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Articles

Challenging scholarship: A thought piece

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Key words: scholarship, identity, agency, knowledge, research.

The title of this thought piece indicates a dual meaning to *challenging scholarship*: obstacles to scholarship and contributions to scholarship. The first part of his thought piece explores a range of obstacles to scholarship: conceptual and definitional confusion; hierarchies of scholarship; the problems of impact and the influence of neoliberalism on scholarship, and the relatively low status that scholarship has in universities compared to research.

This section is followed by a consideration of what challenging contributions to scholarship might entail because of and despite the obstacles outlined earlier. I consider whether there is a professional duty to make our knowledge (and doubts) available to the wider communities to which we belong. I argue that remaining silent or abstaining from scholarship carries certain risks. We are subject to and part of multiple 'norm circles' - norm circles regulate and endorse certain increasingly standardised practices. Scholarship is a means to shape and influence the normative structures that regulate praxis. In order to exert a degree of control over our professional lives an important dimension of scholarship is reflexive critique and advocacy. As reflexive persons and professionals we aim to shorten the gap between what is and what ought to be through articulation of our values and beliefs and praxis. By making our scholarship, however fallible, public we are attempting, through dialogue to transform. In this thought piece I also outline the cognitive capital from scholarship and to argue that there is not only social capital to be gained through scholarship: there is epistemic capital and value in scholarship. I also outline the ways in which we should reconsider the pedagogical relationship with students through scholarship suggesting they have a far more active role to play than so far appears to be the case.

Introduction

In this *thought piece*, which can be qualified as speculative, analytical and, hopefully, thought provoking, I wish to explore the dual meaning of 'challenging scholarship'. Firstly, this entails mapping out the multifarious objections and obstacles to scholarship that have been forcefully articulated in a range of publications within the increasingly diverse and voluminous SoTL (Scholarship of Teaching and Learning) literature over the past thirty or so years. Secondly, having mapped out objections and obstacles, I consider what I mean and what is entailed by scholarship that challenges, *inter alia*,

practices, orthodoxy, values, epistemologies, identities, conceptions, structures, pedagogies, ideologies, and cultures which shape language education. By doing so, I am offering only an oblique response to the challenges to scholarship outlined in the first section. The decision to write in the genre of *thought piece* was taken because of the affordances it allows in terms of expressly inviting dialogue, critique, comments, refutations, and additions from readers. It is also written in this genre because this journal encourages submissions which are works and thoughts in progress, ideas that need further development through critique and dialogue and as such this piece is an open invitation to reshape some, many, if not all, of the provisional thoughts outlined here.

Challenging Scholarship: Obstacles to Scholarship

The most enduring and cited, although increasingly contested, definition of SoTL is:

> We develop a scholarship of teaching when our work as teachers becomes public, peer-reviewed and critiqued. And exchanged with members of our professional communities so they, in turn, can build on our work.
> Shulman, 2000:49.

Superficially, this definition is clear and unproblematic. It offers a clear sense that scholarship is the result, the outcome, the product of our teaching endeavours (the processes), made available publically, and used by the professional communities to which we belong. However, problems and confusions emerge when this definition is unpacked, operationalised, historicised and enacted.

The conceptual confusion around scholarship has been noted by many (most forcibly by Boshier, 2009; Franghanel et al, 2015; Servage, 2009). Perspectives on scholarship sometimes appear to amalgamate 'scholarly, exemplary or good teaching' (Boshier, 2009:2) making them difficult to distinguish. At other times scholarship appears to resemble more orthodox/traditional notions of research, or be equivalent to excellence in teaching or the application of educational theory and research to practice (Kreber and Cranton, 2000). Kreber (2007:2) has tried to align scholarship as 'authentic practice' whilst previously (Kreber and Cranton, 2000:477) suggesting that scholarship is 'ongoing learning about teaching and the demonstration of such knowledge'. It has also been characterised as a 'shorthand

for a strong commitment to teaching' (Atkinson, 2001:1219). Franghanel et al. (2015:10) have noted that scholarship has become conflated with: research-led teaching; teaching as research; dissemination; raising standards in teaching (evidencing excellence in teaching); a means to assess teaching excellence (scholarship providing the framework to assess quality), and as a teacher development tool. Boshier (2009:2) aptly captures the confusion with scholarship: 'Scholarship of teaching and learning is like a fairground mirror distorting the view irrespective of where the observer stands'.

