrants stole their jobs
كان قد **المخلوع** الرئيس ليبيا معمر القذافي	(1) كان قد **خلع** الرئيس الليبي معمر القذافي. or (2) كان قد **خلع** الليبيون الرئيس معمر القذافي	(1) The Libyan president Muᶜamar al-Qadhafi had been ousted or (2) The Libyan people had ousted president Muᶜamar al-Qadhafi

Table 8: Wrong grammatical structure: Replacement of a verb phrase by a verbal noun and the use of the passive participle instead of the past tense

Another sub-category is the replacement of an **imperfect tense form of the verb by a nominal form (verbal noun)** as in the following:

Error	Correct form	Translation
تنبغي الحكومة ان **اتخاذ** القرارات المناسبة.	ينبغي أن **تتخذ** الحكومة القرارات المناسبة	The government should take the appropriate decisions
من الضروري أن الحكومة **تحسين** الخدمات.	من الضروري أن **تحسن** الحكومة الخدمات	It is necessary that the government should improve the services

Table 9: Wrong grammatical structure: Replacement of the imperfect tense form of the verb by a nominal form (verbal noun)

A third category involves **omission of the imperfect verb after the infinitival particle '*an*** as in:

Error	Correct form	Translation
الاقتصاد من المحتمل أن **أهم** سبب للثورة في مصر	من المحتمل أن **يكون** الاقتصاد أهم سبب للثورة في مصر	Economy may be the most important reason of the revolution in Egypt

Table 10: Wrong grammatical structure: Omission of the imperfect verb after the infinitival particle '*an*

The above example shows an error in the use of a **modal- phrase**. Modal verbs and other modal phrases, take an imperfect subjunctive form of the verb after the infinitival particle *'an*. The examples also show a problem in word order in putting these modal elements together as in:

modal verb + the particle 'an + imperfect subjunctive verb
ينبغي + أن + تتخذ [...]
It should take ...
Or
the modal phrase + the particle 'an + imperfect subjunctive verb
من المحتمل + أن + يكون [...]
It is possible that there is ...

Table 11: Structure of the modal phrase in Arabic

There are other errors to do with the **passive structure** (as in examples 1 and 2) and **quasi-passive structure** (as in example 3):

Error	Correct form	Translation
تثير هذه الأيام أسئلة حول الأقليات	**تثار** هذه الأيام أسئلة حول الأقليات	Questions are now asked about minorities
و لكن جعل نفس الاخطاء مثل سلفه و كان هو **تطرد** من العمل	لكنه ارتكب نفس أخطاء سلفه و**طُرد** من العمل	But he committed the same mistakes and was fired from his work
تم دراستهم النساء أبداً لان مسئولياتهم كنا في المنزل مستعدين من سن مبكرة	لم يتم تدريس (**تعليم**) النساء أبداً لان مسئولياتهم كانت في المنزل من سن مبكرة	Women were not educated because their responsibilities were looking after the house from an early age

Table 12: Wrong grammatical structure: Passive structure and quasi-passive structure

The first example above shows that students may not know how to change hollow verbs (verbs whose middle root consonant is 'w' or 'y') into the passive. The second example is a bit unexpected because it is a form-one (i.e. basic) verb and changing it into passive is straightforward. But the wording of the whole sentence is problematic and affects the entire meaning of the sentence. The same applies to the last example where the candidate opts for the quasi-passive structure commonly used in the language of media and is done through: (تم مصدر + - to be done/made/concluded). 'The verb *tamma* is passive in sense, though its vowelling is that of an active verb…' (Ashtiany, 1993:29).

3.3.1.3 Prepositions

Prepositions are defined by Badawi, Carter and Gully (2004:175) as 'particles that precede the noun'. Prepositions are sometimes followed by pronouns and question words (Alhwary, 2011:119). Nouns following prepositions take the genitive case ending (ibid.) In Arabic as in English, prepositions contribute to meaning by referring to location, direction, space, time, or reason. They may also be used in abstract or figurative ways, in idioms and expressions or may occur in combination with verbs to convey a particular meaning specific to that combination (Ryding, 2004:366, Alhawary, 2001:126)[4]. The restricted usages and senses of prepositions implies that prepositions can be categorised as both lexical and grammatical.

The data involves two types of preposition errors: grammatical errors where the preposition is omitted or added and lexical errors where the wrong preposition is used. Below are two examples of grammatical errors which involve missing out a preposition (as in example one), or adding a preposition which is not needed (as in example two):

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[4] For more detailed explanation on the different types of prepositions, see Ryding (2005:366-400), Badawi, Carter and Gully (2004: 174-178), and Alhawary (2011: 119-131).

Error	Correct form	Translation
من الاثار الرئيسية **الربيع** العربي **الاطاحة هذه** الانظمة	من الاثار الرئيسية **للربيع** العربي **الاطاحة بهذه** الانظمة	One of the main results of the Arab Spring is ousting these regimes
قررت مجموعة في أوروبا استعمار **لهذا** الأرض	قررت مجموعة في أوروبا استعمار **هذه** الأرض	A European group decided to colonise this land

Table 13: Preposition errors

In the first example above, a preposition is omitted in the phrase من الاثار الرئيسية **الربيع** العربي / *the negative effects* [preposition missing] *the Arab Spring*, which should be الاثار الرئيسية **للربيع** العربي / *the negative effects **of** the Arab Spring*. In the second phrase **الاطاحة هذه** الانظمة / *ousting* [preposition missing] *these regimes*. The verb أطاح / *to oust* takes the preposition ب / *bi*: **الاطاحة بهذه** الانظمة / *ousting these regimes*. The demonstrative pronoun follows the verb so the preposition is attached to it. In the second example: استعمار **لهذا** الأرض / *to colonise **for*** [preposition added] *this land*, the preposition ل / *li (for)* is added to the verb استعمر / *to colonise* which does not take a preposition. This error could be interpreted based on the student's muddling up two possibilities:

1. The simple idafa (genitive) with a verbal noun: استعمار هذه الأرض

2. The use of a subjective genitive plus ل to introduce the equivalent of the object with a verbal noun: استعمار مجموعة اوربية لهذه الأرض

3.3.1.4 Idafa construction

Arabic distinguishes simple idafa constructions which are similar to the simple 's'-possessive structures in English such as جامعة ليدز / *the University of Leeds* where the head noun (the annexation-head) (Dickins, 2013:59) is جامعة / *University* and the modifier (annex) (Watson, 1993:173) is ليدز / *Leeds*, and compound idafa constructions, involving recursion, such as جامعة

طلاب ليدز / *the students of the University of Leeds*, where the primary head noun (primary annexation-head) is طلاب / *students*, and the primary modifier (primary annex) is the phrase جامعة ليدز / *University of Leeds*, but where this primary modifier (primary annex) can itself be further analysed into a secondary annexation-head (second annex) جامعة *University* and a second modifier (secondary annex) ليدز / *Leeds*.

What makes an idafa construction hard to learn (apart from the possibility of structural recursion) is the specific rules for forming it and the forms it takes. In an idafa construction the head (annexation-head) is always indefinite in form (i.e. it lacks the definite article ال/*al-*), while the modifier (annex) may be indefinite, as in كتاب طالب / *a student's book* (where طالب / *student* is indefinite) or definite as in كتاب الطالب/ *the student's book* (where الطالب has the initial the definite article ال *al-*). In a compound idafa, the last word of the idafa construction (the ultimate modifier / annex) may be indefinite or definite in form, while all the words before it are necessarily indefinite in form: كتاب طالب جامعة القاهرة/ *the book of the University of Cairo student.*
The latter construction is more challenging and is a recurring error in the data:

Error	Correct form	Translation
و يمكن أن يؤثرون على **صناعة** **القرار الحكومة**	و يمكن أن يؤثروا على **صناعة** **قرار الحكومة**	And they may affect the government's decision making

Table 14: Idafa construction errors

The above example shows that the students generalise the rule of the simple idafa to the compound idafa, starting the structure with an indefinite noun and making all the following nouns of the idafa construction definite.

The errors identified in the data suggest that the idafa construction is an area of Arabic grammar which continues to cause difficulty for students, although the idafa is one of the grammar areas which is taught very early on at Level One in the degree, because it is one of the most commonly recurring structures in Arabic.

3.3.1.5 Other less common grammatical errors

In this section, I will discuss the subcategories of Arabic grammar errors which were less frequent in the final year students' data, namely: number specification, case&mood and word order. Although these categories were less frequent, they seemed to be challenging and require more focus in the preparation of materials and in teaching Arabic grammar, writing and translation. They are discussed with illustrative examples:

Number specification

'Specification' (تمييز الكلمة / *word specification*) involves an accusative noun that disambiguates a word which precedes it. An example is لتراً **حليباً** / *a litre of milk*, in اشتريت لتراً **حليباً** / *I bought a litre of milk*. Note also that in this example, the form with the genitive لتر حليبٍ is also possible. This type of specification disambiguates measurements, weight or space. Another form of specification is number specification, in which an indefinite word (the counted noun) disambiguates a number preceding it. Arabic has specific rules for number specification which are now taught as part of grammar in schools. Alhaway (2011, 373) states that:

> there are three rules involved in the use of both parts of the number phrase (the number/numeral) and the 'counted noun' with respect to:
>
> (a) whether the counted noun following the number is singular, dual or plural;
>
> (b) the type of case ending on the number and
>
> (c) the type of case ending on the counted noun.[5]

In their final year writing, many of the students' errors have to do with the case and number of the counted noun itself. Below are a few examples:

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[5] For more details and examples, see Alhawary (2011: 372-82).

Error	Correct form	Translation
ستقسم هذا مقال إلى ثلاثة **قسم**	سنقسم هذا المقال إلى ثلاثة **أقسام**	We will divide this essay into three parts
هناك اثني عشرة **مخيمات** اللاجئين	هناك اثنا عشر **مخيماً** للاجئين	There are twelve refugee camps
1.6مليون **المسلمين**	1.6مليون **مسلم**	1.6 million Muslims

Table 15: Number specification errors

The above three examples involve different rules depending on which number precedes the specification word. The first example illustrates the group of numbers between three and ten. The counted noun for this group of numbers is always in the genitive plural and the number itself must disagree in gender with the counted noun (thus if the counted noun is masculine in its singular form, the number itself must appear in the feminine form, and vice versa). Thus the correct form is ثلاثة أقسامٍ/ *three parts* rather than ثلاثة قسم/ *three part* (i.e. the word أقسامٍ 'parts' has to be in the plural, while the number ثلاثة 'three' has to be in the feminine form, because the word قسم 'part', i.e. in the singular, is masculine).

The second example illustrates the fact that the counted noun for numbers eleven and twelve is always accusative singular and that it agrees in gender with the number; so the correct form is not اثني عشرة مخيمات/ *twelve camps*, it is rather اثنا عشرَ مخيماً / *twelve camp*. In the third example, the counted noun for the number million is always in the genitive singular. Thus, the correct form is 1.6مليون مسلم / *1.6 million Muslim*, not 1.6 مليون المسلمين / *1.6 million the Muslims*.

Case&mood and word order

Other less frequent errors include case, mood and word order. Examples of case and word order are given on the table below. Mood errors were very minor in the data and all of the errors found involved errors in the subjective mood following the particle *'an*.[6]

Error	Correct form	Translation
جاء اللاجئين الفلسطنيين	جاء اللاجئون الفلسطينيون	The Palestinian refugees came
الثورات العربية، أو الربيع العربي، **هي سلمية حركات احتجاجية انطلقت** في بعض البلدان العربية خلال أواخر عام 2010	الثورات العربية، أو الربيع العربي، **هي حركات احتجاجية سلمية انطلقت** في بعض البلدان العربية خلال أواخر عام2010	The Arab revolutions or the Arab Spring are peaceful protesting movements which broke in some of the Arabic countries end of 2010

Table 16: Case and word order errors

The first of the two examples above involve an example of case error. The subject phrase (noun plus adjective) is in the accusative case but should be in the nominative. This type of error varies form one student to another and can also be committed by native speakers (since case-endings are features of Standard Arabic, which Arabs learn at school, but not of their native colloquial dialects, which are their mother tongue.

The second example involves an error in word order in which the student muddles the word order in the long noun phrase, consisting of one head noun حركات / *movements* and two adjectives احتجاجية /*protest-related, protestory*, and سلمية / *peaceful.* In a noun phrase in Arabic, adjectives follow the noun but in the above examples, the student puts the adjective سلمية/ *peaceful* first followed by the noun then followed by the second adjective احتجاجية / *protest-related, protestory*. It is hard to explain this error. It is unclear whether it is to be regarded as being caused by L1 interference, or if it is to do with the complex structure of the noun phrase.

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[6] This type of error will not discussed here due to word limitations. For information about Mood in Arabic, see Ryding (2005: 606-15).

3.4 Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper has discussed errors in final year students' Arabic writing. It has analysed frequency of errors at different levels: grammatical, typographical, lexical and textual. Grammatical errors were discussed in detail as they are the most common errors in the data analysed. In the following paragraphs, I will suggest some ways for dealing with the errors involving the grammatical subcategories discussed in class and outside class.

Errors at the grammatical level include subcategories which are taught at beginner's level: gender agreement, number agreement and definiteness and the idafa construction. Other common errors involve more advanced grammatical subcategories which also involve areas of difference between English and Arabic grammar. These are passive, modal auxiliaries, and number specification. Another common grammatical subcategory where errors occur is prepositions, an area which is taught at different levels throughout the whole degree.

Gender agreement is an area of difference between English and Arabic. English operates almost entirely with natural gender and gender agreement is essentially confined to pronouns. Arabic, by contrast, has grammatical gender, with complex gender agreement patterns. Unsurprisingly, given these differences, learners of Arabic at the University of Leeds continue to get confused and commit errors even at an advanced level of learning. Sometimes it can be hard to dedicate time to basic aspects of grammar aspects at advanced levels because more focus is given to other advanced aspects of grammar. As the figures and analysis have shown, there are certain areas of agreement which need more effort on the part of Arabic teachers such as deflected agreement. This could be revised and reinforced in teaching activity Arabic modules; more focus could be given to this issue in speaking classes, and in oral and written feedback on written tasks.

Prepositions are an under-considered area of Arabic grammar and reading/writing classes. Students are expected to learn prepositions on a fairly ad hoc basis as they progress in their degree. This may be attributed to the fact that there is no one method of teaching prepositions. Rather, they need to be practiced at all stages of the degree. More attention should be given

to them in reading and writing by devoting more time for practice in class through error analysis exercises involving students' writing, gap-filling exercises involving phrasal verbs, and reading in class to identify collocations involving prepositions and verbs, nouns and adjectives. Teachers could also prepare a bank of online exercises and/or quizzes on a variety of topics related to the students' reading and writing syllabus. The work done in the media Arabic syllabus could be of value to the teaching and learning of advanced reading and writing classes.

Basic grammar structures such as the idafa construction are an area of Arabic grammar which is taught at BA level one. But students continue to make errors in their writing at more advanced BA levels. This suggests that this area is to be revisited at all levels in teaching the different skills for Arabic. Students could be assigned home-work activities and autonomous online learning drills and exercises.

Grammatical structures taught at the advanced level such as modal verbs and phrases are areas of difference between English and Arabic grammar and cause difficulty for Arabic learners. These structures are taught at BA level two. They recur in different text types and are challenging to learn. Using the traditional grammar-translation approach in teaching them is not helpful. They need to be taught using innovative communicative teaching methods and to be embedded in the teaching and learning of the four language skills and in Arabic media and translation classes. Using parallel Arabic-English texts and various examples from different text types may also help students figure out differences between the two languages. Other less frequent subcategories in the data analysed are case, mood and word order and number specification. This last is an area of significant difference between English and Arabic grammar. Although it is one of the less frequent areas in the data analysed, based on my experience in teaching it in advanced media Arabic, it is a recurring area in Arabic media texts and students find it challenging. It is taught at the intermediate and advanced levels and requires more practice than it is currently given. It should not be taught in grammar classes only but also integrated with the teaching of the four basic skills. Based on my experience of

teaching Arabic grammar and writing, I can confirm that as with many other areas in Arabic grammar, it is not easy to teach number specification by following traditional grammar methods. Rather it is better to teach it through language-in-context activities. This is one of the areas which need to be revisited and included in the syllabus design of other advanced Arabic modules (e.g. in translation, media Arabic).

In summary, it was clear during the process of the data analysis that some students commit more errors than others. These students need to be monitored and be given more support by assigning them further work to enhance their grammar and writing skills. Finding out the needs and learning strategies of these students could be very helpful in finding out how they could be better supported. Adopting innovative ways of teaching Arabic grammar in context rather than relying on outmoded grammar-based methods can certainly help to overcome the challenges which Arabic learners encounter. Monolingual corpora and parallel corpora are other useful tools to help in teaching Arabic grammar. They can assist the teacher in explaining areas of grammar in context and help students reach conclusions and build patterns/exceptions regarding these areas.

3.5 Limitations of the study

Error analysis as a methodology has been criticised because of the various limitations it poses on sampling, subjectivity, and error categorisation, among other things (Riddell, 1990:28-9). This research has some limitations. There was obvious overlap and difficulty in setting clear boundaries between some types of errors in certain cases. A good example is an error in the idafa construction in الشعب مصر و سوريا/ *the people of Egypt and Syria* where the first part of the idafa construction must be indefinite: شعب مصر و سوريا / *people of Egypt and Syria*. This same error can also be classified as an agreement error where the subject agrees with adjective in definitiveness. The phrase could also be written الشعب المصري والسوري / *the Egyptian and Syrian people*.

In some other cases, a simple change of the grammatical error is not enough such as in the example given about the error of the passive structure (3.3.1.2): [...] تم دراستهم النساء أبداً which was corrected to لم يتم تدريس النساء أبداً / *women were not educated*, however, the whole sentence is to be restructured: لم يتم تدريس (تعليم) النساء أبداً لان مسئولياتهم كانت في المنزل من سن مبكرة / *Women were not educated because their responsibilities were looking after the house from an early age.* Some of the errors committed are caused because of L1 language interference but it is hard to tell if this is the reason or just lack of competence of the students. What one could say is that it is difficult to fully interpret the reasons behind all errors and such interpretations are only based on the researcher/teacher's speculations, intuition and experience. What is important to stress, however, is that learning strategies, different training procedures, individual differences of teachers, learners, text books all seem to operate to make each learning situation different from the other (Jain, 1984:190).

In spite of these limitations, the above analysis has helped to give evidence on the most common errors which continue to happen in spite of the fact that they are taught at beginners' level such as the idafa construction and agreement. The analysis has provided enough evidence that other categories such as prepositions are recurring and they need to be given more attention and to be included in the design of the syllabus and the teaching of Arabic grammar, reading and writing.

Address for correspondence:h.el-farahaty@leeds.ac.uk

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An exploration of the use of technology to enhance the presentation skills of international students with reference to Puentedura's SAMR model

Rachel Robinson

Language Centre, School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, University of Leeds

Abstract

Giving a presentation is often one of the more challenging tasks asked of our students and even confident speakers can give a presentation lacking in focus. Presenting in a language other than their mother tongue may cause some to feel overwhelmed. Consequently, students often dedicate most of their time to developing strategies such as preparing detailed notes; memorizing their presentation by heart, and finally, focusing almost exclusively on the content of their presentation as they strive to cover as much information as possible. Delivery often comes as an afterthought to many students with little consideration being given to the pace and timing of their presentation.

While recent research has suggested that using technology more fully in the preparation and practice stages can help to address these issues for students, from a teaching perspective, making decisions about using technology in the classroom can often be a challenge for busy teachers who must select from a constantly changing array of tools and applications. However, if teachers can present a rationale for using technology based on sound educational theories, then this should go some way to alleviating the pressure felt by some to use the latest new tool simply for the sake of it.

By encouraging students to experiment with and incorporate appropriate technology effectively into such a task as presenting, teachers can increase their students' awareness of the importance of timing, delivery and visual aids. This in turn can lead to increased confidence for non-native speakers of English, and should also lead to a more engaging presentation for the audience. This article offers an overview of some of the theories which can be used to frame the use of technology for education with particular reference to Puentedura's SAMR model and illustrates how it could be applied in the context of student presentations.

INTRODUCTION

There have been numerous discussions about how technology can 'transform' the teaching and learning experience. There are many advocates of technology in the classroom and many who oppose, for good reason what can sometimes appear to be the blanket adoption, or what Selwyn (2011) terms 'unquestionable acceptance' of all the latest technology for teaching purposes simply for the sake of it. For this reason, a number of educators have set out to theorise the use of technology in the classroom by providing frameworks and models which offer guidance to those in a position to experiment with and implement technology into their own classes. One such model is Puentedura's SAMR model. This article will begin with a brief overview of some of the theories which can be used to frame the use of technology for education. Following this is an explanation of the SAMR model and how it can be used to inform the use of technology for improving presentations. Finally, this model will be applied to a contextualized example from the classroom illustrating how such technology could be implemented effectively on a pre-sessional business course.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of relevant theories from education

While a wide range of theories from education and language learning can be drawn on to underpin one's use of technology in the classroom, in the current literature, as highlighted by Laurillard (2008), references to theories which focus on learning as being an active process are most prevalent. Although Warschauer (2005:10) reminds us that 'the term sociocultural theory means many different things to different people', Hampel illustrates its relevance by focusing on drawing together a number of theories such as those proposed by Vygotsky and Piaget. She asserts that Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory and Zone of Proximal Development, requiring learners to interact and cooperate with others in order for learning to take place, is still relevant to pedagogy today and that Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) focuses on the communication aspect of learning, providing 'an excellent tool for socio-cultural,

situated learning' (2003:25). Stickler and Emke assert that learning does not follow the 'transmission model' of knowledge being passed one-way from an expert to a novice, but suggest that if pedagogy can be built on a theory of socio-cultural learning, then this would indicate that collaboration '[…] becomes essential as each learner advances through his/her ZPD' (2011:149). It would seem then that learning is not a linear process involving teachers conveying information to students A further study by Warschauer (2005) on Computer Assisted Language Learning, (CALL), also focuses on Vygotskian theory and the idea that, in addition to being social, learning is also mediated. A metaphor given by Bateson (1972, cited in Warschauer 2005) of a blind man who uses a stick (or tool or artifact) is used to convey this idea that human activity is mediated by tools or signs. Applying this to the realm of technology then, how does the use of a tool such as a computer transform human action? In order to analyse learning it is necessary to consider not just the person or the tool, but what activities can be carried out, or transformed, when assisted by these tools.

Piaget's Constructivism is another theory frequently quoted in the literature and 'combines theories from cognitive science with sociocultural principles' (Hampel 2003:24) with the key focus being on how knowledge is put together, or constructed, by learners pooling their knowledge. While not all are advocates of such an approach, Fox (2001) for example, claims it is simply common sense for learners to build this knowledge together, Selwyn (2011) on the other hand suggests that it is worth defining educational technology in the following terms: artifacts (tools); activities; context. The idea of context here is important because as Walker and White (2013:15) note 'communication is always situated' and no two contexts are exactly the same. This applies particularly to an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) environment because it is highly contextualized with specific learner aims and outcomes. With regard to the use of technology for educational purposes then, the theories underpinning the rationale for new tasks and activities made possible by the technology must be carefully considered. A more recent theory related to socio-cultural theories has been put forward by Siemens with his rationale for this being that earlier theories of learning '[…]do not attempt to address the

challenges of organizational knowledge and transference' (2005:5). His theory of Connectivism (2005), attempts to more accurately theorise the learning process in a digital age where information is constantly changing. One of the key aspects highlighted through this theory is that 'the ability to synthesize and recognize connections and patterns is a valuable skill' (2005:3).

Taking all of these theories into consideration should help teachers to evaluate their pedagogical practices. However, in line with 'newer' technology come 'newer' models and frameworks. Warschauer predicted that 'teachers […] should […] have successful strategies for evaluating and adapting new waves of software that will surely come' (2002:457). One way of evaluating and deciding on how best to do this is to refer to a taxonomy of sorts called SAMR.

SAMR as a framework for evaluating activities

Puentedura's SAMR (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, Redefinition) framework (2014) is one such model which has been adopted by some educators looking for a more technologically-oriented model. It refers to the application of technology for educational purposes and comprises of 4 such 'levels' of evaluation. These levels can be used to guide the teacher when deciding on a particular use of technology in a particular learning context. The lowest level, *Substitution*, refers to the use of newer technology to execute a task being substituted for older technology, so for example, instead of using a paper and pen to write an essay, students could type their essay on the computer. The next level, *Augmentation*, refers to the use of technology to improve the learning outcomes and perhaps make an activity more student-centred. These first two levels Puentedura refers to as *enhancing* learning. Moving up to the *Modification* level sees technology being used to do something new that could not be done without this technology. For example, students might be asked to carry out a research project requiring access to the internet and instead of just writing up their findings, they can pool their findings on a wiki, share their thoughts with their peers and collaborate to produce

a final group report. This can be done outside of the classroom so learning is not restricted to the physical space traditionally associated with learning. Neither is it limited to being done during class time. The final *Redefinition* level could be reached by then asking students to use their pooled information to make a short video reporting on their findings. This task would seem to include many of the features considered to be good pedagogical practice because students are actively engaged in collaboration, with the use of the tool (digital devices) to mediate their learning and to help them reach their full learning potential. Puentedura claims these two higher levels *transform* learning.

The SAMR model is not without its opponents however, and Green (2014, cited in O'Hagen 2015), found that a very similar model identifying three functions of technology use: *replacement, amplification, and transformation* (RAT) had already been put forward by another researcher in 2005. Linderoth (2013) in an open letter, calls the model 'simplistic', a claim echoed by Love (2015), and both note the lack of peer-reviewed literature available. However, Linderoth (2013) concedes that perhaps one such benefit of SAMR being a simplified version of these theories is that, at a practical level, it is accessible to busy teachers, which they can apply day to day in class. It is this theme of practical application and guidance for teachers which will be explored in more depth in the next section.

TECH TOOLS FOR PRESENTATIONS

PowerPoint has long been used as the main presentation software tool, however, particularly in the business world where time is increasingly at a premium and books such as McCormack's *'Brief: make a bigger impact by saying less'* (2014) are becoming more common, surely there must be a way, and a need, to harness this software in a more transformative, powerful and innovative way. Steve Jobs once claimed 'I hate the way people use slide presentations instead of thinking' (cited in Anderson & Williams 2012:1), a sentiment seemingly echoed by Beyer whose study on student presentations was prompted by the

question, 'PowerPoint is a tool they are expected to use, but do they use it effectively?' (2011:122).

It would seem that the majority of presenters only scrape the surface when experimenting with the functionality that is offered by presentation tools. Automated timing for slide transitions instead of the presenter controlling the progression of the slides with a clicker is a little-used function of presentation software such as PowerPoint and Prezi. Adding this simple twist to a regular slide presentation can transform it into a more dynamic and engaging experience because the presenter must remain focused with no time to digress, while questions can be saved until the speaker has finished. As Evans (2013) notes in his study of Hong Kong business employees, communicating succinctly is a key concern for many who use Business English as a lingua franca. It is perhaps no surprise then that the business world in particular for whom the lightning business pitch can be extremely high stakes, has taken to this speedy presentation format. Pecha Kucha, sometimes referred to as 'the art of concise presentations', is a unique format which uses the automated transitions to create a highly visual, brief presentation consisting of 20 slides with 20 seconds for each slide, giving an overall presentation time of 6 minutes and 40 seconds. Two designers, Klein and Dytham have been credited with its inception back in 2003 as a response to the many long-winded presentations they had been subjected to at design functions (Klein & Dytham 2016).

Another of the many tools available for presentations is *Movenote,* up until recently a free, cross-platform application allowing users to record themselves with the inbuilt camera on their laptops and other mobile devices. It would seem particularly apt for presentation practice as users can see a video of themselves on one side of the screen while the other half is taken up with their PowerPoint slides. Various functions include record, pause, edit and timer modes. A further function allows the user to invite another person to watch their recorded presentation who can then offer either text-based comments and feedback or a videoed message.

Teaching Scenario: Presentation skills for pre-sessional business students

Pre-sessional business students preparing for Masters programmes in a UK university have only a few weeks to work on their academic language and skills in order to prepare for their future studies. The aim of the course is to help them to make the transition successfully into their new academic environment. As time is short on this type of high stakes course, it is imperative that the course mirrors as closely as possible the types of task expected of students once they have progressed to their departments so as to fully prepare them and realistically evaluate their abilities. As such, students must focus on developing a wide range of skills, but one of the key skills to attend to is presenting in English.

On such a course, students can prepare a variation on the Pecha Kucha format, the aim being to raise awareness of creating presentations which are clear, concise, visual and engaging in order to maximize effectiveness. The rationale for setting such a task for these business students is partly to address issues of confidence, but also to raise awareness of the importance of quality presenting in the field of business. As Stevens (cited in Christianson & Payne 2011:1) discovered, employers 'strongly expressed a need for stronger skills in public speaking […] and presentation skills, highlighting the ability to use software tools like PowerPoint'. The Pecha Kucha format has been embraced by educators of business students in particular (Levin & Peterson 2013; Oliver & Kowalczyk 2013; McDonald & Derby 2015; Anderson & Williams 2012), because many students struggle firstly, to select appropriate information and secondly, to judge how much information to include on each slide. Presenters must be concise and organized and as Beyer, Gaze and Lazicki note, 'it forces students to be more familiar with their material and reduces the mistakes often seen with traditional PP slides' (2012:28).

Presenting is one of the key transferable skills for business students as they will undoubtedly find themselves being asked to present a marketing pitch or to explain, clearly and confidently, ideas to their colleagues and employers (Evans 2013). Focusing on such skills would therefore seem a worthwhile exercise which can improve students' employability. The challenge of

having to present in English, includes not only thorough preparation and organisation, but also practice, as many students tend to stumble at the point of delivery. Less confident students will often script what they want to say on detailed notecards, learn their talk by heart, or even write all their information word for word on a PowerPoint slide which then acts as their prompt during the presentation itself, while over-confident speakers may feel tempted to 'wing it', leaving themselves open to giving a presentation full of digressions and lacking in structure and organisation. Time dedicated to research and construction of slides ultimately leaves little time for the practice.

In order to address these issues, students work in pairs to produce a 3-minute business pitch of an innovation to present to their classmates. They prepare only 6 PowerPoint slides and, in order to stick to the strict time limit, they need to be shown how to make use of the automated transitions function in order to set each slide to thirty seconds. This means each student has only ninety seconds and three slides to engage the audience and convey their message confidently and effectively. Although many students can take time to come up with an idea, the restriction on the number of slides they are permitted to use should help them to focus and plan their six-slide storyboard. Because the presentation is so short, the much avoided practice stage will not be so unpalatable, however, in order to emphasise the importance of this key stage, students should be encouraged to experiment with various apps available. The Movenote application outlined above for example, allows them to use the video function to highlight potential areas of weakness in delivery such as use of eye-contact and gestures as well as pronunciation, and students can record their delivery for one slide, edit, delete and re-record until they are satisfied with their efforts before moving on to the next slide. Once they have recorded themselves, their partner can then offer constructive criticism using the video feedback function. There is also the facility for this feedback to be recorded and sent back to their partner. Finally, the pairs present live to classmates having engaged with the task at all stages in order to present a slick, confident pitch. It allows them to become more autonomous i.e. independent from the teacher, because using the tools they are able to reflect on their own

presentation performance and benefit from a 'critical friend' peer review, thus building on the elements of Socio-culturalism, Constructivism and Connectivism discussed earlier.

Discussion

Taking such ubiquitous software as PowerPoint but using it in a more innovative way can help students to develop their organizational skills in terms of timing, brevity and clarity. Applying the SAMR model to this exercise would suggest that students are moving between stages during the task, initially using software to prepare PowerPoint slides at Puentedura's *Augmentation* level. By adding automated timing restrictions to their presentation this appeared to map on to Puentedura's *Modification* level, because it transforms the task from a straightforward task to prepare a presentation, to an exercise in thinking carefully about content, structure, visual impact and conciseness, all the elements we hope students will consider when preparing a presentation, but often do not. Finally, by adding additional steps into their brief such as using technology more fully in the preparation stage, this further encourages students to practise, but not learn by heart, exactly how much they can say in the time that they have for each slide, thus taking the exercise to the *Redefinition* level. Student pairs are engaged in asynchronous discussion as they review each other's sections of their joint presentation, leading not only to peer review, but effectively adding a collaborative element, where collaboration refers here to the element of each student working with another person, but also taking responsibility for the whole product, not just their own part. While this task would seem to take the exercise further up the SAMR scale, as noted above, because it involved a number of different elements and different functions offered by the technology available, the students are constantly moving up and down the levels, at times the technology is back at the substitution level, for example, while students redesigned their PowerPoint slides, but at times they are at higher levels engaging with each other. The technological tools enable them to complete a more thorough and meaningful practice stage asynchronously and

independently of the teacher. While a final live run through would also be extremely useful, it is often not as easy to execute due to timetable clashes.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, Selwyn remarks that 'we cannot assume that technological change is an inevitable force for good education' (2011:3) and technology should not be used simply because it is readily accessible. Puentedura's SAMR model can serve as food for thought when considering one's rationale for incorporating certain technological tools. There would appear to be some benefits of applying such a model to tasks and activities in the sense that it helps to build teacher awareness of potential uses of technology, but this should be balanced with an awareness that the students and their learning come before the technology. Some reservations expressed by educators about using this model suggest that just because a particular use of technology may only be perceived to be at the *Substitution* level, this does not mean that learning is not successfully taking place, and there should not be a blind ambition on the part of the teacher to climb to the top *Redefinition* level (Lee, 2014), because learning is not linear. It is likely that students are, at different times, working at different levels and moving up and down.

Finally, teachers should not feel obliged to use technology if they believe there is a better way of helping students using a non-technological approach. As Selwyn (2011:9) comments: 'it is… important to recognize that educational technologies do not always change things for the better.' Losh talks of 'digital rhetoric' which considers the affordances and constraints of technology as it continues to change at such speed, we may need to analyse '…interesting failures and unlikely successes when it comes to teaching, learning, thinking and deciding with technology' (2014:7). By reflecting on our teaching experiences, good or bad, and feeding this back into our practice, we can try to theorise about what we are doing and why, so that the pedagogical underpinnings are not lost in the hyperbole of the latest apps. In sum, SAMR is

perhaps best viewed as a framework for teachers to help them reflect but not to prescribe what they do (Lee 2014).

Address for correspondence:

r.c.robinson@leeds.ac.uk

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Use of Pecha Kucha in Undergraduate Sales Management Classes', Marketing Education

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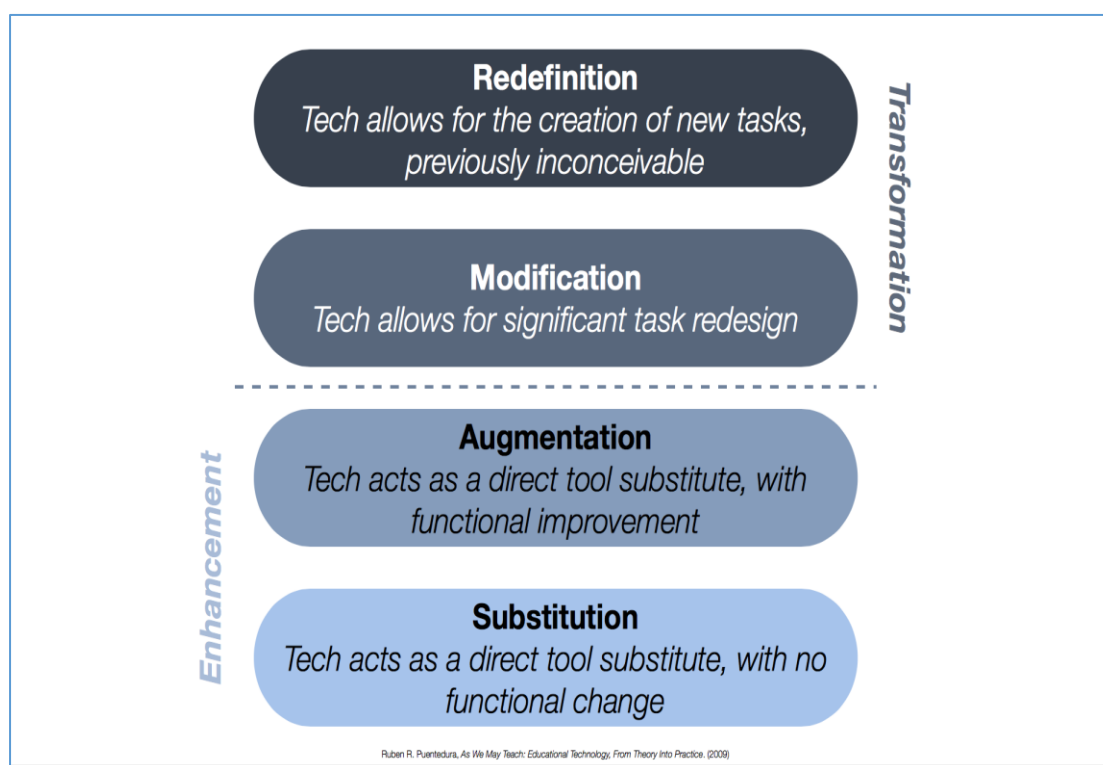Online', *Language Learning and Technology,* 15**.**1 (2011), 147-168

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APPENDIX

Puentedura's SAMR Model:

Redefinition
Tech allows for the creation of new tasks, previously inconceivable

Modification
Tech allows for significant task redesign

Augmentation
Tech acts as a direct tool substitute, with functional improvement

Substitution
Tech acts as a direct tool substitute, with no functional change

Transformation

Enhancement

Ruben R. Puentedura, *As We May Teach: Educational Technology, From Theory into Practice.* (2009)

Puentedura, Ruben, (2009) 'As We May Teach: Educational Technology, From Theory into

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Intercultural communicative competency in an age of globalization: using technology in teaching the Arabic language as culture

Ayah Arabi Durkawi

Department of Arabic and Persian, University of St Andrews

Jeff Binmoeller

Independent researcher. MA in English, School of Professional Studies, Northwestern University; MA in Creative Writing, Northumbria University

Given the rising interest and enrolment figures in Arabic language teaching programmes, the new global technological and security concerns, and the recent shift in understanding the importance of teaching culture in foreign language pedagogy, there has been an inexplicable lack of scholarship on the integration of culture and technology in the teaching of Arabic as a foreign language. Likewise, research into appropriate web-based tools that address the unique cultural context of the Arabic language and into creative teaching materials that can support the integration of culture and technology in the Arabic teaching classroom is lacking too. Existing scholarship on these topics also tends in many cases to be theoretically based and does not explain exactly how to create intercultural communicative competence through experientially embracing the changing world of technological communication in the target culture. A significant part of this everyday communication takes place in colloquial Arabic rather than MSA. However, despite the extensive scholarship on the issue of diglossia and the integration of colloquial Arabic alongside MSA in the Arabic curriculum, there is limited research into effective methods of employing colloquial Arabic in cultural training within the Arabic classroom. If such an employment and integration does not happen, Arabic learners will find it difficult to reach a true intercultural communicative competence.
This paper will look at possible ways the above issues could be resolved by employing certain technological forms of communication and cultural products in the ever-changing contexts of language use. Such a new way of teaching Arabic would require integrating the various discussions and scholarship on the teaching of Arabic, breaking existing boundaries, and promoting a new re-defined role for the Arabic teacher, as well as an increasingly innovative, experiential, and student-centred use of technology, curriculum and web-based tools that could support these changes.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this article is to examine the pragmatic possibilities of using technology in the teaching and learning of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in Arabic: both on the analytical level, as ICC is a concept that has been taken up recently by some Arabic teachers and scholars as a guiding light amongst the many debates besetting the relatively new field of Arabic pedagogy; and on the practical level by suggesting, in the second half of the article, much needed interactive and student-centred activities for successfully realizing the theories on achieving ICC. These activities -- with clear learning outcomes and assessment criteria but also enough student autonomy to allow for explorative collaboration with technological media within communities of practice -- were 'interacted' by students at the UK campus of Queen's University of Canada, called the BISC, where one of the authors was in charge of the creation and teaching of all aspects of the Arabic programme, integrating both formal and spoken Levantine Arabic, and including a large experiential cultural component. The curriculum that the intercultural activities formed a large part of had a clear vision of the role of culture in the teaching and learning of Arabic; the quantity and quality of the cultural elements inside and outside of the classroom; the ratios of time devoted to the teaching of culture and language, written and spoken texts, and traditional and modern culture; the planned interaction of learners with instructional content and technology; and the processes for evaluating the attainment of educational objectives. The curriculum and activities are ideally suited for a full-time undergraduate beginning Arabic course where the teacher is prepared to apply a theme-based approach designed for a small-medium class size, 'as a means of systematically linking and articulating levels of instruction, as well as providing thematic coherence'.[7] These limitations facilitate the Arabic learner's engagement in meaningful ICC activities through the use of instructional technology employing authentic texts that allow for theme-based/content-based

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[7] Karin Ryding, *Teaching and Learning Arabic as a Foreign Language: A Guide for Teachers* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2013), p. 60.

'communication and empathy with native and non-native speakers of Arabic through the formation of communities of practice online and in blended learning situations'. Such an interactive, student-centred, and self-reflexive approach to teaching Arabic language and culture reduces affective filters and fosters an atmosphere of 'mutual respect' that can be 'motivating, fulfilling, and, above all, effective' in learning to create, and perceive, meaning from various viewpoints.[8] [9]

The teaching and learning of Arabic has received a great deal of attention recently and can be seen, itself, symbolically as a guiding light and test for our age of uncertain globalization and rapidly advancing technology. Arabic has recently been reported as 'crucial to the UK's future'[10] and as the fastest growing language in the US.[11] It is also one of the most popular languages to learn today, with enrollments in both UK and US higher education (HE) increasing faster than any other language.[12] [13] What is, perhaps, most striking about the teaching and learning of Arabic is that it has become, in a sense, a barometer measuring the success of the humanist project of globalization and technological progress in fostering intercultural understanding. Karin C. Ryding, one of the foremost Arabic linguists and experts on pedagogy, describes the soaring interest in the language as intimately connected with the interdiscursive globalization that drives its popularity:

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[8] Vance Stevens, 'Learner Strategies at the Interface: Computer-Assisted Language Learning Meets Computer-Mediated Communication', in Kassem M. Wahba *et al.*, eds., *Handbook for Arabic Language Teaching Professionals in the 21st Century* (Oxon: Routledge, 2013), p. 260.
[9] Ryding, p. 219.
[10] Teresa Tinsley and Cathryn Board, 'Languages for the Future: which languages the UK needs most and why', (2013), 22-23 <https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/languages-for-the-future-report.pdf> [accessed 20 April 2017].
[11] Dailymail.com Reporter, 'Arabic is now the fastest-growing language in the U.S.', *Mailonline* (2015), http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3261972/Arabic-fastest-growing-language-U-S-1million-Americans-speaking-home.html> [accessed 18 April 2017].
[12] 'Arabic language studies booming in the US', *ICEF Monitor* (2014), http://monitor.icef.com/2014/12/arabic-language-studies-booming-us> [accessed 28 March 2017].
[13] Ruth Ahmedzai Kemp, 'Arabic: more accessible than you think', British Council (2014), < https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/arabic-more-accessible-you-think> [accessed 12 April 2017].

an interconnected world with ever-increasing international links and interests, as well as key economic and political concerns at the global level, have raised the public profile of Arabic language and literature, Arab society and culture and the Arab world in general.[14]

It is with high intercultural hopes that learners look to the Arabic language (a third of HE learners in the US choose it because of a liking of, or interest in, the Arab world/culture/history).[15] According to the British Council, Arabic has been identified as a priority language in many interculturally intensive areas, from business to international relations and diplomacy to international education strategy. And yet, the teaching of Arabic language and culture still has one of 'the greatest gaps' in terms of 'very little representation in UK education systems'. Globally, 'the Middle East and Africa are amongst the fastest growing regions in terms of internet use'.[16] Internet usage in Arabic is increasing,[17] especially in the spoken vernacular form not usually written but which is now commonly being used in online chat (almost 50% of online chat on Facebook is in dialect).[18] Increasing digital Arabic content, especially in vernacular, is important for global development:

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[14] Ryding, p. 2.

[15] 'Arabic language studies booming in the US', *ICEF Monitor* (2014).

[16] Teresa Tinsley and Cathryn Board, 'Languages for the Future: Which Languages the UK Needs Most and Why' (2014), 19-23 <https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/languages-for-the-future-report-v3.pdf> [accessed 20 April 2017].

[17] 'Internet Usage in the Middle East'. Internet World Stats. Miniwatts Marketing Group (2017) http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats5.htm [accessed 18 April 2017].

[18] Ahlem Chelghoum, 'Social Network Sites and Arabic Diglossia Between Threatening Modern Standard Arabic and Strengthening Colloquial Arabic', *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*, *Special Issue: New Trends in Arabic Sociolinguistics* (Vol. 5, No. 3-1, 2017) <http://article.sciencepublishinggroup.com/pdf/10.11648.j.ijll.s.2017050301.15.pdf > [accessed 18 April 2017], pp. 36-43.

[V]ernacular is one of the reasons that mobile phones have spread so fast [in the Arab-speaking world]: the main applications (voice and text messages) are offered in the language that is most relevant to their users.[19]

And yet, today most HE programmes in the UK and US still don't even teach this variety of Arabic. As Arabic linguist Munther Younes states, '[students enrolled in Arabic] would like to be able to speak with Arabs, converse with them, understand them [. . .] If you want to converse with Arabs, you have to converse in a language they communicate with' -- a vernacular or dialect.[20] Can it be that most curricula in Arabic language and culture, in a technological age of globalization, still haven't addressed this problem? Curricula in Arabic language and culture still exhibit a 'scarcity of web tools that specifically address the particularities of Arabic language, namely, its diglossic nature and its use of a non-Latin alphabet', and there is a 'shortage of well-designed and innovative teaching materials' that use technology to teach Arabic language and culture in its different registers.[21] Mahmoud Al-Batal, who, like Younes, has pioneered a controversial approach to integrating instruction of the formal written variety of the language (known as MSA) with the spoken dialects, recently stated that the vast majority of Arabic learners come to the language 'because they are interested in learning about the Other', suggesting that there is still a great need for intercultural in addition to merely linguistic communication in Arabic. 'The diffusion of satellite television [. . .] is breaking down the firewall between MSA and the dialects', Al-Batal points out, but new pragmatic technological approaches and activities for the

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[19] Chris Vein, 'Why Increasing Digital Arabic Content is Key for Global Development'. *The Guardian* (28 April 2014) <https://www.theguardian.com/media-network/media-network-blog/2014/apr/28/global-development-digital-arabic-content> [accessed 17 April 2017].
[20] Elizabeth Redden, 'Shifting Winds in Arabic Teaching', *Inside Higher Education* (2008) < https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2008/10/01/arabic> [accessed 17 March 2017].
[21] Mohammed Husni Mohammed Tamimi, 'Teaching Culture in Arabic: Perspectives on the Use of Blended Learning and Hypermedia' (The University of Arizona, 2014), p. 16.

teaching of Arabic language and culture in both its registers is not forthcoming in a manner to match such global realities.[22]

There still persist serious obstacles to the teaching of ICC in Arabic: Ryding observes that teachers and scholars encounter difficulties inspiring 'appreciation' and 'respect' for Arabic culture, and there are 'issues of teaching for content and intercultural understanding in a world where Middle Eastern countries are often portrayed in terms of their opposition to Western interests and values'. [23] ICC in Arabic seems to be intrinsically linked to issues of globalization but apparently not always able to surmount obstacles preventing its practical realization in the world we live in. Many of these obstacles could, possibly, be related to problems inherent in how globalization is being carried out, that is, not with a commitment to pragmatic intercultural understanding, as described by Daniel Yankelovich:

> Some argue that globalization reduces the importance of regional and local differences. But there is no evidence that globalization is having such effects. The world remains fractionalized, even polarized. Ethnic, racial, national and religious divisions may be growing even more important, not less.[24]

Therefore, some of these obstacles could be related to how curricula in Arabic language and culture have not yet sufficiently adopted a pragmatic outlook that takes advantage of technological and globalizing realities in a practical, interactive activities-based manner. Such an outlook would bring about an authentic self-reflexive understanding of 'the value of everyday socio-pragmatics, creativity, and aesthetics' within Arabic language and culture on

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[22] Francesca Paris, 'Al-Batal Speaks at the College on the Future of Arabic Pedagogy', *The Williams Record* (8 March 2017), <http://williamsrecord.com/2017/03/08/al-batal-speaks-at-the-college-on-the-future-of-arabic-pedagogy/> [accessed 20 April 2017].
[23] Ryding, p. 219.
[24] Daniel Yankelovich, 'Ferment and Change: Higher education in 2015', *The Chronicle Review, Chronicle of Higher Education,* (November 25, 2005), http://chronicle.come/weekly/v52/il4b00601.htm> [accessed 28 December 2015].

the learners' part. Further, this kind of understanding would foster intercultural

communication and unity, because it would help learners 'integrate language, behavior, and

appreciation of difference' as it is interacted in the actual globalized world.[25] This would allow

Arabic language and culture to really create the interdiscursive linkages of globalized

coherence and development associated with the recent profound interest in the language.

The simple fact is that Arabic has not yet been fully able to show what it can do in the way of

intercultural communication on the global technological level; a great deal of the hype about

the language has been on the theoretical level, and until qualified Arabic teachers create

more practical, innovative, activities-based materials and approaches to the teaching of

language and culture, Arabic will never fully realize its potential as the language of

successful intercultural global development. As Younes has told us, the actual conversation

with Arabs in their spoken dialect bringing about such development has only just recently

begun. The reality is that, for example:

> less than 1% of total global online content is in Arabic and less than 0.2% of global
>
> digital content is hosted in the Middle East and North Africa, although native Arabic
>
> speakers represent about 4.5% of the world population.[26]

This means that in terms of actual communication, in the real activity-based everyday world

employing technology, intercultural globalized communication from different viewpoints with

Arabic native-speakers has been greatly under-realized. 'And still MSA is taught almost as if

it were another language, with no application in the real world', Al-Batal reminds us.[27] Still

what is lacking in many curricula in Arabic language and culture is 'developing [learners']

ability to make and grasp meaning from multiple perspectives' within an interdiscursive

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[25] Ryding, p. 220.
[26] Chris Vein, 'Why Increasing Digital Arabic Content is Key for Global Development'.
[27] Francesca Paris, 'Al-Batal Speaks at the College on the Future of Arabic Pedagogy', *The Williams Record* (8 March 2017).

globalized communication.[28] This article's pragmatic analysis and student-centred, interactive activities based in interdiscursive globalized communities of practice address obstacles to the potential of Arabic language and culture to bring our world closer together. In addition to the lack of scholarship on the topics of both the teaching of culture and the use of technology in Arabic pedagogy, examples of activities employing the innovative use of technology to teach ICC in Arabic are desperately needed. This article hopes to contribute in addressing these gaps in scholarship.

The reformulation of language and culture along new lines as ICC was first set forth by Michael Byram: 'Knowledge of others; knowledge of self; skills to interpret and relate; skills to discover and/or to interact; valuing others' values, beliefs, and behaviors; and relativizing one's self. Linguistic competence plays a key role'.[29] Earlier, Meinert Meyer defined ICC as part of a broader foreign speaker competence, in terms of 'the ability of a person to behave adequately in a flexible manner when confronted with actions, attitudes and expectations of representatives of a foreign culture'.[30] Based on Meyer's definition, Byram states that ICC entails, in addition to an exchange of information, also 'the ability to decentre and take up the other's perspective on their own culture, anticipating, and where possible, resolving dysfunctions in communication and behavior'.[31] Importantly, Byram analyses ICC interdiscursively through various discourse systems: 'knowledge, skills and attitudes, complemented by the values one holds because of one's belonging to a number of social groups. These values are part of one's social identities'.[32]

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[28] Ryding, pp. 219-20.
[29] Tamimi, p. 31.
[30] Tamimi, p. 32.
[31] Tamimi, p. 32.
[32] Michael Byram, *et al.*, *Developing the Intercultural Dimension in Language Teaching: A Practical Introduction for Teachers* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2002) p. 7.

The teaching of ICC cannot be separated from the use of technology. Online learning (including video/audio of authentic linguistic and cultural sources available online on advanced platforms facilitating student-centred learning), Web 2.0, social media, blended learning, and mobile devices have made it not realistic to develop curricula teaching ICC without employing technology. The suggested activities in the following section stress the essential link between technology and ICC in Arabic in today's globalized world. They demonstrate the interactive and interdiscursive nature of ICC: technology allows the learner to 'actively collaborate […] with the medium to construct knowledge,' and to 'focus on the information that is relevant for the acquisition of the knowledge and skills chosen'—in constructing and revising ICC mental models that help them explain and communicate with the outside globalized world.[33] [34] [35]

PRACTICAL STUDENT-CENTRED ACTIVITIES FOR ACHIEVING ICC USING TECHNOLOGY

Overcoming primordialist assumptions using learner background knowledge in laying the groundwork for ICC

One of the most difficult initial impediments for learners of Arabic language and culture on their journey towards ICC is what can be termed the primordialist or essentialist approach to culture. The primordialist approach to culture can be illustrated by the remark an Arabic learner once made on Valentine's Day to a native Arabic speaker, in response to a discussion about marriage customs and celebrations in the Levant: 'Oh, you are in your Middle-Eastern world; that's why you didn't know today is Valentine's Day'. As is perhaps

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[33] G. Dor & N. Seel, 'Instructional Delivery Systems and Multimedia Environments', in S. Dijskra *et al.* eds., *Instructional Design International Perspective, volume 2: Solving Instructional Design Problems* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1997), pp. 145-183.

[34] S. Dijskra, 'Educational Technology and Media', in *Instructional Design International Perspective, volume 2: Solving Instructional Design Problems,* pp. 137-143.

[35] Waheed Samy, 'Instructional Media and Learning Arabic', in Kassem M. Wahba *et al.*, eds., *Handbook for Arabic Language Teaching Professionals in the 21st Century* (Oxon: Routledge, 2013), p. 264.

well-known, this is not a realistic assumption by the learner, especially as very few people are not aware of Valentine's Day around the world, and the celebration of this holiday often gets carried to much further extremes in the Middle East than in Western culture. The primordialist view of culture exists on the part of some people in all cultures. This learner apparently, unrealistically, chose to see 'Middle-Eastern culture' as inaccessible and in opposition to Western customs and values, as an extreme 'Other'. She exhibited a level of ICC that Robert Hanvey in his four-stage paradigm for measuring cross-cultural awareness describes as the lowest, 'Level 1: Information about the culture may consist of superficial or visible traits, such as isolated facts or stereotypes. The individual very likely sees the culture as odd, bizarre, and exotic. Ideas are often expressed in terms of what the culture lacks'.[36] Some portrayals in the media work within the territory of such primordialist interpretations exhibiting a low level of proficiency in cultural understanding and cross-cultural awareness. However, Scollon *et al.* argue that a heuristic approach to intercultural communication embedded within discourse systems or communities of practice available through global technologies are ultimately 'maps designed to help us navigate the territory of human communication, not the territory itself'. These heuristic maps have the 'analytic power and flexibility' to,

> [get] us away from the idea that intercultural communication always has something to do with people from different countries or, even worse, people of different ethnicities communicating (or, as is usually assumed, miscommunicating).[37]

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[36] Hadley, p. 355.
[37] Ron Scollon, Suzanne B. K. Scollon, and Rodney H. Jones, *Intercultural Communication: A Discourse Approach* (Malden: John Wiley & Sons, 2012), p. 4.

This view, expressed by the learner on Valentine's Day, demonstrates that she was unable to experience what Claire Kramsch, a foremost authority on the interdiscursive teaching of ICC, calls 'the symbolic dimension of intercultural competence'[38].

The above situation of mis-communication is a perfect example of the role of discourse in symbolically constituting and creating culture:

> Our culture is now subjectivity and history; and is constructed and upheld by the stories we tell and the various discourses that give meaning to our lives. By defining culture as discourse, we are looking at the interculturally competent individual as a symbolic self that is constituted by symbolic systems like language, as well as by systems of thought and their symbolic power.[39]

In the example of the Valentine's Day learner, the opportunity of interculturally communicating in a symbolically rich manner capable of interdiscursively connecting the lives of two people within an instance of self-reflexive and sympathetic understanding of the complex meaning in everyday life was, unfortunately, missed.

It is perhaps worth noting that the Valentine's Day learner was not a student of language and culture at the BISC, and was learning the Arabic language on a purely linguistic level divorced from its cultural background. At the BISC, globalized technologies allowed Arabic learners to experience within the span of a few weeks interdiscursive experiential learning activities in Arab cooking/dining, Arabic calligraphy, and Levantine dance; as well as to communicate with instructors of these activities and with other native-speakers with similar

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[38] Kramsch, Claire, 'The symbolic dimensions of the intercultural', *Language Teaching*, 44 (2010), pp 354-367 <doi:10.1017/S0261444810000431> (p. 360).
[39] Kramsch (2010), p. 356.

interests within communities of practice over the internet or on social media. Soon after, the learners were able to participate in a London evening of Arabic karaoke illustrating the cooking/dining, calligraphy and dance artistic forms. Then, in a further student-centred approach, the learners practiced the karaoke songs sung on their way home or in their free time. Later, employing themes, information and language from the above ICC learning experiences, group skits were created and staged by students (and filmed by the teacher). Content-based instruction (CBI) was built into the twin themes of the course (food/music), 'as a means of systematically linking and articulating levels of instruction, as well as providing thematic coherence'. These CBI approaches comprised of: task-based assignments, reintroducing content to make learners aware of demands and reduce any negative affect, comprehensible input as well as guessing at meaning. They included the theme-based techniques of 'recycling texts, rereading, and repeated exposure to strengthen acquisition'.[40]

One of the most gifted learners in the beginning module of Arabic language and culture at the BISC provides an example of how Arabic teachers can use technology interdiscursively in a student-centred approach, in conjunction with learner background knowledge and interests, to reduce the effects of primordialist views of culture. This learner seemed to also have a somewhat predetermined and fixed idea of Arabic 'culture', exhibiting little interest in the intercultural activities, which were a required part of the course. He was so gifted in languages that Arabic was just another conquest among several other languages he had mastered. As this learner loved music, especially Western hip hop, it was agreed that he would focus more on the musical aspect of the twin Arabic music/food theme of the course. After encountering the Arabic pop song, سهروني الليل عيونك (راغب علامة) *sahharouni-l-leil ouyunak* by Ragheb Alamah during the module's intercultural experiential field study at a karaoke bar in London, this learner downloaded the video of it from Youtube onto his Ipod and, after a

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[40] Ryding, pp. 59-60.

complete translation of the song's lyrics into English was provided to him, he proceeded to learn the entire song by memory. This learner had fallen in love with the song as well as its video, and he became very interested in Arabic music in general, even blogging and communicating about this interest on the internet and on social media in communities of practice. Later, he elected to film himself singing the song from memory as part of the ICC component of the module. This incorporated preview and follow-up review learning activities. During most of the interactive experience, the learner had full student-centred control of the technological media used and when and at what pace the learning took place.

Almost every learner has his or her own individual 'gateway' of interest(s) in learning Arabic language and culture, through an artistic or aesthetic creation, a practice, or a product. Therefore, it is important to provide learners with the 'intellectual scope needed to begin comparing cultural values', employing 'the humanities framework that should inform Arabic teaching', by exposing them to a broad 'network of human creations' they can choose from. It is especially through this approach that learners can become interculturally aware of the previously mentioned 'value of everyday socio-pragmatics, creativity, and aesthetics, and how understanding these helps a learner to integrate language, behavior, and *appreciation* of difference', that Ryding stresses is missing from many curricula in Arabic language and culture (italics mine).[41] Teachers will find that 'appreciation of difference' connects learners with native-speakers of other cultures interdiscursively, and difference often transforms into an interculturally shared discourse or discourse system, thereby transcending the usual borders of 'culture'. Even though the learner of the karaoke song initially appreciated that Arabic pop music was, in many respects, very different from the Western music he loved, his deepening appreciation and love of Arabic music transformed this 'different' music into 'his' music, as interculturally part of the music he loves. This example is, therefore, one of true

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[41] Ryding, p. 220.

intercultural and interdiscursive understanding. In fact, when this learner was encountered practicing his song as he walked between classes, because of the way he was enjoying and getting into the music, it could have been that he was listening to his favorite Western hip hop song. This is an inspiring pedagogical example of how, within an age of globalization, we can interdiscursively, using technology in attaining intercultural understanding, heal the fragmentation and sense of separation that still afflicts our world. In this example, through technology, the focus on, and collaboration with, the discourse system of music serves as a mental model of constructing ICC that also 'explain[s] to the learner what [he/she] perceive[s] from the outside world.'[42] This model can later be applied to other interdiscursive forms of ICC in increasing globalized understanding.

Overview of ICC activities at the BISC

At the BISC's Arabic programme, the authors started designing the cultural component according to what can be described as the four F's approach (folk dances, festivals, fairs, and food), as delineated by Alice Omaggio Hadley.[43] They then began to adapt the reach of this approach to compare cultural values in more depth. They were guided in creating this integral part of the course by the principle that 'the world of Arab cultural practices and products, institutions, aesthetics, and values' can be most fruitfully incorporated within an Arabic language curriculum,

> if it is taught within and around a network of human creations: things that are spoken, written, woven, drawn, built, chanted, broadcast, carved, designed, or sung. Or those things that are connected to judgement or feeling: what is laughed about, cherished, worshipped, admired, disliked, feared, popular, taboo, desired, or awe-inspiring.[44]

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[42] Waheed Samy, 'Instructional Media and Learning Arabic', in *Handbook for Arabic Language Teaching Professionals in the 21st Century*, p. 264.
[43] Alice Omaggio Hadley*, Teaching Language in Context* (Boston: Heinle, 2001), pp. 345-6.
[44] Ryding, p. 220.

In short: culture is best taught through the employment of a network of various discourse systems or communities of practice. That is why the curriculum of Arabic language and culture was designed around the twin themes/discourse systems of 'food and music', incorporating a wide network of cultural models, traditions, behaviors, values, and products, all revolving around the perspective of the marginalized discourses of women in the Middle East, a perspective that both male and female learners could relate to self-reflexively and empathetically based on the lives of women in their own cultures.'[45]

Around this focus of perspective a 'kind of multilayered but coherent interdisciplinarity' incorporating many discourse systems was achieved to help students understand meaning from various perspectives, and connect Arabic language and culture in meaningful and innovative ways. In the following activities, both formal and informal approaches to culture, not only using MSA but also everyday dialect (Levantine) as it is created through interaction and inter-discourse situations, were incorporated, with the aim of allowing the students to experience the richness of the Arabic collective consciousness and the relationship between the Arabic oral and written traditions.[46] For example, in teaching about cultural products of the Arab world, food preparation and leisure activities were employed in the form of a dinner that was prepared by the students from a recipe they had researched earlier watching online cooking programmes in Arabic aired from Dubai. The students also actively participated in the community of practice on one of the Dubai chef's Facebook page using the food-related Arabic vocabulary they had learned as part of the food preparation activity. The students were asked to take screen shots of the conversations they were involved in and hand them in for assessment. In conjunction with the food/dining activity, calligraphy and Dabke[47]

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[45] Howard L. Nostrand, 'Empathy for a Second Culture: Motivations and Techniques.' In G. A. Jarvis, ed., *Responding to New Realities. ACTFL, Foreign Language Education Series*, vol. 5 (Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company, 1974) p. 277.
[46] Ryding, p. 225.
[47] Dabke is a folk dance that is particularly performed in weddings and happy celebrations across the Levant.

Levantine dance workshops were held as experiential field studies for this module to complement the cooking experience, as all are part of a complex, symbolic, interactive system of cultural artistry and expression, operating interdiscursively on linguistic, visual, musical, entertainment, and other levels. These activities allowed the learner to actively collaborate with technological media in constructing models of ICC through the use of online video/audio and engagement with communities of practice.

During the cooking and dining experience, the learners were required to use both colloquial and MSA, followed by a viewing of a film in colloquial Arabic recapitulating linguistic and cultural material already learned. This experience allowed the learners to use Arabic in both a functional and cultural framework enjoyable for them.[48] Vocabulary that was used during the food preparation and dining experience was grouped into semantic clusters with cross-cultural differences in meaning and cultural significance between apparently equivalent vocabulary being made clear to the learners both through explanation and direct experience during the preparation and dining.[49] Some of these new words were actively employed in the online conversations the students 'interacted' in with followers of the Dubai chef's Facebook page as part of the experience of becoming members of an Arabic-speaking cultural community of practice in building ICC. The food/dining activity was designed with the teaching and learning objective of fostering ICC at a level of proficiency corresponding to what Hanvey describes as the second stage of his paradigm for measuring cross-cultural awareness, 'Level II: Learners at this stage focus on expanded knowledge about the culture in terms of both significant and subtle traits that contrast with those of their own culture'.[50]

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[48] Hadley, p. 378.
[49] Ibid, p. 377.
[50] Hadley, p. 355.

In order to stress that 'the two aspects of culture—practices and products—are not separate [. . .] [but] are [rather] interwoven with each other through language, and can be a vital part of the Arabic language classroom', two important linked activities were also integrated into the language instruction of the beginning Arabic class.[51] First, selected pop music videos about various social aspects of women's lives and identity were watched on Youtube, discussed and analyzed by the class. These videos included Fairuz's علموني *allamouni* and قديش كان في ناس *addesh kaan fii naas,* Nancy Ajram's إحساس جديد *ihsaas jdeed* and ماشي حدي *maashi haddi,* and Haifa Wehbe's أنا هيفا *ana haifa*. Following that, the learners chose to sing the lyrics of some of the songs they liked most in a karaoke bar in London as well as in the classroom, thus contextualizing the products (songs) within a cultural practice of social interaction (after some student-centred practice). The music videos and karaoke activities were designed with the teaching and learning objective of fostering ICC at a level of proficiency corresponding to what Hanvey describes as the third stage of his paradigm for measuring cross-cultural awareness, 'Level III: At this stage, the individual begins to accept the culture at an intellectual level, and thus the culture becomes believable because it can be explained. The individual can see things in terms of the target culture's frame of reference'.[52]

In the second part of the linked activity, group skits were created and staged by learners (and filmed by the teacher) employing themes, information and language from all the above ICC learning experiences, including the food/dining, music videos and karaoke activities. The skits were expected to:

incorporate knowledge of sociopragmatics: 'Values, beliefs, traditions, customs, norms, rituals, symbols, taboos, deportment, etiquette, attire, and time concepts [...]

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[51] Ryding, p. 225.
[52] Hadley, p. 355.

which are often the source of expectations regarding behavior, such as gestures, body language, physical distance between speakers, and deference due to status, age, and gender'.[53]

A preview and follow-up activity were part of the group skit ICC learning experience. The follow-up activity consisted of watching the video of the skit several times and analyzing whether, in addition to accuracy of language, gestures and other cultural features – eye contact, forms of respect, customary social distance, etc. -- learned in various preview activities (including the dinner and Arabic film) were adhered to in the groups skits.

Finally, in assessing the learners' intercultural competence, a portfolio was assigned to be turned in at the end of each semester. Portfolios can develop learners' ability to engage in research, explore and reflect on their own culture as well as Arabic culture. Portfolios 'are amongst the few appropriate alternatives to traditional classroom achievement assessment'.[54] For example, one of the tasks assigned through the cultural portfolio was a set of three Skype and Adobe Connect web conferencing (audio and video) conversations between the class members and native Arabic-speaking volunteers, in which the learners were asked to discuss certain topics appropriate to their proficiency level. These conversational sessions were recorded and later used for self-correction and analysis in class. This interactive theme-based web conferencing activity was based on the recommendations of Kinginger *et al.* for intercultural communication taught through teleconferencing technology. The learners and native-speaking volunteers '[collaborated] on a set of parallel tasks and texts' so that learners could see aspects of Western and Arab

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[53] Ryding, p. 226.
[54] Renate A. Schultz, 'The Challenge of Assessing Cultural Understanding In The Context Of Foreign Language
  Instruction', *Foreign Language Annals,* 40.1 (2007), 8-26 (p. 18).

culture in comparison.[55] The conversations focussed on comparing the lives and artistic expressions of women in the West and the Arab world as seen through multiple perspectives. Supplemental communication between the learners and the volunteers was accomplished through email in Arabic.

The above web conferencing activity dovetailed with a capstone year-end set of CBI activities revolving around authentic Arabic online video representations of various aspects of the lives of women in the Arab world from multiple viewpoints, employing both MSA and dialect: a television broadcast; a narrative on the gender media activism of Nawal El-Saadawi; and a Western media representation in English of Arab/Muslim women. The video narratives employed CBI approaches in fostering ICC. Copies of the three videos' transcripts, which can be recycled in more advanced stages of learning, were circulated to learners to be used in online communities of practice, blogs, and further web-conferencing on the same, or similar, theme.[56]

A written assignment that was also part of the cultural portfolio involved an activity which asked the learners to watch a video about a group of Syrian male and female university students relaxing at a café. The students spoke candidly using both simple Levantine Arabic and English, addressing a person filming them who seemed to be a foreigner with only a basic knowledge of spoken Arabic. They were from different religious and socio-economic backgrounds and expressed differing perspectives about their lives, ambitions, and discourses of interest and study. Learners taking part in this activity could self-reflexively examine the discourses of social interaction, gender relationships, ambitions and career interests, both as these affected the Syrian students and as they affect them from the perspective of their Western culture. In exploring the perspectives underlying the worldview

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[55] Hadley, p. 363.
[56] Ryding, p. 60.

of this social gathering and the practices enacted in it, the learners were being required to reflect on their own social beliefs, norms, and views of people from other cultures. This activity was guided by a set of five questions that, according to Kramsch, the '"interculturally competent speaker" asks and reflects upon' in interdiscursively comprehending the various aspects of 'the symbolic dimension of intercultural competence':[57]

> Not which words, but whose words are those? Whose discourse? Whose interests are being served by this text? What made these words possible and others impossible? How does the speaker position himself or herself? How does he or she frame the events talked about? What prior discourses does he or she draw on?[58]

Kramsch's questions are similar in their interdiscursive reflection on context in the construction of cultural meaning to six instructional aims formulated by Ned H. Seelye, which also guided the activity and are summed up by him as, 'we can help the student develop *interest* in *who* in the target culture did *what*, *where* and *when* and *why*'.[59] We are reminded of what Kramsch said about culture being involved with 'subjectivity and historicity'.[60] ICC is interdiscursive in nature because 'the role of discourse in constructing culture connects what is said to what is constructed in language.' Therefore, 'the role of discourse in forming our lives relates directly to issues of cross-cultural competence and the depth of meaning contained in our daily practices of communication'.[61] These theoretical formulations drawing from leading critics in the field of ICC informed all the interdiscursive activities suggested in this article. They also informed the teaching and learning objective in the activity involving the filmed Syrian students. This activity was designed to foster ICC by guiding the learners,

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[57] Claire Kramsch, 'The symbolic dimensions of the intercultural', *Language Teaching*, 44 (2010), pp 354-367 doi:10.1017/S0261444810000431.
[58] Ibid., p. 360.
[59] Ned H. Seelye, *Teaching Culture: Strategies of Intercultural Communication* (Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company, 1993), pp. 30-31.
[60] Kramsch, p. 356.
[61] Ryding, p. 225.

even though they had only completed just under a year of Arabic, to experience a glimpse of what Hanvey describes as the highest stage of his paradigm for measuring cross-cultural awareness -- a stage that demonstrates initial interdiscursive ICC of the symbolic aspects and expressions of culture:

> Level IV: This level, the level of empathy is achieved by living in and through the culture. The individual begins to see the culture from the viewpoint of the inside, and thus to be able to know how the culture bearer feels.[62]

Kramsch's questions and Seelye's aims, guiding the activity, and Hanvey's highest stage of cross-cultural awareness delineating the learning objective, provided a framework for the teaching and learning of ICC within the Syrian students' video activity.

The Syrian students' video activity forged ICC bridges between the perspectives and discourse systems of the learners and the Syrian students in the video. This task was facilitated by the fact that the learners had much in common interdiscursively with the Syrian students: both groups were about the same age range; both included male and female members interacting within a group activity with certain prescribed social expectations, i.e., an Arabic class and a get-together at a cafe; and both groups shared many interests, aspirations, and problems in life. That is, both groups interdiscursively and symbolically mirrored each other, and this relationship facilitated the development of both an appreciation of difference as well as an empathetic viewpoint from within the culture. Moorjani and Field argue that 'the study of a second culture can only be a contrastive process, a dialogue between two ways of living and viewing the world'.[63] This calls for a reiteration of the most

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[62] Hadley, p. 355.
[63] Angela Moorjani and Thomas T. Field, 'Semiotic and Sociolinguistic Paths to Understanding Culture', A. J. Singerman, ed. *Toward a New Integration of Language and Culture,* reports of the

important tenet in fostering ICC argued for in this article as well as its suggested activities: the teaching of ICC should be student-centred and self-reflexive, encouraging the building of inner mental models through the use of theme-based content that serves as a bridge in also allowing for dialogic learning with native speakers in communities of practice encouraging the interdiscursive application of those models to the world of the target culture. This is precisely why globalized forms of technological communication that foster dialogic, interactive ICC are now urgently needed in the teaching of Arabic language and culture. 'The information represented in the media of globalized technology is a reduction of the information' in the target culture, which is explained by the learner in the creation of mental models that collaborate with the technology and dialogically interact with the target culture in the outside world in building ICC.[64] [65] [66] Another aspect of this tenet has also guided all the suggested use of materials and recommended instruction in this article: 'one [. . .] liability of authentic materials is that they assume no intercultural dialogue and can only be effective (as far as the teaching of culture is concerned) with the help of an interculturally sophisticated instructor'.[67] It is with an understanding of the importance of such a dialogic and interdiscursive use of materials and guidance by a teacher of Arabic language and culture that this article has suggested its carefully designed activities, which can, hopefully, be of help to Arabic teachers in our fast-changing technological world of globalization.

North-East conference on the teaching of foreign languages (Middlebury: North East Conference, 1988), pp. 25-45 (p. 26).

[64] G. Dor & N. Seel, 'Instructional Delivery Systems and Multimedia Environments', in S. Dijskra *et al.* eds., *Instructional Design International Perspective, volume 2: Solving Instructional Design Problems* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1997), pp. 145-183.
[65] S. Dijskra, 'Educational Technology and Media', in *Instructional Design International Perspective, volume 2: Solving Instructional Design Problems,* pp. 137-143.
[66] Waheed Samy, 'Instructional Media and Learning Arabic', in Kassem M. Wahba *et al.*, eds., *Handbook for Arabic Language Teaching Professionals in the 21st Century* (Oxon: Routledge, 2013), p. 264.
[67] Angela Moorjani and Thomas T. Field, p. 26.

CONCLUSION

This article has examined some of the possibilities of using technology in the teaching and learning of ICC in Arabic. The first part looked at the increasing interest in Arabic as a language that can offer learners practical interdiscursive opportunities that draw on ICC in a globalized world. It also analyzed some of the major obstacles to the pragmatic use of technology in the teaching of Arabic language and culture to improve globalized intercultural understanding, such as the fact that the vernacular variety of Arabic is still not taught in most UK and US HE institutions. If technology is not employed in effective ways in the teaching of ICC in Arabic then learners will not only find it difficult to overcome primordialist assumptions and stereotypes about Arab culture, but they will also find it challenging to achieve the level of ICC that will allow them to 'communicate effectively with native speakers' from various viewpoints.[68] Goals of 'translingual and transcultural competence' that lie at the heart of ICC and communication between languages were stated in the 2007 MLA report, and they have still to be fully realized in the teaching of Arabic language and culture.[69] Yet they remain an objective that Arabic pedagogy should continue to aim towards. To facilitate achieving these goals, the second half of this article suggested a range of innovative, student-centered, and interactive practical activities that can be employed by teachers of Arabic language and culture to interdiscursively teach ICC.

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[68] Ryding, p. 219.
[69] Modern Language Association (MLA), 'Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages. Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World', *Profession* 2007, pp. 234-45.

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Redesigning a Language Module for Finalists to enhance grammar acquisition

Dr Olivia Santovetti

School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, University of Leeds

Key words: Italian, design, gramar

This article is based on my own experience of redesigning the Italian final year language module (ITAL3010) at the School of Languages, Cultures and Societies of the University of Leeds. The changes were introduced in the academic year 2008-9 and the module is still running with the same structure today due to the very positive feedback we continue to receive from our students. At the time of the restructuring of ITAL3010 the Italian unit had been recognised by the University for the excellence of its teaching (with the award of three Faculty Teaching Development prizes since 2004) and had just received an impressive 96% satisfaction rating for its Learning and Teaching in the National Student Survey of 2007. In this very positive context the final year language module represented a problem since in the previous year the External Examiners for Italian had noted that student performance in Italian was lower in language than in 'content' modules. The revision of module ITAL3010 therefore became a priority of the Italian unit. In this article I will retrace the steps that together with my colleagues I took to rectify this imbalance and improve the final year students' performance in Italian language.

My article is divided into three sections. In the first I provide the context by describing the module before the change and identifying its problematic areas. In the second section I explain the rationale behind the restructuring as well as the proposed changes for the academic year 2008-09. In the third section I evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the

new revised module and reflect on possible improvements. The article focuses on the process of reshaping the teaching, methods and material to enhance learning in a Level 3 language module, but it also inevitably deals with the introduction of new learning technologies and with specific aspects of academic and pastoral support.

Section I: The context

i) The module in 2007-8: numbers, teaching and learning environments, objectives

The module ITAL3010 is compulsory for all students of Italian (both Single Honours Italian and Joint Honours). In 2007-8 the total number of contact hours was 52, which comprised one written and one oral class per week plus one translation class from Italian into English every fortnight. The number of students attending the module in that year was 54. They were divided into four groups for the written classes and six for the oral classes (where smaller groups facilitate conversation and interactional activities). There were six tutors involved in the teaching: two English mother tongue colleagues for the translation into English classes and four Italian mother tongue colleagues for the remainder (consisting of our two Language Fellows plus two Lecturers including myself). It is already clear at this stage that the high number of people involved in the teaching of this module presents a challenge which is that of maintaining communication between colleagues and guaranteeing coherency within the curriculum.

The students who attend this module constitute only approximately a uniform group. The majority of our students start their degree without A-level Italian (Beginners), while others do start with an A-level (Advanced students). The Advanced students who are enrolled for Joint-Honours programmes with another language spend in Italy the term after the Easter holiday of their second year. Whereas all the others – Advanced Single Honours, Advanced Joint Honours with a non language subject and Beginners – spend a full Year Abroad in Italy in their third year. This should be enough to level up the distinction between

Advanced and Beginners. Indeed what we find is that the linguistic performance of the students in the final year varies considerably depending not on whether they started as Beginner or Advanced but rather on the way they profited from the year abroad, their attitude to study, and also their natural predisposition and their exposure to the language in previous years. The Module Catalogue available on the Italian website sets out the learning objectives of this module: 'further consolidation of written and oral aptitude at an appropriately extended level, through familiarity with sophisticated literary and non-literary linguistic constructions in a variety of registers'.[70] These objectives condense very succinctly point 7.16 of the Benchmark Statements of 2007 for 'Languages and related studies', which state that 'students should have achieved level C2 (Mastery) in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* and should be able to:

- communicate fluently and appropriately, maintaining a high degree of grammatical accuracy, in the target language(s) with competent speakers of the target language(s)
- be able to exploit for a variety of purposes and, as appropriate, to contextualise a broad range of materials written or spoken in the target language(s)
- be able to apply effectively and appropriately their language skills in a professional context'.[71]

My task as convenor and tutor of ITAL3010 for the year 2007-8 was therefore that of observing closely but with a critical mind how the teaching and learning processes were happening in this module in order to understand why our students were performing less well in language than in 'content' modules and how the achievement of the module objectives, as per the 2007 Benchmark statement, could be better pursued. It is important to underline that

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70   See http://webprod1.leeds.ac.uk/catalogue/dynmodules.asp?Y=201011&M=ITAL-3010
71   See http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/statements/languages07.asp

the reform of Italian Language teaching in Final Year analysed in this article focused exclusively on the existing 20-credit module dedicated to this subject, but looking at possible synergies with existing content module in the non-language part of the curriculum. In finding a way to improve students' results, I had to use all the inputs available, including student feedback on the old module, and combine all the facts in a dialogical, non-hierarchical and open-minded way, yet placing research on language learning at the centre of the process.

ii) Identification of problematic áreas

At the end of the academic year 2007-8 it was possible to have a clearer picture of the strengths and weaknesses of our Level 3 language module. Let us begin with the strengths. These were:

- the oral classes
- the translation classes from Italian into English
- the teaching staff (the fact that my colleagues were all expert and enthusiastic teachers and were keen to work together).

The weekly oral classes and the translation classes from Italian into English worked well and were highly praised by the students for their clear focus and the interactive quality of the teaching. Particularly appreciated were the lively debates on current issues organised in the oral classes. The problem therefore lay in the weekly written classes where the Benchmark target of 'high degree of grammatical accuracy' was not always achieved. My hypothesis was that this was happening for several reasons:

- lack of stimuli in the way grammar was taught, met at times by a corresponding lack of motivation on the part of the students (a certain weariness on the part of both students and teachers might be inevitable since the same grammatical topics must be covered several times)

- lack of focus in the curriculum: there were too many written tasks to master (translation, essay, and summary) and too many activities during each session (grammar explanation, correction of written task, grammar revision exercises)
- lack of coordination between the tutors, particularly in the way of providing feedback
- gap between the language module and the content modules of Level 3.

Soon it became clear that to resolve these problems the best strategy was a combined effort that is a strategy that could count on the energy and inventiveness of all the tutors teaching the module as well as the inputs and collaboration of the Subject Leader and other colleagues. It also became clear that to be effective our response had to tackle the issues at different levels, which included the adoption of a more pronounced learner-centred approach, the emphasis on language awareness and self-reflexive techniques in the teaching of grammar, a more structured and clear system of feedback provision and the implementation and/or better use of new technologies. The way all of these aspects were integrated in a coherent curriculum will be explained in the next section.

Section II: Redesigning teaching, methods and material to enhance learning in ITAL3010

i) Principle behind the new planning

My first thought when I set about my task of redesigning the written part of this module was not (paraphrasing Butcher, Davies and Highton, 2006, p.55) 'about content', because this was already given in the Italian grammar, but about the students. The Level 3 students are a particularly pleasant group to teach: they have just come back after their year abroad, an experience which makes them significantly more confident and motivated, and eager to make the most of their final year. Their language abilities have also improved enormously but not evenly: some of them have done better than others; all of them have perfected their speaking, listening and reading skills but not their writing (this is due in part to the particular

experience in the Italian universities where most of the exams are oral and where the opportunities to write are rare). It is no surprise that the grammar can still present a problem. Their learning needs are quite specific and mostly have to do with the phenomenon linguists and SLA researchers describe as 'fossilization', that is 'when a learner's L2 system seems to 'freeze', or become stuck, at some more or less deviant stage' (Mitchell and Myles, 1998, p.13). According to Ellis (1997, p. 131) this constitutes one of the two most interesting puzzles in L2 acquisition studies: that is the situation in which 'learners appear able to develop fluency in the use of L2 while fossilizing linguistically'. Ellis' 'fluency-accuracy puzzle' describes exactly the challenge faced by the language teachers at Level 3 dealing with students who are very fluent and very confident speakers and who however have internalised some recurrent errors. How can we eradicate these errors? And also how can we make the students go back to the grammar avoiding a sense of weariness or boredom for a topic they have studied and revised in the same order many times during their degree programme? In short, how can we keep in the language module the level of enthusiasm and motivation that the students show in the content modules? My intuitive idea was that we had to make the study of grammar intellectually engaging and fun: the grammar in its complexity, and not in the isolation of its grammatical rules, had to become the object of their attention, the ground where they were asked to test their knowledge and creativity. This meant that we, as teachers, had to focus and devise strategies in order to tackle those recurrent and automatised errors.

ii) The planning process

The changes proposed for the revision of ITAL3010 were the following:

- abolition of the summary
- changes to the essay writing exercise
- more reading activities from Italian academic sources

- introduction of grammar lectures for the explicit teaching of grammar

- constant feedback and different feedback: encouragement of self and peer assessment

- introduction of a VLE area

- creation of a handbook.

The abolition of the summary was proposed on the suggestion made by tutors that the summary task required having to work in depth, first of all, with a text in English. This was seen as pedagogically distracting for the students. The suppression of the summary had the great advantage of allowing both teachers and students to concentrate more profitably on translation and essay writing, which are the most important writing skills to be tested at this level. Moreover, the number of translations from English into Italian was now equal to those carried out in the translation classes from Italian into English, creating a more evident link between the two translation activities.

The second change concerned the essays, which were going to be based not only on general topics but also on the more academic subjects found in the content modules of Level 3. The reason for this change was twofold. First, we were going to encourage the students to work on language at a more sophisticated level for example, by reading, analysing and familiarising themselves with samples of essay writing from Italian critics that should provide them with models for their own work (this was not an option in the past and in particular good students who wanted to improve their vocabulary and style were penalised because they could rely simply on sparse newspaper articles since the essay titles covered only very general questions). Writing on a topic of their content modules was also going to motivate them to make more use of the bibliographical sources in Italian which were provided, but often neglected, for these modules. Secondly, genuinely believing that the the teaching of language and the teaching of literature enrich each other, we made a concrete link, and therefore bridged the gap, between the work done in the content modules and the language

work, so that the students could transfer their knowledge of Italian literature and culture into their study of the language and finally see the two competences of part of the same coherent project[72]. This has been strongly promoted by the Benchmark Statements of 2007.[73]

The third change, that is the implementation of reading activities from Italian academic sources, was closely related to the essay writing exercise. It was born out of the belief that in order to write well one needs to read a great deal: therefore to write essays in Italian, students needed to read more examples of Italian essay writing. The academic articles introduced as homework were selected from among those which treated translation and essay writing as their subject matter. This was deliberately done to stimulate discussion and reflection upon the two writing skills practised. For the list of reading material specific to each content module, as well as for new essay titles, I had asked the collaboration of all my colleagues teaching in Level 3: they provided, alongside specific essay titles, also examples of good academic writing in Italian in their subject area. These articles or essays were meant to be a linguistic support for the student, providing examples of essay writing in Italian as well as the appropriate technical vocabulary (an article on cinema, for example, will show them how to use words including 'sequence', 'close up', 'framing', 'pan shot', etc.). We did not want them to quote from this critical material but to work on them, analyse and familiarise themselves with their structure, their style, and their vocabulary so to improve and enrich their own written Italian.

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72   On the correlation between the teaching of language and the teaching of literature see: Brumfit, C. and Carter R. (1986): *Literature and Language Teaching*. Oxford University Press, Oxford; Carter R. and Long, M. N. (1991): *Teaching Literature*. Longman Publishing, New York; Bassnett, S. and Grundy P. (1993): *Language through Literature: Creative Language Teaching through Literature*. Pilgrims/Longman, Harlow.

73   See point 2.2 of *The Benchmark Statement* for 2007 where the two competences of language studies are underlined: 'The first is a focus on the acquisition of competence in the target language, which requires a wide range of knowledge, understanding and skills of a subject-specific and generic nature. The second component is the study of aspects of the cultures and societies associated with the language studied, whereby the nature and scope of such studies will vary according to the aims and objectives of the programme'.

http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/statements/languages07.asp

The introduction of a series of Grammar Lectures, to be held every fortnight for the whole group of students, responded on one side to the idea to optimize and make more effective the revision of grammar (these single sessions aimed at the explicit teaching of difficult grammatical points, which before was left to the initiative of the single tutor within her/his weekly class) and on the other to allow teacher and students in the small weekly classes to concentrate on what Ellis referred to as 'interpretation tasks' and 'self-conscious tasks' (Ellis, 1997, p.152), that is, tasks that encourage the students to discover by themselves the grammatical principles involved and reflect upon them. If the 'interpretation tasks' are designed to facilitate the noticing of a grammatical feature that otherwise might be ignored, the goal of 'consciousness-raising tasks' is 'explicit knowledge of grammatical structures, including some metalingual knowledge' (Ellis, 1997, p.160). This means that the features of grammar discussed in class were those that the students noticed and deduced from the analysis of their own production, either in the form of translations or essays. Once a grammatical feature was noticed, students were encouraged to compare it with the equivalent structure in their own mother tongue as well to their knowledge of other linguistic systems. The idea was to raise language awareness and to make the students reflect on the role played by grammar in the creation of meaning in any language. Also, by relating the new discoveries with their previous knowledge, the students were able to appreciate more the process of learning and engage with it – it became particularly clear to me that to enhance new learning it was fundamental to 'help students discover what they already know from their own experience' (Main, 1985, p.83). The fact that the grammatical features the students noticed and discovered came from their errors and their reflections upon them, explains why as teachers we started basing our methodology on the analysis and discussion of errors, not only because 'making mistakes or errors is an integral part of the learning process' (Arthur and Hurd, 1992, p.49) but because as Ellis (1997, p.108) pointed out referring to the findings of Lightbown and Spada (1990) 'the teacher's treatment of learner error, may increase the salience of selected features, thus enhancing their noticability and

learnability'. This means that by working creatively on errors we were able to raise awareness of the recurrent problems and help the students to control them and break the 'fossilization' barrier.

The emphasis on the analysis of errors implied also a change in the way the feedback was delivered. The feedback needed to be regular and contextualised. Admittedly, there were 'controversies over whether the provision of negative evidence is necessary or helpful for L2 development' (Mitchell and Myles, 1998, p.16). However, it is now generally agreed in SLA literature that 'active correction (that is provision of explicit *negative evidence*) contributes to increased accuracy in learners' target language production' (Mitchell and Myles, 1998, p.136). On this regard, 'both implicit (covert) and explicit (overt) feedback are effective' (Ellis, 1997, p.81). For ITAL3010 we envisaged that explicit feedback had to be delivered almost every week for the translations and the essays given for homework (not only marks but a list of recurrent errors); implicit and explicit feedback was to be given during the class discussion. Others forms of feedback had also to be implemented, in particular peer assessment: for example when students were asked to comment and analyse in pairs photocopies of their reciprocal work before being given their original work that had been marked and assessed. Self assessment was also implemented: special exercises were to be introduced in the curriculum including a specific self-reflexive exercise on an already written language essay.

As part of this joint strategy a successful bid was made for TQEF funding, by the Italian Subject Leader and the two Language Fellows. The project, which drew on synergies with other resources (such as the new VLE and Learning Support post in the Language Centre), aimed to present feedback to finalist students in a new way, requiring them to analyse their mistakes with a view to increasing self-awareness and motivation and to creating independent language-learners. The 'Independent Language Learning for Finalists' area became available at the beginning of the academic year 2008-9 and since then it has

proved to be an exceptional interactive resource for Level 3 students who can practice and revise their Italian in a range of different learning strategies and in a fun and self-reflexive way. It is divided into four work areas: 1) Italian Language & Culture (7 units on different topics each with different grammatical and stylistic tasks); 2) *Italian Grammar for finalists* (units of exercises on specific grammatical points); 3) *Discussion board for finalists* (where articles from Italian newspapers or websites are made available for general discussion and comment); 4) *Language Learning Diary* (an excellent tool where students identify and reflect on their recurrent errors and check their progress).

Finally, the creation of a handbook, provided the framework where all the different parts of the module (grammar lectures, weekly oral and written classes, translation classes, the VLE, independent study) were linked together to form a coherent and cohesive whole. It was also very useful to ensure that the same material and the same methodology was used by the several different tutors.

Section III: Evaluation of the work done

By the end of the academic year 2008-9 I was able to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the revised module. The feedback, which was obtained through student questionnaires and via the staff-student committee, was very positive about the new features of the written part of the module. In particular, the students found helpful: the use of the handbook, the introduction of the Grammar Lectures, and the creation on the VLE of an Independent Language Learning zone. Interestingly, they also mentioned the class discussions on grammar as one of the most efficacious learning and teaching methods. On the other hand some of the students found difficult the activities on models of translation with errors and the self-correction and consciousness-raising exercises (one even expressed the view that a more traditional or explicit teaching of grammar was to be preferred).

My reaction to this was two-fold. On the one hand I was really pleased with the success of the class discussion on the grammatical features raised by their translations or essays. I was pleased because having the students debating passionately about grammatical points corresponded exactly to my intention to work on the language at a more sophisticated and creative level. This meant that instead of having a teacher re-explaining a grammatical rule, the students were asked to self-correct their essay or translation, alone or in pairs, and then to bring their questions or doubts about their errors into the class discussion. The teacher's role was that of summarising and highlighting, often using PowerPoint presentations, the most common and recurrent errors, and guiding the discussion. However, for what concerns the tasks that some of them found difficult I was compelled to think over and I made different decisions. Regarding the translation with incorrect errors (that is a translation with deliberate grammatical errors) I concluded that the students were right. Perhaps in my enthusiasm for a methodology that pivoted around the analysis of errors I had devised a task for which they were not ready. Readiness is an important concept in SLA in as much the success in teaching a new grammatical feature 'much depends on the learners' stage of development' (Ellis, 1997, p.72). If the students were not ready, this type of exercise was not useful and could lead to confusion. For this reason and in agreement with the other tutors I decided to drop this type of exercise from our outline. I took a different decision instead regarding the resistance that some students manifested towards consciousness-raising tasks. This is because it was only a small minority who did not feel at ease with them, while others referred to them as the most useful teaching methods. Hence I decided not only to keep them but to increase them, provided that we give the students enough explanation and time to adjust to this type of exercise. Similarly I did not consider the idea of going back to explicit teaching of grammar: not only because this was done during the Grammar Lectures, but also because I was too keen to preserve the space and the format of grammar discussion in our weekly classes.

During the period of reflection I also did extensive reading in SLA. I found it very interesting that language teaching theories – which Stern (1983, pp.453-473) summarised as the traditional method, the direct method, the reading method, the audiolingual method, the audiovisual method and the cognitive theory – developed only relatively recently and alongside the prevailing psychological and philosophical approaches. I was aware of the role played by Chomsky's theory of Universal Grammar in linguistics but I did not consider until this time the influence that his theory had on second language acquisition. The cognitive theory, influenced by Chomsky, seemed to me the most persuasive in explaining the importance of conscious grammar teaching, 'meaningful practice, and creativity' (Stern, 1983, p.470). Similarly Long's Interaction Hypothesis theory for which if 'learners have the opportunity to negotiate communication breakdowns, the interactional modifications (e.g. requests for clarification and confirmation) which arise in the discourse make grammatical features salient so that they can be acquired' (Ellis, 1997, p.49) appeared to me as a brilliant explanation of the kind of learning situation which I was trying to established in the class. Very enlightening were also those studies which tried to bridge the gap between the teaching of language and the teaching of literature which reflects directly my experience as a teacher (Bassnett and Grundy, 1993; Carter and Long, 1991; Maley and Duff, 1990; Bromfit and Carter, 1986). Very useful too were the studies on the importance of reflection and self-assessment (Boud, 1985 and 1995; Cowan, 2006) as well as on what it means and what is entailed in teaching today in higher education (Biggs and Tang, 2007 and Butcher, Davies and Highton 2006). The great merit of these studies was to make me reflect on my own practise of teaching and give a name and an explanation to the things that intuitively and through many years of experience had become part of my methodology. Now I was able to recognise with more confidence and more knowledge the principles behind the teaching I had envisaged for ITAL3010: teaching that was learner-centred (that is from outcomes to content), which promoted deep learning and language awareness, and was research-led and research-informed (in the sense that it was to stimulate an inquiry approach in the

students) and last but not least a teaching that emphasised the pleasure that learning can generate.

The success of the revision of ITAL3010 was further demonstrated by student performance in the final language examinations. In the academic year 2007-8 (before the revision of the module) only 34% of students achieved a grade of 60% or above. In 2008-9, the first year of the revised module, 57% of students achieved 60% or above, and in 2009-10 54% of students achieved 60% or above. When the module was redesigned in order to rectify the imbalance between the language and the 'content' modules, a target threshold of 50% of students achieving a grade of 60% or above was planned, and so the redesigned module has proved successful from this viewpoint as well[74] .

Address for correspondence: o.santovetti@leeds.ac.uk

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[74]   The positive trend has been confirmed in the following years where the number of students achieving a grade of 60% in the redesigned format of ITAL3010 only once went below the target threshold (and only just): 54% in 2011, 49% in 2012, 63% in 2013, 64% in 2014, and 71% in both 2015 and 2016.

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Using Computer Assisted Translation tools' Translation Quality Assessment functionalities to assess students' translations

Jun Yang, Dr. Dragoș Ciobanu, Caroline Reiss, Dr. Alina Secară

School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, University of Leeds

Abstract

Translation quality assessment (TQA) is essential in translator training. For formative and meaningful feedback, quantitative methods of error-type categories are frequently used to evaluate students' translations. However, because the annotation of the errors made by students still tends to be done in a Word document, which requires redundant manual work and the result often lacks consistency and clarity. We propose using CAT environments for more efficient TQA. One the one hand, it will bridge the gap between the training and industry by familiarising students with current industry translation practices; on the other hand, it will assist with the design and analysis for formative assessment that could guide the learning of not only one student, but of whole cohort of students. The current paper uses SDL Trados Studio as an example to demonstrate how translation evaluation works in a CAT environment. Through the discussion of practical challenges and advantages of implementing a TQA in the translation classroom, we highlight the clarity both of expression and of presentation of feedback and evaluation and the long-term benefits in recording the students' individual and group progress of all times to make data-driven choices regarding the training curriculum.

Key words: translation quality assessment, computer-assisted translation tools, translator training

INTRODUCTION

The majority of undergraduate and postgraduate translation programmes include a compulsory translation element as part of the training. In addition to this, training in Computer-Assisted Translation (CAT) tools is frequently part of the postgraduate curriculum. However, these two components tend to be taught separately, one being seen as a linguistic task, while the other a technical one. Our current article suggests a framework where formative student translation feedback could be integrated in and supported by a functionality offered by several CAT tools, which allows the semi-automatic identification, annotation and tracking of translation errors. Depending on the CAT tool used, this functionality can be found under the name of Linguistic Quality Assurance (LQA) for users of the memoQ CAT tool, or Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) for users of SDL Trados Studio. Used creatively, this functionality can enable translation trainers not only to automate the detection and tagging of certain translation errors, but also the creation of a translation evaluation corpus – also known as a 'learner corpus' and representing a collection of corrected and annotated translations - which could be analysed per student or per cohort. The use of such corpora is still rare in translation studies research, as well as translation training, mainly because of the difficulty associated with their compilation; their benefits, however, include the possibility of identifying patters in student translation choices early on during training courses, thus subsequently enabling trainers to implement corrective actions in a more timely and structured manner.

In the words of Doherty (2016:131), 'Translation quality assessment (TQA) is crucial to formative assessment for translators in training, for professional certification and accreditation, and for recruitment and screening of translators.' At the same time, 'trying to apply quality control to intellectual output such as translation is difficult and encounters significant resistance among practitioners' (Samuelsson-Brown, 2006:42). While on the one hand, trainees cannot progress without meaningful feedback; on the other hand, the manner, consistency and user-friendliness of this feedback are also vital in the training of future translators.

The evolution from general qualitative evaluations of translations to more detailed, quantitative methods was a welcome development which has brought translation training closer to industry translation evaluation methodologies, and nowadays numerous training programs evaluating student translations are using error-type categories for consistency and efficiency purposes. While it is undoubtedly a step in the right direction, more can be done in order to streamline the evaluation process. At the moment, the annotation of the errors made by students still tends to be done in a Word document, which requires assessors first to remember by heart and write redundantly throughout the document the error typology labels, and secondly to add up at the end of the evaluation the numbers of errors made in each category and sub-category. In some training contexts one further evaluation sheet is created for each student with data centralised to various degrees of reliability, which is used outside the specific translation assessment and which invariably requires constant reference back to the assessed translation for context purposes. This practice is prone to human error, as well as more complicated to implement in cases where the error categories are organised on multiple levels and sub-levels, and they are also differentiated according to their severity.

Doherty (2016) highlights the need to approach TQA in a more objective, empirical manner and move away from a subjective analysis of linguistic features only. Reiss (2000) also supports the view that evidence-based TQA would be a good pedagogical tool for both evaluators and translators themselves. Collecting data on evaluations and then mining this data according to the error categories the trainers and trainees want to focus on at particular times would indeed offer a more methodologically-valid approach to translation training. We share this view, and the current paper will focus on using CAT environments for more efficient translation quality assessment. Adopting CAT tools as part of traditional translation classes will both bridge the gap between training and industry by familiarising students with current industry translation evaluation practices, and will also assist with the design and analysis of formative assessment that could guide the learning of not only one student, but of whole cohort of students.

While in the Translation Studies literature, it very often looks like evaluation is the final step in a process; in other domains such as Machine Translation (MT), the evaluation is often part of a larger framework and therefore it is built in from the beginning with the idea of supporting a more complex process (Doherty, 2016:133). The framework we are suggesting would imply the trainers either adopting an existing industry translation evaluation framework, or re-creating and using inside a CAT tool their favourite error typology. To make the training process more transparent and meaningful, this framework should also be shared with the students from the beginning of the translation process, progress against all error categories should be regularly tracked at both individual and group level, and students should be trained to use this very same industry-driven evaluation methodology when self- and peer-assessing translation output. Moreover, instead of proceeding with training activities and source text selected intuitively by the trainer, the regular TQA reports should influence the creation of customised training resources based on areas where the data indicates that students need more practice.

Various TQA frameworks have been used for human and machine translation assessment, post-editing effort, estimation of productivity and implementations. For human translation evaluation, the earliest Quality Assurance (QA) models were introduced in the automotive industry - e.g. SAE J2450 - or the localisation industry - e.g. the QA models proposed by the late Localization Industry Standards Association (LISA). These models were based on translation error-types identification and the categories included ranged from accuracy, fluency, terminology and style to formatting and consistency (for a more detailed discussion on the early translation error-category models, see Secară (2015)). Later on, the Translation Automation User Society (TAUS) adopted a dynamic model for evaluation translating quality. In addition to the previous categories, they also evaluated the time spent on the task together with more localisation-specific tasks, such as the post-editing of machine translation. In parallel, Language Service Providers and organisations have been developing their own translation evaluation schemes, based on their needs. For example, for International

Organisations such as the United Nations or the European Commission, a category linked to appropriate research and double-checking of references is always included in the evaluation process. Also, some choose to integrate weighting in their models, deeming some errors more serious (mistranslation) than others (formatting). No matter how many errors one chooses to use in their translation evaluation scheme, their choice should be linked to the purpose of the translation task and attention should be paid to the actual error-types included.

Assuming a translation trainer already has a suitable translation evaluation scheme, in the next section we will discuss how the scheme can be integrated in a CAT tool so that the trainer could semi-automatically tag certain types of error when marking student translations.

USING CAT TOOLS FOR TRANSLATION ERROR ANNOTATION

SDL Trados Studio and memoQ are two popular commercial CAT tools that include the functionality of TQA. SDL Trados Studio followed the example set by memoQ and, starting with its 2015 version, has been supporting the creation of customised TQA models - one could imagine a scenario where tutors would create different models depending on characteristics of individual language combinations. For example, some error typologies in European languages may not suitable in Asian character-based languages (Chinese, Korean, and Japanese) - for instance, due to the absence of gender and number in Chinese, an error category of the type *Language: Inflection and Agreement* is superfluous and potentially confusing for the learners of this language, while for inflected languages such as any of the Romance languages it is an essential category.

Although there are some differences in implementation, both tools can generate comparable bilingual TQA reports which contain scores, the error typology used and, most importantly, include 'track changes' of with the annotated erroneous translated segments compiled in one document. Since the purpose of using TQA in translator training is to provide systematic and structured feedback, we believe that the 'track changes' functionality is an essential one as it tells students where their errors are and – provided the marker included corrections and/or

additional comments – how these errors can be corrected and the student's performance improved. In this paper, we use SDL Trados Studio 2015 as an example to demonstrate how TQA works in a CAT environment.

While tutors using memoQ can immediately select existing TQA templates already loaded in this CAT tool which are already widely used in the industry – e.g. the LISA QA model, MQM, or TAUS – in SDL Trados they need to setup their own TQA by defining the following metrics: categories, severities, scoring, and document types. '**Categories**' allow users to configure the error typology that will be used to annotate the students' translations (subcategories can also be configured for specific error types). '**Severities**' sets custom metrics that can be used to measure the importance of errors. '**Scoring**' determines the importance of each severity level in the overall assessment and allows users to define the *Pass/Fail Threshold* which is the maximum penalty score that a CAT tool can admit before failing the TQA check for a translation. Finally, '**Document Types**' lists the types of files that the current TQA settings can apply to, which is useful in a translation project which includes files in several formats. The customised TQA settings can be saved as a template for future use.

Figure 1 shows one of the four metrics ('Scoring') of the TQA configuration in SDL Trados Studio. When opening the CAT tool, in *File/Options/Translation Quality Assessment*, the user can customise all four fields already mentioned above. All the highlighted areas are editable, including where tutors can define the *Pass/Fail* scores at the word or character level.
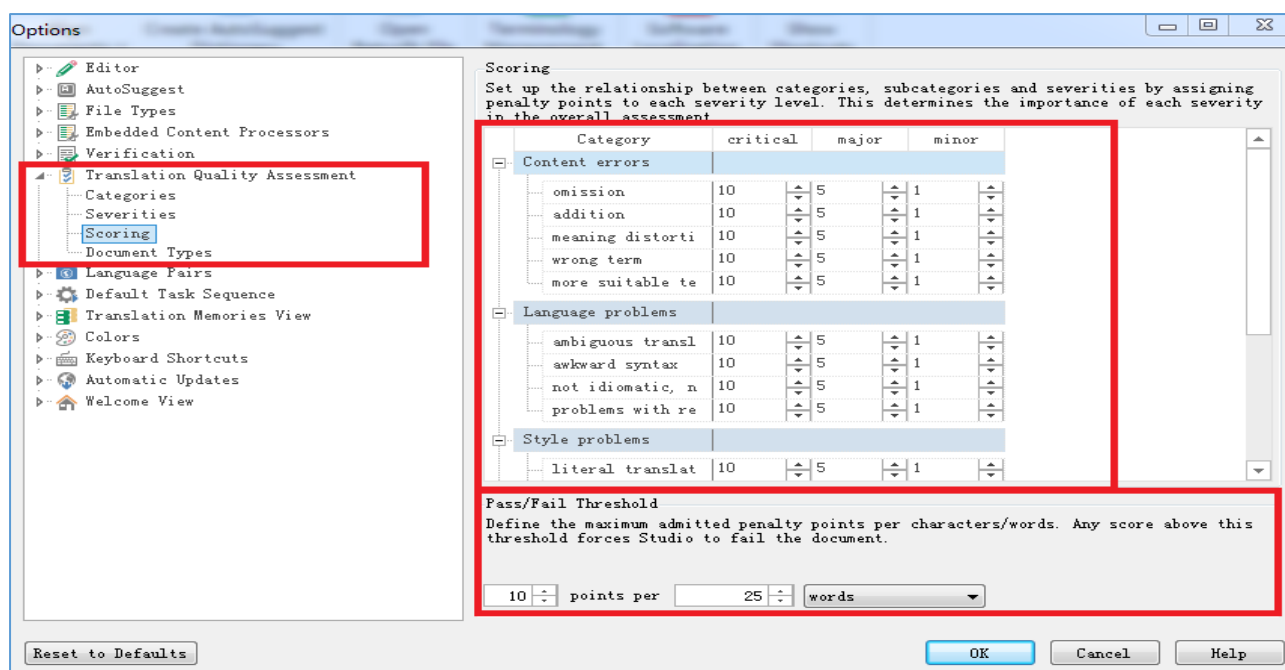
Figure 1. TQA configuration in SDL Trados Studio

Naturally, the easiest way of operating is for the tutor to set up a translation project in a CAT tool and then ask the students to complete it within the same CAT tool before returning it for marking. However, it is also possible to complete the translation outside of a CAT environment, and only use the latter for the error annotation stage. Once the translations have been imported into SDL Studio, the tutor can begin to evaluate the students' translation under the 'Review' pane, in 'Assess quality' mode. When an error is spotted, the tutor can either make revisions similarly to using 'Track changes' in *MS Word*, or highlight the problematic part in one segment and leave a comment. The former option allows tutors to add metadata - e.g. annotations of errors including error type, severity level and revision type (strategies that used to improve the translation: deletion, addition or replacement) - related to each change to give specific feedback on quality. The metadata is captured and displayed in the TQA report. Figure 2 illustrates how to work with the TQA in SDL Trados Studio.
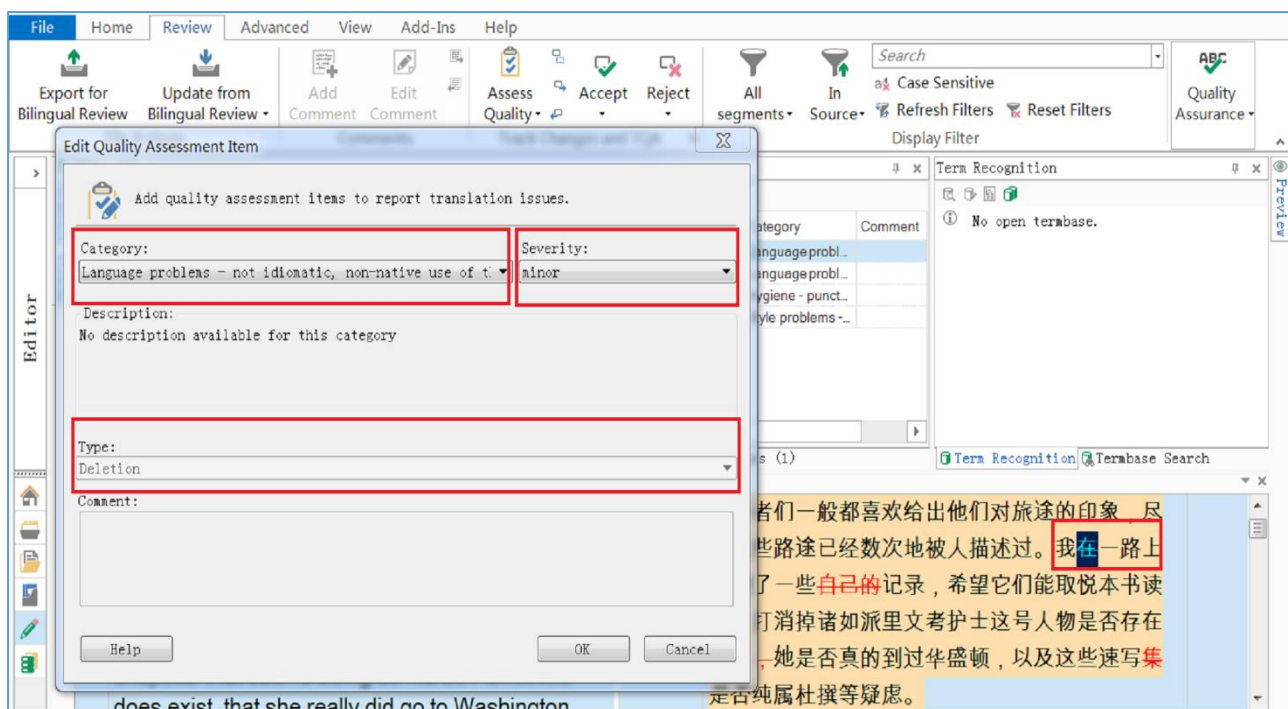
Figure 2. Carrying out a translation evaluation in SDL Trados Studio

In SDL Trados Studio, the TQA annotations that contain the tutor's evaluation and comments are recorded in the 'Editor' pane. As highlighted in Figure 3, TQA annotations are listed together with the segment ID, revision type, document name, author, severity level and category (category-subcategory). Next to 'TQAs', the user can choose to view 'Comments' that were left by the evaluator (circled in red in Figure 3).
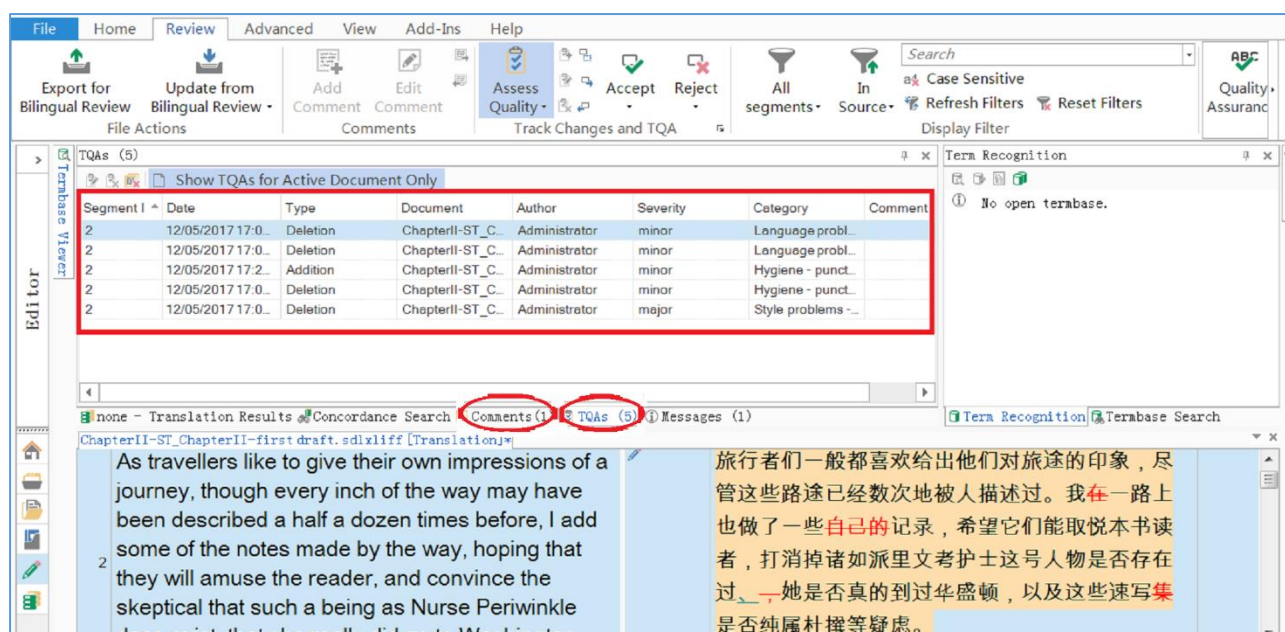
Figure 3. Example of TQA items

When the tutor finishes evaluating the students' translation, a TQA report can be generated through 'Batch tasks' under the 'Home' window. The new TQA report can then be viewed in the 'Reports' pane, from where it can also be saved in other file formats (.html, .xlsx, .mht and .xml). For the common purposes of translator trainers, the TQA report in Excel format offers the most flexibility, as it is clearly-structured and easily-editable. Figures 4-6 illustrate the format of the TQA report in Excel. There are four essential parts in the TQA report: the first part gives a summary of TQA together with the final evaluation score: *Pass* or *Fail*; the second part details the scoring model that has been used; the third part indicates the occurrence of each error type with its specific penalty score; lastly and most importantly for formative purposes, the fourth part of the TQA report provides a comparable table with columns containing the source content and the student's translations, including the original translation, the tutor's feedback (revised translation), the revision strategy (TQA type), the error category, the severity level and any formative comments inserted by the marker.

Figure 4. Example of a TQA report in Excel (Part 1 and 2)

Figure 5. Example of a TQA report in Excel (Part 3)

Figure 6. Example of a TQA report in Excel (Part 4)

The TQA report presents a type of structured feedback for translator training which is beneficial for both tutor and students. On the one hand, the tutor has a quantitative record of the students' performance that enables the diachronic tracking of both individual and group performance, as well as the clear identification of error categories for which additional training is necessary. On the other hand, the students are able to compare their translation with a reference translation that highlights the errors and explains why they are problematic and, if a learner corpus – as defined in the beginning of the article – is updated with the students' work at the same time, investigate the effectiveness of alternative translation strategies or the way in which their colleagues have dealt with particularly challenging source text passages.

Implementing a TQA in the translation classroom: practical challenges and advantages

The use of a translation quality assessment model to mark and provide feedback on student translations offers opportunities to enhance the students' awareness and understanding of theoretical concepts and to enable tutors to further guide students' learning and development.

When the assessment of student translations focuses on identifying language and translation errors (Waddington, 2001), tutors should use either the standards for quality assessment currently employed within the translation and localisation industry - such as the TAUS framework - or, alternatively, adapt the TQA model according to the characteristics of the language pair being taught. In either case, students will need to develop a clear understanding of the role of translation quality assessment, the TQA model's error categories and, in particular, the implications of their differing severity. Broadly speaking, there are four commonly used error severity levels, irrespective of the technology used for evaluation purposes: Neutral/Preferential errors, Minor, Major, and Critical. In order to ensure that students understand fully the meaning and differences between these error severities and categories, the tutor should provide in advance a text-based version of the TQA model, containing practical examples to contextualise the error categories.

The use of a TQA model to categorise errors as pragmatic, semantic, idiomatic, orthographic, linguistic or stylistic (ibid.) could enhance group discussions with the students by highlighting practical, comparable examples of translation theory in action and by introducing the use of industry-wide standards and the importance of complying with a translation brief. The TQA reports could further clarify and consolidate students' theoretical understanding by allowing them to visualise for each text-type translated what kinds of translation errors they have made, and how many. Furthermore, by using a learner corpus, they could compare their translation choices with those of their peers, as well as reference translations.

Penalty points can also be applied to errors of differing severity levels. Typically, a neutral error would receive a score of 0, a minor error receives 1, a major receives 5 and a critical error would receive 10, although the CAT tools allow the user to define the values of penalty points. This approach offers students the opportunity to familiarise themselves further with the TQA process as it occurs within the translation and localisation industry and to gauge the professional quality of their translation. If necessary, it is also possible to deselect the use of penalty points without negatively impacting on the usefulness of any TQA output reports

produced by the CAT tool. The tutor may choose not to give penalty points, and instead just annotate the error types and TQA types when assessing the students' work. The final TQA report will still illustrate the tutor's specific feedback as shown in Figure 6 for formative purpose. However, such an implementation loses the advantage of quantifying the students' performance in a longitudinal study.

Assessing student translations in this manner over the course of a semester or academic year may provide students with a meaningful record of their progress, as well as highlight areas for further improvement. On completion of the TQA process, SDL Trados Studio produces the chart shown below (Figure 7) where error types are colour-coded, providing a clear representation of the range of errors identified.
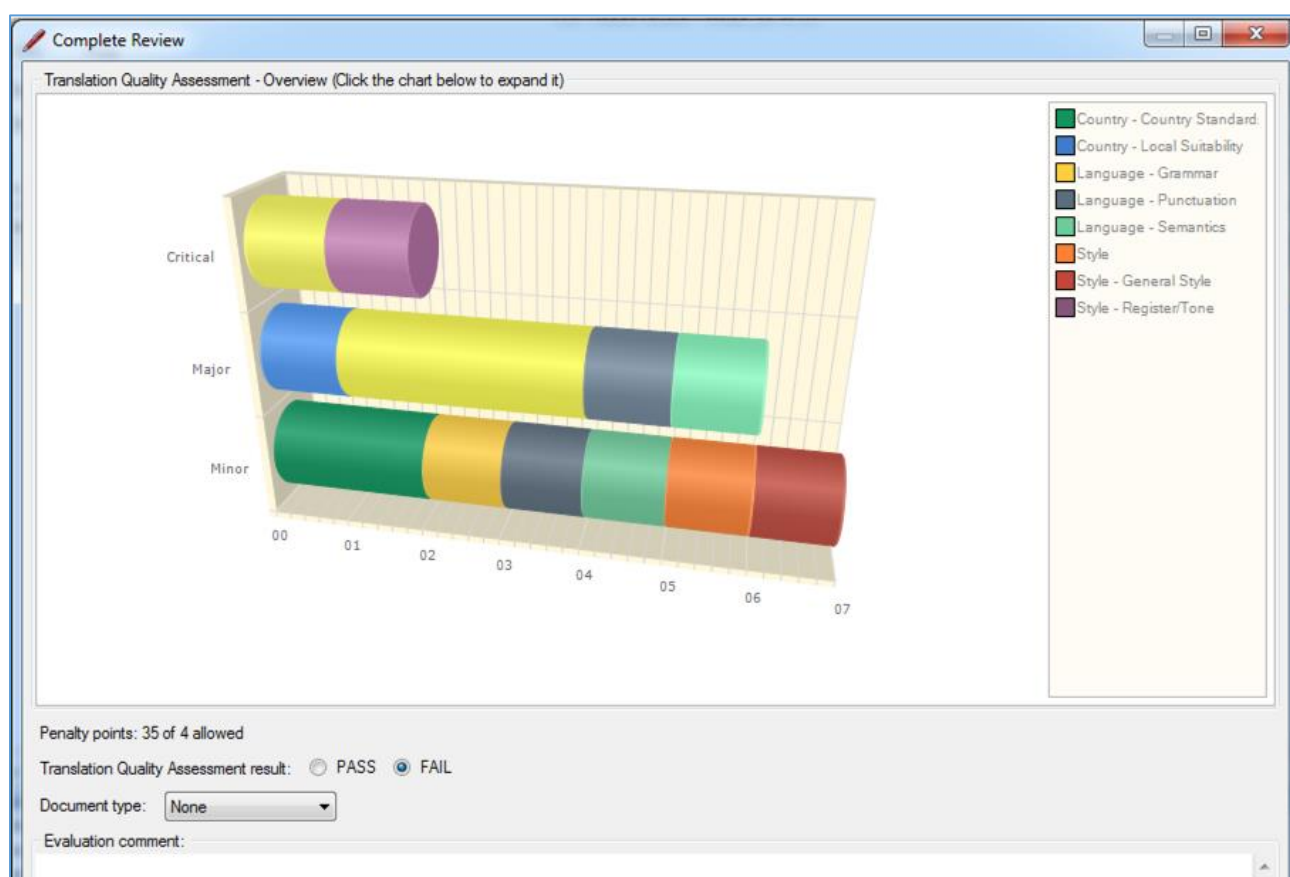

Figure 7. Example of a TQA chart

A comparison of students' output reports in this format could serve to highlight common errors within the group and provide a basis on which to plan further teaching or discussion. The charts and reports may enable students to focus their attention on particular areas when it comes to revising their own translations.

However, one should acknowledge that, at least initially, integrating the use of a CAT tool with the tutor's regular assessment and feedback processes will require some time and effort. CAT tool integration would expect the tutor to dedicate approximately one day to learning to use the TQA function of the CAT tool and plan the structure of translation projects. During this stage, the tutor would also create translation memories to attach to each student project as a repository for the student's translations. Project and language resource settings, such as adjustments to the translation memory's segmentation rules, can then be saved for future re-use. This may appear slower in comparison to the traditional way of assessing through paper work or the easily-managed tool *MS Word,* but it also brings the advantages of consistency, accurate individual and group progress-tracking, and error-pattern identification already discussed.

CONCLUSION

Overall, using the TQA approach will initially require a greater time investment from the tutor compared to working with *MS Word*'s Track Changes features or using another online platform with which markers may already be familiar with. However, it will bring clarity both of expression and of presentation of feedback and evaluation. The most popular current electronic marking practice already poses challenges where adding edits or comments can render both the translation and its annotations difficult to read: in *MS Word*, comments can mount up in the margins and become misaligned with the relevant portion of text. While other electronic systems may include comments in such a way as to overlay the student's translation, the Language Services Industry is fully committed to the use of CAT tools, and

students and tutors alike should become familiar with industry standards and approaches in this area as early as possible in order to maximise their employability prospects in this sector. Within the CAT tool environment, errors and/or their annotations can be clearly presented in a graphical or tabular form to be viewed or printed separately and returned to the student, which makes feedback more visually accessible and, ultimately, more meaningful for learner development and discussion. The short investment of time dedicated to mastering the CAT tool and to embedding them in updated translation training sessions will soon be outweighed by the benefit of knowing the students' individual and group progress at all times, as well as of being able to make data-driven choices regarding the training curriculum.

Addresses for correspondence:

Jun Yang (ml11j3y@leeds.ac.uk), Caroline Reiss (c.l.reiss@leeds.ac.uk), Dr. Alina Secară (a.secara@leeds.ac.uk), Dr. Dragoș Ciobanu (d.i.ciobanu@leeds.ac.uk)

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Who's afraid of Action Research? : The risky practice of immanent critique

Jayne Pearson

Westminster Professional Language Centre, School of Social Sciences and

Humanities, University of Westminster

Key words: Action Research, Assessment, EAP, Writing Development, Agency

In this piece, I explore the current status of Action Research in the EAP community and suggest some reasons why it is perhaps under-utilised as a potentially emancipatory way for EAP practitioners to become researchers of their own practices and conditions. I frame these reasons as 'risks' that teachers investigating their own practices can pose. In order to do this, this article provides an example of my own practitioner research conducted within an Action Research framework on the assessment of writing on an EAP pre-sessional course at one UK institution. I do this not to provide an example of good research but to reinforce my central thesis that conducting research is a difficult, risky but ultimately necessary practice for the EAP practitioner.

INTRODUCTION

This article is, among other things, a defence of a methodological framework for educational

research that has drifted in and out of fashion in language teaching over the past few

decades. In order to explain why I feel Action Research needs such a defence, I have

chosen to contextualise this view by describing a project on EAP assessment undertaken

over three years using an Action Research methodology. In describing this project, I wish to

share what I learned from the research, why the title of this article is a caveat that Action

Research (henceforth AR) is indeed a *risky* practice and suggest some various groups to

whom it might represent risk. I will firstly outline some of the core tenets of educational AR

and how these can be at odds with its typical use in the EAP community. Then, by briefly

describing my own project on EAP writing assessment and some of the findings from the

three iterative cycles, I will share the challenges I faced, and how such challenges shed light

on some wider issues in EAP. My main argument is that although conducting AR is *risky* in many ways and to some interests, including sometimes our own, its inherent riskiness is precisely its emancipatory power and potential.

WHAT IS ACTION RESEARCH?

The application of Action Research for education originated from a disenchantment with conventional educational enquiry, which was accused of being disconnected from the quotidian realities of classrooms (Hargreaves, 2007), focusing instead on concerns of the academic community or government policy makers (Kemmis, 2006). It is important to emphasise that AR has represented many things to many people and there is no-one-size fits all approach. However, in their seminal work *Becoming Critical,* Carr and Kemmis (1986) identified AR first and foremost as a 'critical educational science'. AR is generally intended to be a 'democratic' form of research, with participants and researchers exploring their understandings of their localised practices in three 'mediating conditions' (Kemmis and Smith, 2008). These conditions are the *cultural/discursive* which shape thinking; the *material/economic* which shape the behaviour or 'doing'; and the *socio-political* which shape how people relate to one another in relationships of power (ibid). The ultimate aim of AR then is for practitioner-researchers to change our practice, our understandings of practices, *and* the conditions under which we practice.

Hence, the notion of immanent critique*,* a Hegelian-Marxist concept which I will simplify here to refer to a sort of 'insider' critique, is fundamental to AR. Immanent critique is a way of appraising principles and practices by recognising the conditions which generate them rather than judging practices by externally imposed standards (Bhaskar, 1998). In other words, we cannot separate ourselves from the knowledge that we produce about educational practice as we are intertwined with that practice. This questions the supposed neutrality of forms of research which claim to measure educational interventions. McNiff (2013) makes the distinction between E-theory and I-theory. The former is forms of knowledge external to the

self, the knowledge of and about things from studying objects (research-informed practice). However, I- theory places the self at the core of the research, even if the focus of the research is not specifically on the self as practitioner. Knowledge then emerges from the raising of tacit or intuitive knowledge of practice to explicit conscious awareness in the practitioner (ibid), which enables new forms of knowing to emerge when connections are made between existing knowledge and new experiences.

Yet the generation of that form of knowledge is insufficient for a theory of AR. Rather, praxis is the main goal of research. Praxis in AR is not merely the unification of theory and practice, or action based on reflection, but a morally-informed and ethical process of knowledge formation *through* action (Kemmis, 2009). Grundy (1987) sets out a framework for praxis based on Aristotle's definition, which starts with a situation or question about the human condition which is guided by *phronesis* or a disposition to act morally. This engages *praxis,* or the interaction with that situation through an iterative cycle of planning, action (usually implementing an intervention in the local context) observation and reflection (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1982). Research is therefore conceptualised as a process where 'the researcher joins the participants in a theoretically guided program of action extended over a period of time' (Lather, 1986: 268), different to the get-in-and-get-out approach that some research can be accused of (ibid). Because of the emphasis on praxis, AR is an attempt to move beyond the potentially disempowering critical tradition of merely problematising, or 'pedagogies of pessimism' (Morgan, 2009) towards a theory of action in which participants take some control over their lives. Therefore, in AR, teachers and students are themselves contributing to a theory of education through systematic inquiry which generates new understandings of their own localised contexts, and where resulting changes in these contexts may be informative (although not generalisable) for other contexts. Boog (2003: 434) defines the criteria for success of AR at the *individual* level as participants' 'reports about the growth of their capacity for self-determination in the domain on which the research

focuses', and at the *collective* level as 'whether researched subjects and other actors obtain more transforming power and influence on the process of decision-making'.

It is easy to see why these notions mean that AR might pose a 'risky' option for EAP researcher-practitioners wishing to publish such research. The inherent 'messiness' of trying to understand the complexities of one's practice and the conditions which shape it does not lend itself to the neatly delineated sections of a classic journal article. The technical rigour that peer reviewers demand can be hard to achieve when AR in our idiosyncratic contexts of EAP could require hybrid and intuitive methods of data collection and analysis (Dadds and Hart, 2001). More than this, it represents not so much an alternative means of conducting research but an alternative way of thinking about epistemology, who generates and disseminates knowledge and how. It can question in whose interest seemingly neutral research is being implemented. The idea that practitioners can be creators of their own theories of education represents a challenge to the usual ways of doing academic business, where researchers inform practitioners about the latest products of research knowledge, and practitioners and students are the objects of research.

AR represents a further risk in its potential challenge to the individualism of the neo-liberal university context of EAP. AR was initially embraced by the ELT community (Nunan, 1992; Edge, 1992), due to its particular circumstances where classic research approaches requiring time, training and funding are not abundant. Somewhat as a reaction to the problem outlined above, AR has been adopted as a means of professional development by the ELT/EAP community in its desire to be more accepted by academic communities as a higher-status skilled profession (Burns, 2005:48). The Cambridge DELTA pays lip service to AR in one of its (unassessed and uncredited) assignments. However, the problem with this is twofold. Firstly, it has led to a trend for teachers to largely focus on what they do in their own classrooms with a view to improving their own practices, ignoring the wider social and economic conditions which shape those practices (ibid). Indeed this approach is advocated by respected researchers in the field such as Wallace (1998) and Dörnyei (2007). The

alternative of Exploratory Practice (EP) for time-poor teachers was posited by Allwright (2003) and while the principles of EP itself and the immensely impressive work in this area are admirable, it derives from an attack on AR understood as technical and solution-based. This is understandable given its incarnation in the ELT world, but unhelpful in its rejection of AR as a potential force for change as well as understanding.

Secondly and perhaps more damagingly, the adoption of a watered-down version of AR by the EAP community as a training tool plays into the hands of the neo-liberal university in its trend towards performative assessment of the 'effectiveness' of teaching practices. Teachers' reflections on their own practice can now be used to judge teaching and learning as measured by tick-box criteria, as the latest reaction by UK universities to the impending TEF, the Fellowship of the HEA, can attest to. This can be seen as an example of subjectification in the Foucauldian sense. To force teachers to work on self-improvement in a visible way is an example of auditing performance (Ball, 2012) through indicators of quality judged by external bodies as 'professional competencies'. While improving one's teaching and better facilitating learning is of course a worthy goal, the danger comes when we equate a judgement of our performance with a judgment of our professional and personal identities. We are encouraged to reflect on actions, successes and failures as if they took place in a vacuum, without true reflexivity, or 'the ability to consider ourselves in relation to our [personal and social] concerns' (Archer, 2007), which has the effect of commodifying not only our labour but our very sense of selves.

At its core, AR should stem from a practitioner concern and be followed by an attempt to fully understand the context in which the research is conducted. These concerns, even if they remain at the classroom level, are then not decontextualised but are understood in relation to the conditions of our practice, as enabled and constrained by societal structures (Archer, 2000). In this sense, to conduct AR in its true form is to pose a challenge to the social structures that shape our classrooms through the exercise of agency. This disruption is a daunting prospect.

ACTION RESEARCH AND ASSESSMENT

My research originated from a concern around the impacts of writing assessment practices on students and teachers of pre-sessional courses- the gate-keeping nature of which is at odds with its purported goals, which are to facilitate acquisition of the skills such as analysis and text construction needed to succeed at tertiary level in a foreign language, as well as to facilitate the process of transition to disciplinary discourse communities (Alexander et al, 2008). Supported by a review of the literature, I felt that if students could not conceptualise themselves as developing writers and only see writing as equated with assessment of performance, this could exacerbate social disempowerment, the deficit model of EAP that the Academic Literacies movement has heavily critiqued (Lillis and Scott, 2007). In addition, if students see assessment as an exercise of power 'performed on' them (Boud, 2000) rather than as an opportunity for learning, this could lead to an encroachment on personal agency and negation of learning itself. From this initial rather broad concern, a project was conceived to design and trial a form of *alternative* assessment (Huerta -Macias, 1995) named *processfolio* on a pre-sessional course at one UK institution.

Although all research involves processes and procedures, process is at the heart of AR ethos (Winter, 1989). Iterativeness is central to the idea that action must be sustained, and the reflexivity and praxis that are its goals cannot be achieved through classical experimental approaches. Hence, AR is usually conducted in cycles, with one cycle flowing into another. My project had three cycles from 2013-15 and a version of the Kemmis and McTaggart's (1988) model of a spiral of planning, action, observation and reflection was adopted for each cycle. The first cycle was a Reconnaissance stage (Townsend, 2010), involving a systematic inquiry of the context, reviewing the literature and conducting empirical data from students' and teachers' accounts of assessment experiences and understandings of writing practices. The second cycle involved designing and trialling the assessment intervention to implement with my own class of 14 students; the third, widening the participation (Stringer, 2004) with a

second trial (following refinements made to the folio and the research design) to include three classes and three teachers.

Traditionally, research into assessment within EAP has been either within a largely positivist paradigm using quantitative methods, or employing a purely theoretical critique. However, using an AR framework is congruent with assessment research for a number of reasons. Firstly, a focus on consequential validity (Messick, 1989) and the social impact of language assessment (Shohamy, 2001; McNamara and Roever, 2006; Fulcher, 2009), emphasise the notion of problematising existing practices and the socio-economic conditions which shape them. In EAP, this includes the common practice of benchmarking in-house assessments to international SELT criteria, regardless of the aims and materials of the course and the incongruity of the respective assessment constructs. In addition, the increasing call for a reconceptualization of validity and reliability in the alternative assessment paradigm (Lynch and Shaw, 2004) align with an AR framework of valuing that which might not be measureable in a classical language testing paradigm, and allows for flexibility when dealing with the diversity of UK EAP assessment contexts. Moreover, there is a parallel with the iterative approach to research in AR with best practice in assessment development and production, a cycle of information-gathering regarding test specifications and constructs, to implementing and evaluating based on data collection, which feeds into refining and improving the test (Read, 2010). Finally, recent concerns around EAP teacher assessment literacy (Schmitt and Hamp-Lyons, 2015; Manning, 2016) have led to calls, albeit tentative, for more practitioner-orientated research into in-house EAP assessment practice.

In conducting this project, however, I realised that AR is not only a risky proposition for the interests identified above but for the researcher him/herself. The following section outlines my reflections on each cycle and unlike reports which attempt to 'cleanse' (Smyth and Shacklock, 1998) the AR process, I reflect on the challenges I faced, the mistakes I made, as well as the learning curve I climbed as an action researcher attempting to work collaboratively with students and colleagues. For a more in-depth (and traditional!) treatment

of the rationale for the *processfolio* project, its design and findings, see Pearson (2015) and Pearson (2017).

CYCLE ONE: RECONNAISSANCE

The main findings of the Reconnaissance stage on the pre-sessional in 2013 largely confirmed my concerns. The six student participants interviewed demonstrated a largely mechanical approach to writing and defined their development mainly in terms of outcomes (scores or criteria); often requiring 'model answers' to follow. Hence, many found it difficult to explain their own writing choices beyond a fixed linear process and acquisition of linguistic features, for example, *"we learn nominalism" (*sic). There was minimal conception of writing as a means of positioning oneself within an academic discourse community (Hyland, 2009), although many expressed frustration at arbitrarily imposed topics for tests in which they had no prior knowledge or interest. Many felt it was the job of others to evaluate them, exemplified by one student's resigned attitude to assessment as 'performed on' her (Boud, 2000), you *told us 'ok now you have to write a timed writing'. I will do it. And then give us a long essay. I will do it.*

Staffroom discussions recorded in my AR journal focused on the dependence that students showed on teachers to judge them, as one teacher commented,

> *students can just feel like they're just writing in the air and they don't know… "what do people want from me? Judge me, rank me I just want to see my grade".*

This is perhaps indicative of an inability of learners to organise, control and evaluate their experiences (van Lier, 1996), vital for agency in the learning process. Perhaps most worrying though was the level of students' emotional stress in anecdotal teacher accounts and student interviews alike. One student cited his inability to settle in London, *I cannot feel part of this city because I might be excluded any time I fail an exam,* an example of the alienation around gaining access to higher education (Case, 2008) that international students can feel in the face of gate-keeping assessment.

Based on the findings from this cycle, the *processfolio* project was conceived. *Processfolio* is the name for a type of assessment associated with Zessoules and Gardner (1991) in the Pittsburgh ArtsPropel project, and adapted for design courses such as engineering (Kyza et al, 2002). Rather than a collection of disparate pieces of work as in the traditional version of a portfolio (Hamp-Lyons and Condon, 2000), *processfolio* allows students to depict the journey they have undertaken in order to complete one piece of work: in this case, a 1000-word research essay set by the institution on a topic related to their chosen discipline. It should include a variety of work undertaken as part of writing the essay in the order in which it was completed. It also requires students to select those pieces themselves and state why they have done so in an annotated contents page, mini-essay or abstract. The aim of the *processfolio* is to provide an opportunity for students to conceptualise their own processes of text creation and research by exploring and justify their choices. It provides reflection and discussion about writing development, disciplinary differences, textual ownership and plagiarism, but rather than mere written reflection, allowed for a *demonstration* of development, the challenges faced and how this might affect continued learning processes. Because students had control over their organisation and presentation of the folio, they were able to demonstrate active engagement with assessment. The idea was that they would feel more in control over the way they wish their abilities to be judged. At this point in my thinking, I wanted the folio to explicitly assess the process in some way as I felt that if it was not assessed, it would not be viewed as important by all students (Weigle, 2000). However, theoretical, ethical and practical concerns would not enable me to grade it, only to give holistic comments. This also seemed beneficial in order to adhere to principles of formative assessment (Harlen, 2012).

CYCLE TWO: THE FIRST TRIAL

I trialled the *processfolio* in 2014 with one class of 14 students. It could not be used un-trialled in a high-stakes context and so was implemented on the first four weeks of a nine-week course where students were required to produce the formative assignment described above. Using the folios and interviews as primary data sets, it was clear that there were benefits. Each folio was different, reflecting a degree of independence and ownership of the process and product (Hamp-Lyons and Condon, 2000). Some displayed more creativity than others, for example one student divided the process into three stages, retrospectively imposing her own order on the process. All justified to a degree the choices of the pieces they had included, and identified weaknesses and strengths of their product essay. Language used in the introductions to the folios, such *my essay;* the use of active past tense verbs, *I decided, I chose, I produced* and the various terms that they used to refer to the folios, *a documentary, a witness, an invisible tutor,* indicate their identification with their own work. Some of the main benefits identified in the interviews were the level of confidence and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994) gained from their record of their experience of managing the process, *I felt I was on the way to a professional.*

Although preventing plagiarism was not an explicit goal of this type of assessment beyond combatting the sense of alienation that can manifest itself in such behaviour (Case, 2008), it seemed that it also helped to facilitate the notions of textual ownership. One student explicitly pointed out her use of the folio at the formative stage of the course helped her at the summative stage:

> *I noticed from the folio feedback that I didn't put my note-taking in the folio. It may be because I didn't note-taking clearly so it leads to the plagiarism.*

There was also evidence of a shift in recognition of the process in addition to merely grades,

> *I am more stressed about how to say, consequences than the process...so ask us to write a product and a process can provide us with new…method,*

allowing them to see assessment as an opportunity for learning in addition to a judgment of performance (Harlen, 2012).

However, there were fundamental issues which arose during the project and were evident in the students' interviews. Some students who had compiled the *processfolio* retrospectively found it time- consuming, as I had expected, but some expressed a concern about the fact it was assessed at all. For example, one student stated that the assessment was in some ways negating the process, the very thing I was trying to mitigate. Although I had felt that assessing it was necessary for motivation, I realised that I had fallen into the trap of employing assessment as a technical tool to *demand* engagement (Madaus, 1993), or worse, as a means of performing the individual through a *public display of reflection*, as one teacher eloquently put it. One student indeed expressed their discomfort with the reflection element:

> *If I don't need to submit it I can do better because I can write something that I really want to say in this paper and I can learn from my comments.*

I realised that I was inadvertently through good intentions perpetuating a discourse of making the learner responsible for their own learning, problematic because when students see their own learning process as entirely their own responsibility rather than seeing it as a product of the society in which they are learning, or the conditions that shape them, it justifies certain neo-liberal policies (Torrance, 2015), in a similar way to those performed on teachers. Realising that I was not adhering to the principles of AR in my initial thinking about my assessment intervention is an example of the benefits of immanent critique. As an insider, I was able to notice impacts at the structural level that an outsider researcher may not have seen.

It was clear that I had to change my way of thinking about the *processfolio* and what I wanted it to do. In an attempt to marry principles and pragmatism, I had to reconceptualise the *processfolio* not as an alternative assessment tool to elicit desired behaviours, (Hughes-Wilhelm, 1996), but as a means of mitigating such attempts to do so. The folio would

therefore not be assessed but submitted in tandem with the product essay to emphasise the integral nature of process and product (Ivanič, 2004). This would better allow for the exploration of tensions in the academy around writing and assessment without the fear of judgement, of facilitating some agency on the part of students, while raising to explicit consciousness students' awareness of the social conditions that shape their educational experiences and how they can negotiate them.

CYCLE THREE: WIDENING THE PARTICIPATION

The third AR cycle took place in 2015 involving three classes with three teachers. All participating teachers were volunteers, as by its nature, AR facilitates bottom-up engagement as opposed to top-down imposition, although due to the vagaries of summer teaching schedules, a limited number were able to participate in the full nine-week course. Although many benefits of the folio were similar to the first trial, more genuine evidence of agency emerged. A number of students expressed in the folios and interviews an explicit awareness of their choices. One student commented on his pragmatism, aware that the course was not teaching him all he needed because of the assessment but that he had to comply with the assessment conditions, *I think postgraduate is not just summarising, I have to find something new. But the main task was to finish that essay.* Another student was honest about the frustrations he felt in trying to fit his ideas within a restrictive framework of an essay, but both embraced that frustration as part of the academic writing process and reflected on his choice to disregard the pragmatic option:

> *Why can't I pretend I love everything, just choose one topic – that way you don't put your emotion into it, it's like a machine and it might be easier? But I think that's a waste of time. I think the pain is part of the experience.*

While these students could well have conceptualised these choices and changes regardless of the project, the *processfolio* had given them a tangible means of doing so. Crucially, as it was not 'assessed' and only completion was a requirement, students could present

themselves in an honest way without fear of quantitative or qualitative judgement, or even make an agentic choice not to engage with it beyond a surface level if they so wished.

As for the teachers, I found this more fraught that I had anticipated. I had naively assumed that my colleagues shared the same views around assessment but this was not the case. Although Sara's hope for her students aligned with the ethos of the folio,

> *I felt that they really needed to learn to […] value their own opinions because there was a kind of a sense of not trusting yourself […] really depending on the teacher's opinion*

John felt that there was little that could be done to change things,

I know students can become quite dependent […]. But other than telling them to just get on with it, I don't see what you can do. His views reflected an assessment discourse of measurement and outcomes, which did not align with the purpose of the folio, *If someone can produce a product, the process doesn't really matter. The product is how you measure how well they've done.*

I was conflicted at many stages with the democratic and participatory nature of AR in allowing teachers to interpret the *processfolio* for themselves, while hoping that they would commit to implementing it with their own classes in order for it to have the desired impacts. As Townsend (2010) states, AR cycles and iterations can be messy, and risky, in that they can take us far from the direction we imagined taking when we embark on a project. While this is of course the case for other types of research, the 'human factor' of AR in attempting to collaborate with colleagues and students for change, as well as the attempt to deeply understand the context while enacting that change, perpetuates this frustrating process. However, John's scepticism did abate by the end of the project as he identified beneficial impacts on his class compared to his previous years of teaching on the pre-sessional:

> *By the last couple of weeks […] they were doing it all themselves, I was just confirming, so it was very different. I did feel they were less anxious […] less teacher dependant […] more confident and had transferable skills actually.*

This is an example of how AR can pose a risk to ourselves. It challenges our assumptions about our practice, our students, our profession and ourselves through reflexive monitoring (Archer, 2007) and the exercise of agency. Although John's attitude to the purpose of EAP assessment did not unequivocally alter, it confronted him with questions and may have contributed in some way to a shift in thinking. It required *me* to rethink many of my own assumptions and understandings of my purpose as an EAP practitioner. It also confronted less agreeable aspects of my personality in my desire to control processes and outcomes. I had to recognise where I could be 'causally efficacious' (Shipway, 2011) and where the limits were within the social structure of EAP pre-sessional assessment and its 'mediating conditions'. In addition, a theory of action through research requires an engagement with theory and a body of literature that is often neglected by time-poor teachers trained to be interested only in improving their own teaching. Challenging the epistemological traditions of research that informs our practice does not mean that we can ignore this research foundation, especially if we wish to be taken seriously as EAP scholars.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

I have argued that AR represents risk for practitioners, the academy and the neo-liberal university. However, as I have tried to show in the context of my project, it can be a risky endeavour for the field of EAP itself. I propose that changes have to originate from an immanent critique of our practices, but this comes with some caveats. The *processfolio* project required us to question methods of assessment that place extreme stress on students and teachers, and worse, may not only be an example of valuing only what is measured, but a means of creating what it intends to measure (Hanson, 2000). In other words, perpetuating a conceptualisation of writing as a product created in a vacuum by applying formula to meet criteria, employed due to cost and time-effectiveness, speaking an inculcated discourse of SELTs. There is a danger here that perhaps through immanent critique, as we expose and promote what we do as EAP practitioners to our wider

stakeholders, we find it conflicts with the realities of the university climate in the 21st century. At that point we face the dilemma of whether to acquiesce or whether, and how, to resist. There is also the risk, as in the *processfolio* project, that collaboration reveals that many of us are not as much on the same page as we would like to think when it comes to a construct of EAP.

Although the immanent critique that AR represents is daunting and brings to light some things we would perhaps rather leave in the dark, I would contend that in the end it is more empowering if we practitioners are the ones who do this for ourselves rather than waiting for border agencies, government policies, university audits and the latest decontextualized research to tell us what to do. In EAP, we teach and talk of rhetorical moves. However, in Ancient Greece, *parrhesia* represented the opposite of *rhetoric* in its function of speaking candidly and challenging those in power. According to Kemmis (2006) AR should be a form of *parrhesia*, capable of telling unwelcome truths. I am not suggesting that EAP should only be concerned with AR as a research framework. But if it is to be used, the risks must be considered, and by risks, I mean what good AR that returns to its roots of collaboration and morally-informed action and social concern may have the power to achieve.

Address for correspondence:

j.pearson@wesminster.ac.uk

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Reviews
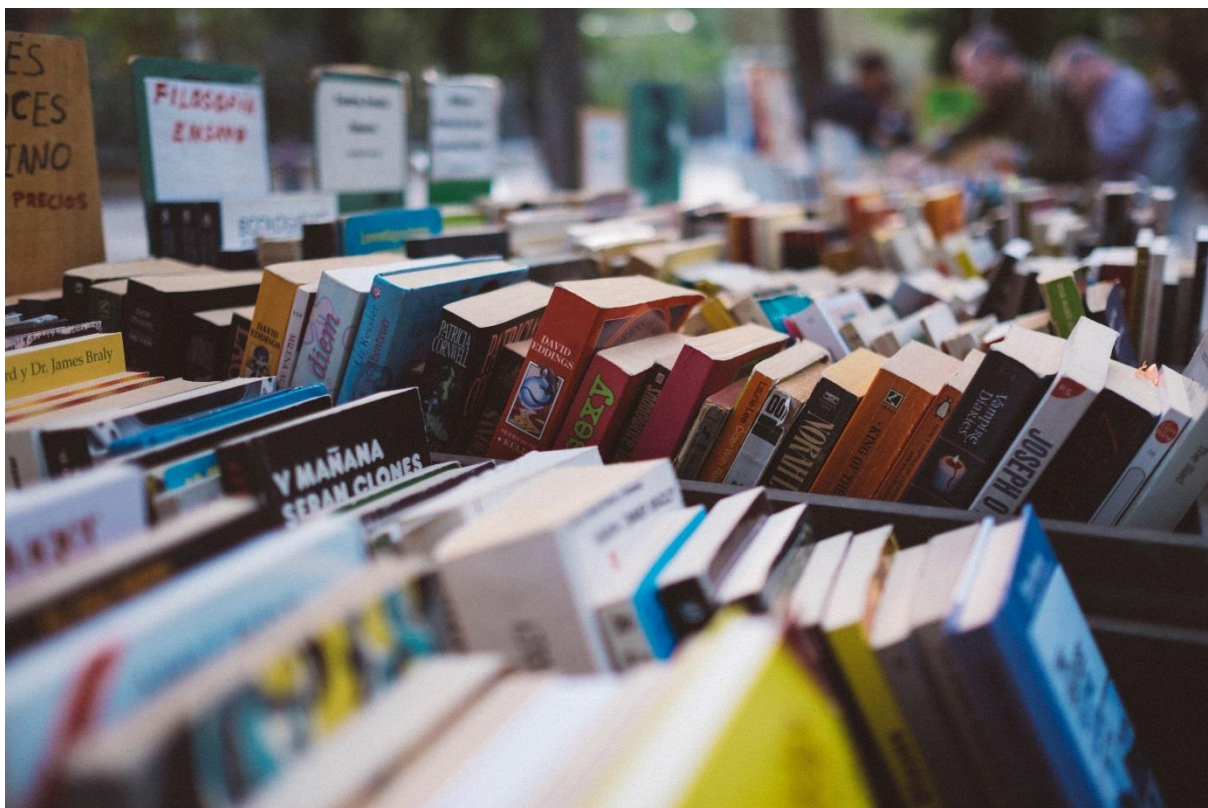
Unresolved tensions, hard realities and conflicting agendas: a review of the BAAL/Routledge Applied Linguistics workshop

Dr. Haynes Collins

Language Centre, School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, University of Leeds

Key words: BAAL, conference, Routledge Applied Linguistics Workshop

Conference review of the BAAL/Routledge Applied Linguistics workshop held on 16 September 2016 at Manchester Metropolitan University focused on the theme of 'mismatched and destabilised epistemologies and ontologies'.

The BAAL/Routledge Applied Linguistics workshop held on 16 September 2016 at Manchester Metropolitan University focused on the theme of 'mismatched and destabilised epistemologies and ontologies' throughout the day, but perhaps not always in quite the way the organisers had envisioned. Rather than explicitly investigate, explore and identify contrasting epistemologies and ontologies, these differences were apparent through the various frameworks that presenters used in their papers which focused on international students, English language assessment and, more broadly, UK HE. What transpired was that both the reality and construct of the international student served as a crucible where various interpretations and agendas met, clashed and, perhaps too often, passed each other by.

Although the organisers (Khawla Badwan and Lou Harvey) did an excellent job in attempting to focus the discussion, there appeared to be several notable and crucial unresolved tensions throughout the proceedings. The morning session was dedicated to the theme of 'International students negotiating intercultural discourses' and began with Professor Adrian Holliday drawing on his notions of cultural threads versus cultural blocks and his 'grammar of

culture' (see Holliday 2016). This represented a very promising and nuanced start and was followed by four papers which were loosely held together by the morning's first theme. These papers reflected both different contexts and approaches to understanding and/or working with international students from problematising the label of the international student (Collins), to global citizenship (Leslie), superdiversity (Jablonkai and Du) and employability skills (Herrero). However, as one of the participants noted, while the conference began with a critical and nuanced approach from Holliday, it was then followed by participants frequently invoking categories such as the 'international student' in ways that at times may have lacked a degree of criticality. This is in part due to the inescapability of the label international student where it has become naturalised within the discourse and vested interests of UK HE, particularly in connection with student recruitment and the reliance on higher fees for students who are classified as international. Moreover, behind the label of international student also rest some of the 'hard realities' which these students face during their study in the UK including the increasingly difficult processes for obtaining visas (see Travis and Weale 2016).

Another of these hard realities which international students face is the need to take a UKVI recognised secure English language test (SELT) most often in the form of an IELTS to meet an English language requirement prior to gaining entry onto a degree programme and this was recognised in the second theme of the workshop (language assessment and international student recruitment). These four papers were the most cohesive in terms of their relevance to the session's theme and they included the tensions between the use of pre-sessionals versus the overreliance on IELTS (Bentley), the predictive validity of IELTS (Drybrough), the need to rethink entry requirements and assessment for PG programmes (Ottewell) and expectations of language needs from students on a Master's level TESOL programme (Moran). In this session there was a palpable sense of agreement amongst the 80 participants that IELTS is not entirely fit for purpose, but that IELTS was also not

necessarily designed as predictive assessment of a student's capability to succeed on a degree programme.

The discussant Vincenzo Raimo concluded the second session in polemical fashion stating that those working in HE as applied linguists and EAP practitioners had, in his words, 'failed.' While this assessment certainly captured the attention of the audience, he was unclear in his criticism about what exactly the failure was. Was the failure a reference to the decline in the popularity of language study in UK HE, the lack of influence which practitioners exert over language policy rules and regulations at governmental and HE levels, or perhaps even the lack of influence over the recent Brexit vote? Certainly, these are areas which need further clarification, consideration and debate. However, without clear identification of the problems, it remains difficult to seek solutions or to have a productive discussion. To add to this, Raimo also stated that continued failure will see language provision in UK HEIs taken over by private language providers. Given that this is a growing trend (see Chakrabortty: 2016), this threat carried some weight and after the conclusion of Raimo's assessment, the participants in the workshop continued with the sword of Damocles hanging over our heads.

The afternoon session focused on the day's final theme (the International Student Experience) and again there was a significant degree of coherence in the 5 afternoon papers. However, where discontinuity was somewhat apparent was in relation to the morning statement by Holliday regarding his decision to not ask or state where research participants are from, instead leaving this to the research participants to make reference to if they felt it was important. This cautiousness against imposing a national or ethnic identity on research participants contrasted with the series of afternoon papers which dealt with the ISE from the perspective of Arab students (Hajar), Russian students (Ryazanova) Thai students (Cleary) and Chinese students (Ni). While all papers were well-researched and had interesting findings, there is a danger that studies from the perspective of a particular nationality/ethnicity might imbue the category with greater significance than it may actually warrant. This approach also raises questions about when these categories are appropriate

and relevant particularly in light of Holliday's earlier distinctions between cultural blocks and threads. Where the afternoon session worked very well was when research students themselves (e.g. Candarli and González) talked about their own experiences in a way which reflected the cultural threads approach. While both researchers drew on their own nationality, their primary focus was on their transformation and integration into the group of fellow students and the small culture of their programme. This paper also felt less like a report of research done *on* a particular category of student and the kind of nuanced approach that the morning had promised (see Harvey 2016 for another example of a similarly nuanced approach).

It should be no great surprise that there were, in the words of the organisers, competing epistemologies and ontologies which emerged in an event such as this. However, the workshop may have served as a catalyst for starting to identify what exactly these mismatches are (possible examples include neoliberalism versus humanism, critical cosmopolitanism versus essentialism, postmodernism versus positivism and the many discourses in between these problematic binaries). This starting point can lead to further consideration of the implications for competing approaches to EAP, culture, interculturality and UK HE in general. While some of the workshop's participants may have left with a feeling that this process had barely begun and too many questions remained unanswered, fortunately, the promise of a second workshop in Leeds in 2017 offers hope that some of the issues raised on the day will be considered in the near future. Further information about this event will appear in the *Leeds Language Scholarship Journal*.

Address for correspondence: h.collins@leeds.ac.uk

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'Full Steam Ahead At BALEAP'. A Review of the BALEAP Bristol 2017 Conference

Kashmir Kaur

Language Centre, School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, University of Leeds

Key words: Legitimation Code Theory, Cumulative Knowledge Building, Segmental Knowledge Building, Critical EAP, QR Codes in EAP

Brunel's steamship SS Great Britain was an excellent start to my BALEAP conference experience[75]. Relaxing over a glass (or two) of chilled white wine under a cloudless blue sky, it was good to catch up with old colleagues and be introduced to new. In a moment of quiet reflection, with the strains of a lone saxophonist floating in the background, I mused over the conference theme 'Addressing the State of the Union: Working Together = Learning Together' and contemplated if the conference would produce anything innovative to change history in the EAP world as this ship had in the world of ship building [76].

The 23rd biennial had provided a full programme with a cast of varied presenters, both international and home, delivering a wide range of papers. The subject matter spanned discussions from theory and knowledge building to technology and sharing teaching experiences and reflections. It was satisfying to see such diverse topics, even though this made choosing sessions difficult.

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[75] The BALEAP 2017 Conference (7-9 April) was hosted by University of Bristol. There were four invited keynote speakers - Clare Furneaux, Karl Maton, Libor Štěpánek and Glenn Fulcher and approximately 114 talks delivered in 10 parallel sessions across the 3 days under the themes 'Writing', 'English for Specific Academic Purposes, 'Assessment/Feedback', 'Technology Enhanced Learning' and 'The EAP Practitioner'.

[76] Deborah M. Withers, 'SS Great Britain and the containment of British collective memory', *International Journal of Heritage Studies,* 17:3 (2011), 245-260 (p.246) http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2011.557835 [accessed: 21.04.2017].

Clare Furneaux started the proceedings. In the opening plenary she set the theme with a thought provoking, at times humorous, account of EAP past, present and future. She addressed the key questions of: who we as EAP practitioners are, what our role and place in the academy is and what our future may be within British higher education.

On Saturday morning Karl Maton delivered a wave-making keynote address on Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) which certainly caught my interest. This sociological multi-dimensional toolkit connected theory with practice in a tangible way and addressed how forms of knowledge develop and in an effort to empower learners, he emphasised that learning needs to be cumulative and not segmental.[77] Thus, the focus needs to be on cumulative knowledge building whereby learning interconnects in different areas and navigates away from segmental knowledge building which is strongly context bound, condensed and only meaningful within that context. In fact, it is very much in the vein of Bernstein with the emphasis on vertical knowledge building.[78] It was cheering to hear that the framework is already being used to explore a variety of practices and contexts in education for example, music, mathematics, English and technology, successfully.

Steve Kirk, in his paper the next day, expanded on Maton's 'wave making' by sharing his experience of using semantics, one dimension of LCT, in his teaching. Kirk's case study assisted in a deeper understanding of LCT in practice and his visible 'signature profiles' is definitely worthy of consideration in course design and practitioner development. Here the entire and/or sections of a lesson is captured and analysed for its strengths of 'semantic

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[77] Robert Van Krieken et al, *Sociology : Themes and Perspectives*, 5th Ed, (Sydney: Pearson, 2014), p.175; Karl Maton, *Knowledge and Knowers: Towards a Realist Sociology of Education*, (London: Routledge, 2013), p.106.
[78] Basil Bernstein, 'Vertical and Horizontal Discourse: An Essay', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 20:2 (1999), 175-173 (p.161) <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01425699995380?needAccess=true> [accessed: 09.05.2017].

gravity' and 'semantic density'. For example, the stronger the semantic gravity (SG+), the more meaning is dependent on its context; conversely, the weaker the semantic gravity (SG−), the less dependent meaning is on its context. Semantic density follows the same pattern. The stronger the semantic density (SD+), the more meanings are condensed within practices; the weaker the semantic density (SD−), the less meanings are condensed. These concepts demonstrate how contextualised and basic understandings of knowledge transition towards more consolidated, diverse and deeper meanings.[79] As I listened, I simultaneously realized that 'semantic waves' could be incorporated into my teaching not only to assist delivery of lessons but also as a tool for learners to develop their academic style (the formal academic language and the academic conventions that align it) and cumulative knowledge building.

A couple of sessions I attended did not deliver anything new. Nevertheless, as a practitioner, it was good to be reminded of certain elements that had been backgrounded. It appears that the current climate is ripe for these to be foregrounded such as embedding intercultural competences into programmes and the multiple levels of collaboration that can take place between the various actors. Furthermore, it was heartening to learn that the above and certain practices already incorporated in my teaching could lead to further possibilities of working and learning together in a variety of areas such as formative feedback.

A number of my colleagues from the University of Leeds shared their interests at the conference with Dr Alex Ding presenting twice - once in collaboration with Dr Ian Bruce with 'State of the Union: Evaluating the Current and Envisioning the Future Knowledge Base of EAP' and he also presented a paper which played on an utterance purported to be by

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[79] Karl Maton, 'Making semantic waves: A key to cumulative knowledge-building', *Linguistics and Education*, 24 (2013), 8-22 (pp.11 & 20) < http://www.legitimationcodetheory.com/pdf/2013Semantic_waves.pdf> [accessed: 21.04.2017].

Socrates entitled 'The EAP Practitioner: Examining An Unexamined Life'. Dr Simon Webster presented his findings for case study research in 'Evaluating Partnership Programmes in Embedded In-Sessional Settings' and Bee Bond and Professor Melinda Whong collaborated on a paper entitled 'A Combined Offer: Collaborative Development Through a Content-Based Pre-Sessional Programme'.

The most dare I say 'revolutionary' session I attended was Chris Macallister's. He argued for a more critical approach to the practice of EAP particularly as ideas matter in education and they are reproduced again and again. Education is a political arena and the EAP classroom is not a neutral site but a political space where opportunities exist for political and social change - critical can be realised in the classroom.[80] Macallister's paper indicated that it is possible to engage students with political concepts which result in their agency as political actors. He concluded that students needed to be viewed holistically - not just as producers of good essays but as actors with political agency too. Even though EAP is very much a high stakes results orientated form of ELT, it is possible for criticality to coexist with EAP. In the current post-truth and fake news landscape and the ever expanding social media, it is essential for learners to engage critically with all sites of information. I too advocate that EAP should not just be EAP but Critical EAP (CEAP).

Even though the bright sun and cerulean skies beckoned, I am pleased I caught Averil Bolster's and Peter Lavrai's talk on Sunday morning which situated sustainability at the heart of their EAP course book. It was interesting and informative to hear how they developed their course based on the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals 2030. I must confess, it prompted ideas that could be adapted. For example, the extensive use of QR codes in

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[80] Paulo Freire, (Myra Bergman Ramos, Translator) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, (London: Penguin Books, 1996), p.72; Sarah Benesch*, Critical English for Academic Purposes: Theory, Politics and Practice,* (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc., 2001), p.46.

their textbook was inspiring. Engagement with QR codes does not appear to be widely employed in EAP to enhance students' learning; albeit, they have occasionally made an appearance on posters. It is an excellent approach to enable students to access external resources in an efficient and speedy way and be integrated on the VLE.

Returning to the question posed earlier, did the conference produce anything that will impact the world of EAP in the manner SS Great Britain impacted the shipping industry? Maybe… it is possible that the LCT and CEAP ripples could be considered the vanguard of a new era in EAP. No doubt, it could be claimed that that CEAP is very 1990s and not the leading force. However, I would argue, even though CEAP has lain dormant, in an era of post truth politics and fake news it is more relevant and necessary - it needs to be stirred and awakened.

 Overall, it was good to hear that the 'State of Union' is alive and kicking and that 'Working Together = Learning Together' is very much in evidence and ample opportunities enabled new partnerships and alliances to blossom to ensure the 'union' continues to move forward.

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What does it mean to be a Language Centre?

A Report of the AULC 2017 Annual Conference

Professor Melinda Whong

Leeds University Language Centre Director

Key words: Language Centre, institution wide language provision (IWLP) programmes, modern foreign languages (MFL), English language teaching (ELT), Association of University Language Centres (AULC)

There are two ways in which a language can be offered by a University: through a degree awarding programme or as a co-curricular class or course. The origin of most university language centres in the UK is as the home of co-curricular language provision. Given that one healthy facet of life is that society is dynamic, when the external context in which universities exist change, language centres within universities also change. An interesting feature of the recent annual conference of the Association of University Language Centres (AULC) was to see the diversity of what constitutes a Language Centre in 2017, causing me to ponder what it means to be a Language Centre.

The majority of the delegates and papers at the AULC conference came from members of institution wide language provision (IWLP) programmes, i.e. co-curricular language classes. IWLP programmes in the UK typically provide classes in European languages and the dominant global languages, such as Chinese and Arabic, and in some institutions languages which meet the needs of the local community, e.g. Punjabi. There was also some representation from degree-awarding programmes at the AULC. This is only natural as most concers amongst language teachers will transcend whether or not the class carries credits. But perhaps because of the origins of language centres in the UK, the inclusion of the wider

MLF constituency was underrepresented. In a similar vein, there were few delegates who teach English. That said, one of three invited keynote speakers was English-oriented, Libor Štěpánek, from Masaryk University in the Czech Republic, where English is taught as a foreign language. Notably absent was representation from English units in the UK. It is not the case that there were no UK-based English teachers present, but given the volume of English for Academic Purposes teaching that takes place in UK universities, the absence was stark.

Discussions with members of the AULC Executive indicated that the AULC sees its primary concern as the teaching of languages within IWLP contexts in the UK, despite the aims given on the AULC website which indicate a wider orientation to 'encourage and foster good practice and innovation in language learning and teaching' without any indication that any language or language teaching context is not included (http://www.aulc.org/aims.html [accessed 23 January 2017]). And indeed, it was also clear from both papers given and discussions that took place during the conference, that the AULC including the Executive, would not want to exclude any language or language professional.

The importance of an organization like the AULC cannot be overstated given the current political climate, and the difficulties facing Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) in the UK (Paton 2013). One positive development despite the current political shift to look inward is that IWLP programmes are growing nationally (UCML-AULC Survey 2015, p. 7). However, pondering what it means to be a language centre left me thinking that there is much to be gained if there was more of a direct linking up of the teaching of English and the teaching of other languages. It is an unfortunate reality that in terms of academic discipline MFL and EFL are largely distinct from each other. I would argue that it is in language centres where this divide should be overtly challenged. The genuine openness of the AULC indicates support at the national level for any language centre wanting to challenge this divide.

Consideration of the theme of the AULC conference illustrates the artifice of the EL-FL divide. Under the theme, The Multilingual University: Inspiring Teachers, Transforming Learners, the papers given and issues discussed largely transcended the boundaries of particular languages and whether they were being offered on courses as part of a degree or not. The AULC annual conference was hosted by Queens University Belfast, 12-13 January 2017. There were 3 invited keynote speakers, 20 talks in four parallel sessions, and time given to the four AULC Special Interest Groups: Professional Development, Teaching & Learning Support, Language for Specific Purposes and Management.

There was strong participation from the University of Leeds, with contributions by colleagues whose primary remit is in IWLP (i.e. Languages for All), MFL, and EL. Specifically, the following talks were given:

- Caroline Campbell, Using student-centred assessment to inspire learners and evidence their learning
- Patrizia Lavizani, The Italian Digital Project
- Juan Muñoz López & María García Florenciano, Authentic Materials and real tasks, Enhancing students' employability, intercultural Awareness and communicative competence
- Carolin Schneider & Melinda Whong, Developing Co-curricular Language Learning Activities

There is every reason why language centres should be the hub for the teaching and learning of all languages. Whether that's the teaching of Thai, Arabic, German or English, the vast majority of concerns that teachers have in their classrooms with their learners are common to all and would thus benefit from a cross-language approach to language teaching.

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Dialogue Interpreting: A Guide to Interpreting in Public Services and the Community

Long Yang and Yu Yuan

Centre for Translation Studies, School of Languages, Cultures and Societies,

University of Leeds

Abstract
With more global attention being paid to migrant and asylum issues, people have noticed the important role of interpreting in this regard. In fact, interpreting in the community, or community-based interpreting has begun to attract attention since the 1980s; hence it comes this book under review. Not only does this book cover different fields of community-based interpreting, but also it explores their latest development. This article will briefly summarize the main chapters of the book and analyse its advantages and the aspects that warrant improvement.

Key words: Book Review; A Guide; Dialogue Interpreting; Public Services; Community-based Interpreting

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, with more global attention being paid to migrant and asylum issues, people have noticed the important role of interpreting in this regard. In fact, interpreting in the community, or community-based interpreting has begun to attract attention since the 1980s when people were faced with mounting communication problems in the public-sector institutions (e.g. health-care, social services). It has been gaining a gradually growing popularity in the interpreting studies community as well; hence it comes this book under review now as a general guideline on this topic. Not only does it cover different fields of community-based interpreting, but also it explores their latest development. This article will briefly summarize the main chapters of the book and analyse its advantages and the aspects that warrant improvement.

This book, co-authored by Dr Rebecca Tipton at the University of Manchester and Prof. Olgierda Furmanek at the Wake Forest University, aims to provide an essential guide for practising interpreters and for all students of interpreting, Modern Languages, Applied Linguistics and Intercultural Communication. Both authors are well-known scholars on public service and Community Interpreting Studies.

Structurally, this book is organized into three parts. Part One generally introduces the topic of the book, including the scope and purpose of this guide, terminology and taxonomy in dialogue interpreting. Part Two (Chapters 1-7) firstly talks about the continuing professional development (CPD) required for the practice of dialogue interpreting and then further classifies dialogue interpreting into six concrete domains (i.e. criminal procedure, asylum procedure, healthcare setting, education setting, social care-related setting and religious setting) and discusses each of them in detail. Part Three concludes the work.

2. EVALUATION

In fact, researchers have to be innovative in writing a book on introducing a subject, as this probably has been done by many scholars before. Dialogue interpreting is no exception in this regard and many previous introductory books have their own characteristics. For instance, *Coordinating Participation in Dialogue Interpreting* (2012), edited by Claudio Baraldi and Laura Gavioli revolves around a single concept, or the concept of coordination, which was first introduced by Cecilia Wadensjö in her 1998 book *Interpreting as Interaction*. The volume has proved that this concept is a productive and useful tool to describe features of interpreter-mediated interaction.

Overall, the studies in this book are of high quality and have some innovations as well both in structure and in content. These qualities guarantee that it has largely achieved its aim of presenting the field of dialogue interpreting. Firstly, unlike some stipulated documentations such as *International Standard ISO 13611 Interpreting – Guidelines for Community Interpreting, 2014*,[81] which put the thematic competencies under core competencies for interpreters, this book places emphasis on the need for a broader and more complex understanding of thematic competencies in specific settings. The authors believe that thematic competencies can be a complementary part to core and developmental competencies. That is why the chapters are structured around the concept of competency in each specific domain. It is like a thread that can lead and link every chapter. This made the book well-designed and readers can quickly locate the domain they are looking for. What's more, the legal domain was further divided into criminal and asylum procedures, which reflect the new development and need in dialogue interpreting. This made us think of the 'European migrant crisis' taking place in 2015. From here, we can see that the authors closely follow the new trend in dialogue interpreting.

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[81] International Standard ISO 13611 Interpreting – Guidelines for Community Interpreting: http://www.iso.org/iso/catalogue_detail.htm?csnumber=54082 (accessed 31 Dec. 2016)

Secondly, as a professional guide, this book focuses on analysing many examples and case studies, which make it very engaging, rather than only discussing interpreting concepts or theories. By providing many hands-on activities for illustration purpose, the book can motivate readers and let them explore different settings in interpreting. For instance, in Chapter 3, which explores interpreted events concerning claims for asylum, learners are encouraged to look for the position regarding the involvement of asylum and immigration court interpreters in their own country. In Chapter 6, a case study revolving around Freedom from Torture, an organization in the non-profit sector in the United Kingdom was discussed in detail. The authors introduce the establishment of this organization, how it recruits interpreters and how it functions. Through analysis, they emphasize the importance of development and training for interpreters in social care domain.

Thirdly, the guide can offer sufficient and practical background information for beginners. At the beginning of each chapter, the authors illustrate the modes, scope and nature of each specific domain, which can help interpreters prepare well before they embark on their career. For instance, in chapter 3 for asylum procedures, which is a relatively new area in dialogue interpreting, they introduce some international laws and many useful resources in this regard. In chapter 4 for healthcare interpreting, the authors talk about many related projects in some countries and the relevant conditions of healthcare interpreting in these countries in order for the readers to familiarize with the context of this field. In effect, all the domains in community interpreting are covered in this book. Traditional community interpreting usually revolves around medical and legal settings (see Hale 2007; Valero-Garcés and Martin 2008). This book can balance between the new areas in community interpreting such as education and social care and the traditional settings. For professional interpreters, who can learn or train themselves through the reflections on case studies, it provides a working guideline by thorough and comprehensive coverage of various topics, scenes, procedures and ethics, etc., while for the academics, who can choose some underdeveloped topics or issues for research, it offers a reservoir of research topics. Also, for the purpose of interpreting

teaching or training, it supplies many resources. The broad coverage of this book can be useful references to design curriculum for interpreting courses and many case studies can be introduced to class directly.

However, some aspects can be further improved in this book. Firstly, there is not much theoretical underpinning. This is an introductory book that is suitable for beginners or practitioners in dialogue interpreting to acquire some background knowledge and skills required in this field, but not suitable for academics to carry out research. It focuses on practices rather than theories. There are many macroscopic, summative or contextual contents on different domains of dialogue interpreting. Like in Chapter 7, the background of interpreting in religious settings and their four subtypes are generally introduced. However, it lacks in-depth analyses in some specific aspects. For instance, there are many kinds of interpreter-mediated interviews or dialogues mentioned, but more specific and recent research have begun to pay attention to some details such as the patterns of gaze and other non-verbal signals during the interpreting process, which are bound up with role, status, issues of identity and power, etc. (Mason 2012: 177). So, learners must bear in mind their purpose before reading this book. Secondly, the differences in dialogue interpreting caused by geographical locations are not fully manifested. In Table 1.2 on page 5 of this book, the authors introduce a lot of terms of dialogue interpreting in different countries. It seemed that they would pay attention to the different conditions of dialogue interpreting in those areas, but this respect was not well illustrated. Also, it is known that dialogue interpreting usually takes place in the multicultural and multilingual public procedural contexts (Inghilleri 2012: 72). However, this would not be the case, for instance, in China, which largely is a mono-cultural and mono-linguistic society. For example, in one study, Su (2009: 42-45) outlines every aspect of interpreting in China and finds that Chinese community interpreting developed rather late, especially in healthcare interpreting. Su finds that until today, many foreign patients in China will choose to communicate directly with Chinese doctors who can speak English rather than looking for an interpreter. That means, the condition of development of dialogue interpreting

can vary in different places. Some scholars have noticed this point and have a much clearer target. For instance, in their book, Colin and Morris (1996) focus attention on analysing various aspects of interpreting issues in legal process in the United Kingdom, especially in England and Wales, and at the end, only very briefly review the situation in other countries such as Canada, Sweden and the United States. Rudvin and Tomassini (2008: 245-266) also give us a good example. They examine the language mediator's role in educational and medical settings specifically in Italy and find that the local demographical, historical and socio-political situation impact radically on professional categories, especially those professions which are related to the politically volatile area of migration. Last but not least, though this book claims it is a guide for both practicing interpreters and all the students, it did not strike a balance. It actually focuses much attention on CPD, while the initial professional development, or institutional learning was not reflected. However, formal schooling was also of importance for working in this field. Edwards (1995: 4) maintains that for federal certification exam for Spanish court interpreting, one needs at least 14 years of schooling in English to understand the English used in court, not to mention university degree requirement. Thus, we believe formal education could lay a solid foundation for dialogue interpreters. But this guide may not be suitable for schooling.

To sum up, for further improvement, this book could have introduced more theoretical underpinnings and combined them with interpreting practice. Despite this, it has to a great extent introduced the latest development of dialogue interpreting, covered all the relevant fields and outlined their major trends and achieved its purpose. It can benefit both interpreting practitioners and academics. It is recommended.

Address for correspondence: mlly@leeds.ac.uk

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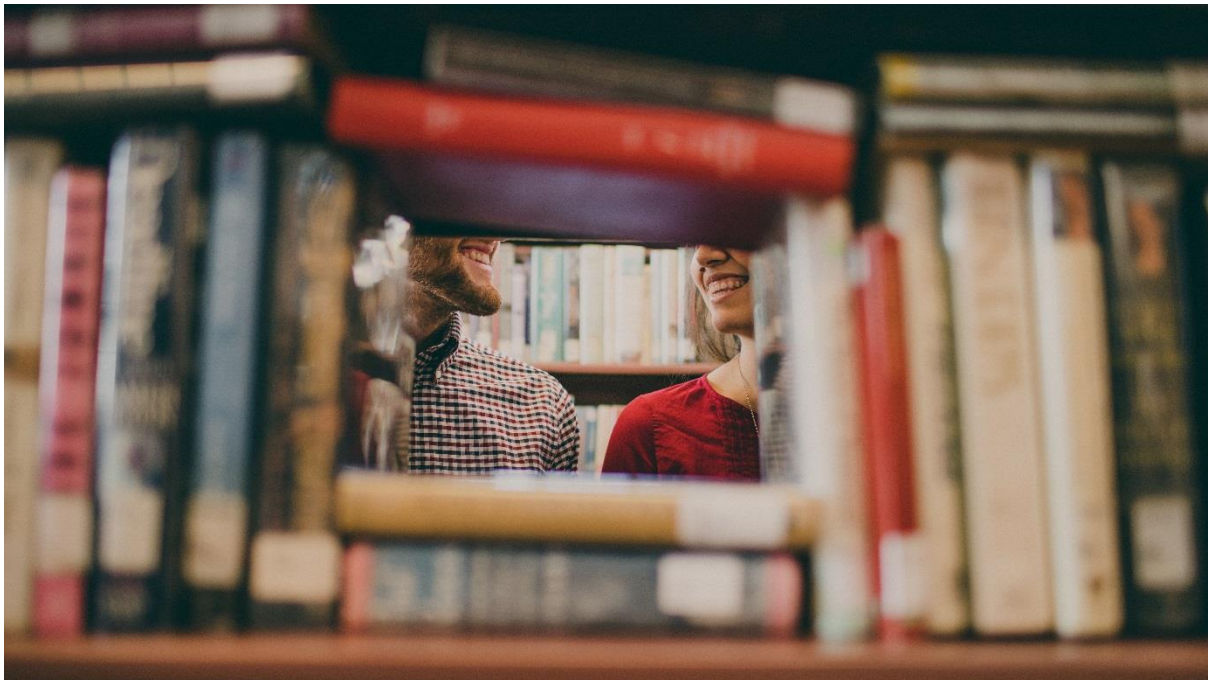
Reflexiones de una socióloga

Anabel Castillo

Modern Languages Teaching Centre, University of Sheffield

Key words: Identidad, Lengua, Bilingüismo, Aprendizaje de Segunda Lengua, Emociones, Identity, Language, Bilingualism, Second Language Learning, Emotions

Desde una perspectiva autoetnográfica el artículo describe el proceso de redefinición de la identidad de una socióloga y el aprendizaje del inglés como segunda lengua. El núcleo central de esta trayectoria gira en torno a la identidad y la lengua (tanto el inglés como el español). En la primera parte se describen diferentes situaciones que muestran las dificultades de una inmigrante para formar parte de la sociedad y cómo en la búsqueda de alternativas se ve forzada a reinventar a sí misma nuevos espacios e identidades gracias al uso tanto del inglés como del español. La segunda parte, ofrece ideas para el análisis haciendo especial hincapié en la importancia de las emociones, finalizando con una invitación por reivindicar lo diferente como fuente fundamental para la integración. Palabras claves: Identidad; Lengua; Bilingüismo; Aprendizaje de Segunda Lengua; Emociones.

This article uses an auto ethnographic framework to describe the process through which a sociologist redefines her own identity after starting teaching Spanish as a foreign Language in the UK. The core of this experience hinges around the concepts of identity and language, and how one defines the other. The first section highlights the difficulties faced by a desire to integrate into British society that, ultimately, push towards a redefinition of the concept of identity. The second part addresses the importance of examining emotions when analysing such experiences and invites the reader to consider the role that 'difference' plays as a fundamental source of integration.

Llegué a Inglaterra hace dieciséis años, el mismo tiempo que hace que no escribo excepto enviar correos o escribir comentarios a los trabajos de los estudiantes de español. Habiendo sido formada en el área de las ciencias sociales y entrenada como sociólogo en el estudio y análisis de procesos sociales, inevitablemente durante esta última década lo mejor que he podido hacer es utilizar todo esa formación y conocimiento para reflexionar sobre mi propio proceso.

¿Cómo empezó todo? Hace dos años trabajaba como voluntaria en un evento ofrecido por la Universidad de Leeds Beckett: "Languages in the Globalised World", donde concurrían expertos en áreas como bilingüismo, análisis de discurso e interculturalidad. Fue en la conferencia de clausura, a cargo de Barbara Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, quien reflexionaba sobre las emociones y cómo expresarlas en una segunda lengua, lo que inspiró esta reflexión personal.

Por una parte, sus ideas abrieron un camino para entender las dificultades en el uso y entendimiento del inglés, pero también para comprender que muchas de estas situaciones no eran producto del azar, sino que, por el contrario, que hay teorías que buscan explicar lo que pasa cuando estamos en una situación de estrés y no alcanzamos ni a decir nuestro nombre correctamente. Fue entonces cuando empecé a leer a Aneta Pavlenko (2005, 2007). Desde entonces he tomado notas de manera asistemática y he grabado reflexiones que me vienen a la mente. Algunas de ellas son las que se describen en las próximas líneas.

IDENTIDAD Y LENGUA

El inglés: encuentros y desencuentros

Siempre he estado convencida que lo primero que hay que hacer para pertenecer a una sociedad donde no se habla la misma lengua es aprender el idioma. Su aprendizaje permite acceder tanto a las instituciones (educación, salud, vivienda) como a los ideales y valores de la misma, y en consecuencia entender a los otros e interactuar recíprocamente.

A los meses de haber llegado decidí que tenía que aprender inglés (mi nivel de inglés no solo

era rudimentario, sino que era demasiado básico), me inscribí en el *college* pero también decidí que evitaría cualquier contacto con personas que hablaran español. Extraña decisión, siendo que lo único que poseía como fuente de identidad, era, al mismo tiempo mi principal obstáculo: el español. Para darle viabilidad a este plan empecé a buscar trabajo de voluntaria, sobre todo en el sector comunitario, donde yo pensaba que, aunque no tuviera un completo dominio de la lengua, sí tenía ciertas destrezas. Este fue uno de los primeros encuentros con la variedad lingüística de Bradford, y lo que eso significaba para una inmigrante recién llegada.

Era un programa orientado a familias de bajos recursos económicos que consistía en la instalación de puertas de protección en las escaleras para los bebés. Tuve que ir a un curso y pasar por un entrenamiento (¡sorprendentemente la lengua no fue un obstáculo!), luego al visitar a las familias, la lengua tampoco era un problema, bien fuera porque la mayoría de estas familias no hablaban inglés, o porque la comunicación con la trabajadora social era en otra lengua, quizás punjabi, urdu (nuevas para mí), conversaciones en las que yo no podía tomar parte, naturalmente. El trabajo de voluntaria poco ayudó con el mejoramiento del inglés, pero si permitió conocer la dimensión de lo social y lo público, muy distinta a la vivida y estudiada en Venezuela. Ambas interrelacionadas, donde lo social es garantizado por un estado, que define y permea lo público como espacio de acceso a todos, que regula las condiciones a su acceso y sanciona cuando se incumplen.

Recientemente mi propuesta de tesis doctoral había sido aprobada por la Universidad de Deusto, en Bilbao. Me encontraba entonces en la etapa de buscar financiamiento para el trabajo de campo, el cual no conseguí.

Siendo que el financiamiento de mi tesis no había sido aprobado estaba claro que tenía que replantearme qué hacer profesionalmente. Trabajar de voluntaria no parecía que fuera a abrirme las puertas que yo necesitaba, ni me ayudaría a mejorar el inglés. Durante años me aferré a la idea de que en algún momento podría retomar el tema que tanto me apasionaba: el estudio de la violencia y su relación con la falta de institucionalidad en sociedades

democráticas. Por los momentos había decidido incluirlo en la lista de cosas por hacer antes de morir.

Decidida a conseguir cualquier trabajo que me pusiera en contacto con el mundo real; con gente real que hablara inglés, conseguí trabajo en una fábrica durante una semana. Esta experiencia me trasladó a otra sociedad completamente distinta. El trabajo en sí mismo era sencillo, empaquetar ropa interior, sentada, no requería mayor esfuerzo ni físico ni intelectual. El uso del inglés, brillaba por su ausencia. Desde que se entraba en la mañana hasta que se salía en la tarde, las personas se comunicaban en otra lengua distinta al inglés, hasta la radio era en otra lengua. Cuando terminaba la jornada y dejaba la fábrica sentía que había viajado miles de millas de un continente a otro, para llegar de nuevo a Inglaterra, lugar al que todavía no podía llamar hogar.

Seguí estudiando inglés por dos años y huyendo de quienes hablaran español, pero este deseo se fue desvaneciendo cada vez más, al tiempo que la brecha entre lo que yo era (venezolana con poco dominio del inglés) y la dificultad de entablar relaciones con los nativos se ampliaba cada vez más. Fue el momento en el que entendí dos cosas: primero, que tanto aquí como en Venezuela el acceso a la información y el tener redes sociales era igualmente importante, más aún, tratándose de una inmigrante y, en segundo lugar, que no bastaba vivir en una sociedad para aprender su lengua, que se requería la interacción cotidiana con la gente, con las instituciones, y todo esto estaba, aún, fuera de mi alcance.

El español: mi segunda lengua

Doblegada por la cruda realidad donde la lengua que quería aprender no era de tan fácil acceso como siempre había pensado, rompí mi promesa y al tiempo que empecé a socializar con mis conocidos hispanohablantes se me empezaron a abrir las puertas, poco a poco, lentamente, y no sin sorpresas.

La primera puerta que se abrió fue la que se le abre a la mayoría de los hispanohablantes recién llegan a Inglaterra: dar clases de español. Primero intenté con las agencias de

reclutamiento. Me topé con la arrogancia de quienes sin saber otra lengua más allá del inglés me pedían pruebas de mi nivel de español, así como constancias que evidenciaran mi capacidad de hablar español. Adicional a este requisito también me pedían experiencia de haber enseñado. En el curriculum se enumeraban los años de docencia que había ejercido en Venezuela. Naturalmente, un simple papel no mostraba el profundo compromiso y pasión, que, desde joven, había tenido con la enseñanza. Para ese momento, 2003, mi trayectoria profesional recorría un período de por lo menos 15 años en la docencia. Ya en la escuela secundaria trabajé alfabetizando adultos en los barrios pobres de Caracas. Posteriormente, durante mis estudios de sociología, trabajé dos años como asistente de sociología y posteriormente, graduada de sociólogo, a los 22 años, empecé mi carrera como profesora universitaria de Sociología Jurídica en la universidad Central de Venezuela, la cual terminaría nueve años después, cuando en 1999, gracias a una beca del gobierno vasco, dejé Venezuela y me fui a Bilbao para hacer un doctorado en sociología.

Paralelamente a la docencia trabajaba como consultora internacional de proyectos sociales, es decir, tenía publicaciones, tanto libros como artículos en revistas, todos en español. Para mí todo esto era un claro indicador de poseer no sólo un alto nivel de español, sino también habilidades como docente. Esto era lo que me definía personal y profesionalmente. ¿Qué si tenía experiencia?, claro y amplia por los demás. ¿Dónde? este era el problema. Todas mis credenciales eran de Venezuela. Con esta situación me tropecé varias veces. Con el tiempo entendí que este descrédito de lo que yo había hecho no sólo sería en el mundo inglés, sino también en el de quienes hablaban mi lengua.

Enajenada de mi propia lengua: ahora soy latinoamericana

En virtud del poco éxito que tuve con las agencias de reclutamiento decidí probar suerte directamente con los institutos que ofrecían español como segunda lengua. Tuve la osadía de mandar mi curriculum a una prestigiosa institución que ofrece clases de español como segunda lengua, me invitaron a una entrevista informal con el sorprendente desenlace de que

ellos no contrataban latinoamericanos, según me comunicaron al final de la reunión.

Debo confesar que lo menos que me esperaba como resultado de esta entrevista era que aludieran a mi origen [82]. Así, este fue el primer y más duro golpe a lo que yo era, a lo que yo pensaba definía mi identidad: por una parte, el hecho de que el español, mi lengua, fuera puesto en entredicho por gente que igualmente lo hablaba y luego la adscripción a un nuevo origen, el ser latinoamericana, más que venezolana. Me encontraba ahora en una subcultura, la de los hispanos, donde lo latino necesitaba aprobación.

Sorprendida y frustrada, no hacía si no estar llena de preguntas, la mayoría sin respuesta, ¿Qué pasa con el español que yo hablo? ¿Cuál es el problema? ¿Por qué todo lo que yo he hecho no sirve de nada? ¿Es un prejuicio hacia quienes estamos formados en el tercer mundo? Estaba claro que no solo había dejado mi país si no que ahora me encontraba enajenada, exiliada de mi propia lengua. Me convertí en parte de una 'minoría equivocada' [83] como diría una amiga.

DEL ESPAÑOL PENINSULAR A SU RECONOCIMIENTO UNIVERSAL

A pesar de estos prejuicios y gracias a las redes, conseguí unas horas como profesora de español a adultos. Estaba feliz. Terminaba las clases y no me quitaba el carné que me identificaba como tutora de español, quería que todo el mundo lo supiera. Así empecé esta aventura de enseñar español y de reinventarme profesionalmente en un rol para el que no estaba preparada formalmente y con el que no he dejado de aprender desde entonces, de eso hace ya trece años. Mi obsesión por mejorar el inglés encontró aquí un nicho que me permitió avanzar con el inglés y enriquecer mi español.

Los primeros años no dejaron de ser igualmente sorprendentes en cuanto al mundo lingüístico

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[82] A veces tentada a seguir el juego de los estigmas y estereotipos mencionaba que era hija de españoles que habían emigrado de España a Venezuela o que había nacido en Venezuela hija de inmigrantes españoles. En algunos causaba sorpresa, pero no pasaba de allí.

[83] Se trata de aquella minoría para quien no hay políticas de 'discriminación positiva' o iniciativas de integración social como sucede con otros grupos minoritarios.

del español al que me enfrentaba y me seguiría enfrentando.

Cuando lo desconocido se niega y se rechaza: 'Así no se dice'

Mis primeros encuentros como profesora de español asociaban mi lengua a una España barata como la excusa perfecta para huir del inhóspito clima inglés. Aunado a esto me enfrenté con la recelosa actitud de estudiantes que, aun conociendo poco o nada sobre el mundo hispano, ponían en duda mi capacidad para enseñarles y en consecuencia la posibilidad de que ellos aprendieran español, '¿Por qué no pronuncias la zeta (z)?'; 'si yo hablo como tú ¿me van a entender en España?', o cuando les dije que era venezolana algún estudiante reaccionó con '¡ah! ¡entonces hablas venezolano!?'.

En su momento pensé que esta situación podría estar relacionada con el perfil socioeconómico del estudiante. Para mi sorpresa me conseguí con reacciones similares entre algunos colegas, cuya lengua materna era el español, pero para quienes lo único válido y permitido, era, sin duda, el español peninsular. La constante corrección a cualquier palabra que yo usara o dijera, 'salón se refiere al lugar de la casa donde hay un sofá' y no al aula de clase que era de lo que yo estaba hablando, me aclaró una colega. Esta única manera de hablar el español formó parte de mi cotidianidad laboral durante unos años.

Recientemente en una reunión de intérpretes, cuando nos presentamos una colega dijo que ella hablaba tres lenguas: español castellano, latino americano e inglés, la tallerista, confundida, le preguntó por la diferencia entre ellas 'el castellano se habla en España mientras que el español latinoamericano es un dialecto', dijo.

Adicionalmente a esta presencia hegemónica del español peninsular, se encontraban las editoriales y los libros que utilizábamos en clase. Durante mis primeros años enseñando español observé que el contenido de los manuales estaba fundamentalmente referido a España, y que muy poco hacían referencia a América Latina.

Este aparente menosprecio del español venezolano se convierte en invitación para el análisis de un campo completamente inexplorado por mí: el prestigio de un tipo de español sobre otro;

la lucha por estandarizar el español frente a una realidad lingüística variada, geográfica y culturalmente [84]. Aunque estos aspectos van más allá de los límites de este trabajo, vale la pena mencionar que ya algunos estudios han reconocido la variedad lingüística del español desde una perspectiva histórica (Palacios, 2006). Otros trabajos han abordado el impacto de esta diversidad y el de una actitud 'etnocéntrica' en la enseñanza del español como segunda lengua (Cerdeira P. y José V., Ianni; 2009).

Reconocimiento de lo diferente

Durante los trece años que he estado enseñando, tanto el perfil del estudiante como la línea editorial de los manuales ha cambiado y han dado muestra de lo amplia que es nuestra lengua incorporando materiales de lectura, giros o usos lingüísticos latinoamericanos.

Cada vez más los estudiantes, agradecen el hecho de tener profesores de América Latina, incluso muchos estudian español porque quieren viajar o vivir un tiempo en el 'nuevo continente'.

La visión eurocéntrica del español como lengua empieza a diluirse. Un hecho significativo aunque no por ello paradójico, es la publicación en 2010 del Diccionario de Americanismos por parte de la Real Academia Española[85]. El Diccionario de Americanismos "[...] es obra de las veintidós Academias asociadas en su trabajo al servicio de la unidad del español sin menoscabo de su rica y fecunda variedad" (RAE, 2010).

¿QUÉ QUEDA DE TODO ESTO? ANÁLISIS DE LAS REFLEXIONES ANTERIORES

El núcleo central de ésta experiencia ha sido la definición de la identidad en torno a dos elementos claves: lengua e identidad y la evocación.

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[84] El español es lengua oficial en veinte países de América Latina: México, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Cuba, Costa Rica, República Dominicana, Panamá, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Colombia, Perú, Ecuador, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay.

[85] Resulta paradójico que esa visión esencialista del español se haya resquebrajado con la postura de la organización que decide cuánto del español que se habla fuera de España es considerado legítimo.

Lengua e identidad

Con el tiempo el binomio identidad- lengua se disocia. Cada uno toma caminos distintos. Por una parte, el concepto de identidad evoluciona desde el plano personal al profesional: ser venezolana da lugar luego al hecho de ser sociólogo, fusionándose, a veces, pero en otros oponiéndose. Por otra parte, con la lengua hay inicialmente una evolución, caracterizada por un aprendizaje acelerado del inglés, interrumpido por la constatación de la diferencia entre el inglés de calle y el inglés del *college.* La lengua como artefacto cultural de integración a una sociedad diferente es más un concepto teórico que práctico. Su realidad práctica depende de componentes como la personalidad, las actitudes, los antecedentes u orígenes sociales y de las redes sociales.

La expresión de las emociones, así como la dificultad de expresarlas en la segunda lengua, se convierten en un aspecto fundamental de la identidad. Del mismo modo, que cuando se está molesto expresar la rabia o hablar en inglés a hace la comunicación sumamente difícil, que las palabras no salgan, se entrecorten. En su momento esto es atribuido a la incapacidad de aprender un inglés aceptable, correcto. Sin embargo, diversos estudios (Dewaele, 2006; Pavlenko 2012; 2005) muestran que en personas bilingües, principalmente quienes han aprendido la lengua tardíamente, estas situaciones son particularmente común (Pavlenko, 2007).

La evocación: cordón umbilical entre Venezuela e Inglaterra

Es la brisa del fresco verano inglés que trae los recuerdos de los calurosos veranos del litoral guaireño, en la costa o el olor del *fish and chips* que evoca los atardeceres a la orilla del mar, comiendo pescadito frito.

Reflexionar sobre la propia experiencia pone en evidencia el poder que tienen los recuerdos en la asimilación, comprensión e incorporación de la nueva sociedad como parte del sí mismo. Por una parte, permiten crear un compás de espera entre los momentos dejados atrás con aquellos que empiezan a ser descubiertos en una sociedad que abre sus puertas y de la que

apenas se empiezan a disfrutar sus bondades. Esta breve pausa, vivida a través de los recuerdos entre el ayer y el presente hace que la transición sea menos dolorosa. Los recuerdos, por otra parte, permiten construir una suerte de eclecticismo entre lo propio y de lo que aún no se pertenece, pero de lo cual se quiere apropiar y hacerlo suyo. Es hacer uso de lo familiar para incorporar lo desconocido y ajeno. Es el asociar una cara no familiar con la imagen lejana del frutero en Venezuela, quien se apostaba todas las mañanas temprano, en la esquina del edificio.

Es el fabuloso efecto reivindicador que tiene la evocación de las imágenes, las caras, los olores. Todo ello permite la apropiación cognitiva de lo que socialmente no nos pertenece: de los espacios, de las cafeterías, de la música, de la comida. Es el reconocimiento de sí mismo en lo diferente e inexplorado.

Es así como estas reflexiones se han convertido en una fuente reivindicadora de lo diferente. En una invitación personal a explorar nuevas líneas de investigación donde la integración social y cultural deben buscarse en lo diferente y en lo opuesto, no en lo que hace que las personas sean iguales.

Address for correspondence: a.castillo@sheffield.ac.uk

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Personal Tutoring: Notes from a small conference

Dr Ruth Payne

Leeds University Language Centre Director

Key words: conference, tutoring

UKAT* 2017 @ Leeds Trinity April 5th and 6th

The purpose of this short report is not to wave any flag for personal tutoring, nor to press people to undertake even more work in this area. It is simply to highlight things I learnt at the recent conference and to reassure everyone that at Leeds, we are very much **on top of our game**.

The Keynote speaker was Liz Thomas, who outlined the history of personal tutoring from its inception as tutors in *loco parentis* - because students didn't reach adulthood until they were 21 – to the league-table-driven provision we have today. More importantly, though, Liz Thomas is author of HEA's What Works? (https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/individuals/student-success/retention/what-works), looking at student retention and success; she is now working on Phase 2 (http://www.lizthomasassociates.co.uk/phase2.html).

The key issues for students are not surprising:

1. **Personal touch and personal knowledge – *he knew my name***

2. **Sense of belonging**

3. **Tutoring managed as part of mainstream activities – not as an add-on**

4. **Tutoring/support is delivered to all, so it's best to embed tutoring in main teaching**

5. **Peer relationships**

6. **Students' identities as learners in HE**

7. **Relevance to students' interests and to future individual goals**

8. **Meaningful relationship between staff and students – approachable staff**

9. **Most effective advice is given via academic skills teaching, by academic staff**

Of course, the **timing of the delivery of advice** is always critical, and students continue to benefit when information is not just passed on all at once. The focus during induction should be on **friendships** with other students and on **relationships** with staff, with guidance to all necessary information coming later on through those social links, but not as a means of forging them. This feels like a real **endorsement for peer mentoring** and support from other students as well as from staff. It also suggests clearly that **induction is more than 'Induction Week'**. Most importantly, perhaps, it highlights the need for **early contact with personal tutees.**

Our personal tutoring through Leeds for Life is already based on a **curriculum model** that includes advice and guidance in overall programme provision. This differs from pastoral models that separate support from academic work, or professional services models of tutoring that offer access to a range of support agencies. What we do as personal tutors in Leeds is **establish the relationship** the students find so important, then **guide students towards other services** where necessary. Key to this is that academic guidance remains part of the academic experience overall, not an add-on component, and students have been seen to value this as a **key connection to academic staff**. However, we cannot overlook the fact that there are still ways to improve our work as personal tutors, and this can be achieved through transparent discussions about what we are trying to provide, as well as through provision of a range of **accessible resources to support colleagues** new to personal tutoring, or simply new to Leeds.

What's happening elsewhere?

One of the sessions referred to tutoring as 'Cinderella' – the poor relation to academic skills and subject teaching. This institution set up a Learning Hub to address retention problems and student engagement, employing recent graduates as interns to set up events and manage social media. Again, the message was that **social integration is a clear route to academic investment and success**. I wondered if a learning hub would separate academic skills from subject learning and remove a crucial point of contact for personal tutors and other academic staff, but we do need to **take every opportunity to signpost Skills@library**, perhaps going so far as to set up a schedule of prompts for 1ˢᵗ years as they reach key assessment stages, reminding them of available support.

Another session discussed coaching skills and how we can learn from other models, such as charities and businesses, using coaching skills to establish the relationship at the very start; this discussion referred to the **importance of silence in personal tutorials**, to allow students to gather their thoughts and then explain what is most important to them as individuals. Another session discussed the 'patchwork tutoring' made up of peer mentoring, personal tutors, senior tutors (more a programme support role) and the clear links between them.

Some institutions recommended setting a piece of assessed work in core modules to form the basis of the first tutorial meeting. Having asked the tutee how they approached the assignment, discussions then naturally lead to key issues such as time management and writing style. This then provides an opportunity to **set specific targets for each tutee**, with an end of year performance review reflecting on the extent to which the targets have been met.

The very **important topic of CPD** as personal tutors was discussed in the final session I attended, including **training on listening and advising**, and the provision of an interactive pdf as an online **resource for personal tutors**. The issue with this will always be keeping resources up-to-date and fresh, but it's definitely worth doing. One very important point from

this session was the provision of clear indicators of **what the personal tutoring relationship is** *not* – and that sets very useful boundaries for those tutors who have concerns about how far tutoring should be taking us in terms of giving advice to our students.

Some take-home points:

- **Leeds for Life provides an exceptional model of Personal Tutoring**

- **The next step in LCS must be to embed Personal Tutoring fully within our programme**

- **We must make full use of our new peer mentoring scheme**

- **Keep signposting Skills@library**

- **We needs to monitor attendance at personal tutorials**

- **There is a key link between personal tutoring and induction**

- **Relevance is equally important to students and staff - why are we doing this? – and that will mean tailoring tutoring to different subject areas and student cohorts**

- **There's a real need to shake off any vestiges of the 'poor relation'**

* United Kingdom Advising and Tutoring group