I do not wish to labour this confusion any further simply to note three things; firstly, it is difficult not to agree with Andresen (2000) when he suggests that advocates of SoTL do not understand fully what is meant by scholarship. Secondly, this problem is compounded for those of us who come from disciplinary, educational and professional backgrounds in MFL (Modern Foreign Languages) and TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) where *scholarship* is not (yet?) part of the fabric of disciplinary discourse and concerns. Thirdly, the consequences of a lack of coherence and agreement about scholarship are *real* and not solely a matter of intellectual debate.

One of the consequences of lack of coherence regarding SoTL has been the emergence of a hierarchy of scholarship. This is, in part, due to interpretations and applications of Boyer's (1990) influential four-part scholarship model which consists of the scholarship of: discovery (research); integration (obtaining new meanings from available knowledge); application (application of knowledge to problems in theory or practice), and teaching (process of teaching). Although not Boyer's intention this model has often been disaggregated/atomised rather than considered holistically (Boshier, 2009) with the result that scholarship of discovery is considered more desirable than application (Franghanel et al, 2015). Despite Boshier's observation above he stresses that for scholarship to count it must make 'an original contribution to knowledge. Teaching codified knowledge or rehashing other people's ideas… would not suffice' and 'creating original knowledge … distinguishes non-scholarship from

scholarship' (Boshier, 2019:3-4). Creating/discovering *original knowledge* appears to put the bar so high to contributing to scholarship that it would act as a disincentive to many to begin to engage with scholarship especially if a significant motivator for engaging in scholarship is to improve the quality of educational life (a local, pragmatic and ethical concern) and for educators who engage seriously with teaching but also have other competing intellectual, work and discipline-based obligations, commitments allegiances and interests. Boshier appears to suffer from what Bourdieu called *intellectualcentricism* or *scholastic fallacy* – forgetting the scholastic conditions which have enabled him, a university professor of education, to make contributions to scholarship and erasing those conditions which shape, inhibit or circumscribe others' contributions to scholarship.

The confusion surrounding SoTL, the hierarchy of types of scholarship and the frequent focus on classroom pedagogy and problem-solving have contributed to a diminished recognition for SoTL. It is widely acknowledged (cf Bender, 2005; Chanok, 2007; Kreber, 2005) that SoTL has 'always resided in the long shadow of academic research' (Servage, 2009:29). Lurking 'at the periphery of university life and discourse' (Boshier, 2009:2) much of the discourse on SoTL continues to emphasise a lack of status, power, respect, legitimacy, value and recognition accorded to SoTL as well as hints of intellectual snobbery e.g. where SoTL is considered by many as a 'fallback route for promotion for people with patchy research records' (Boshier, 2009:1). These challenges to SOTL are further compounded in terms of promotion, recognition and reward for SoTL where senior managers and human resources departments fail to understand scholarship and where there are issues concerning evidencing SoTL through appropriate data.

At this point, it is worth pausing and considering the following questions: Why scholarship? Why now? The answer lies from two quite separate directions: it is a convergence of historical circumstances. Scholarship has been claimed as a 'movement that can transform the nature of … society toward our ideals of equity and justice… [it is] a paradigmatic change in higher education (Atkinson, 2001:1217).

It has 'humanistic and progressive aspirations of improved teaching' (Servage, 2009:27) embedded in professional values of reflective practices to guide 'authentic practice' (Kreber, 2015:109). SoTL is a manifestation of a commitment to enacting professional values, lending legitimacy to teaching in universities in an attempt to put teaching on a par with research, as well as a 'rallying cry for educational reformers' (Atkinson, 2001:1219) concerned with promoting social justice and equity.

SoTL clearly has a transformative philosophy and potential but it would be naïve to view SoTL ahistorically. The rise of SoTL in North America in the 1990s also coincided with the emergence and domination of neoliberalism where the university has been and continues to be subject to an ideology of financialisation, managerialism, market competition, and entrepreneurial utility. The transformation of the university through directives, reforms and legislation to become embodiments of the free market has had a number of effects: increasing competition between universities to attract students (Newman et al. 2004); greater dependence on student fees (Servage, 2009); the 'student is expected to serve as the personification of market forces' (Furedi, 2011:3), and students are encouraged to perceive education in terms of their access and entitlement to wealth and social capital. Consequently, students tend to avoid experimentation, risk-taking, intellectual challenges, and manifest conservative attitudes towards learning in order to maximise their chances of academic success (Nixon et al., 2011). Learning has, it seems, become consumptive and entrepreneurial (Lambeir, 2006). In this climate SoTL – and teaching more generally – has become another metric to rank universities/faculties/schools/individuals and enable universities to extract greater fees from a greater number of students - often to subsidise research (Probert, 2013:27-28). As such universities are being increasingly held to account for and judged by the quality of teaching (Kreber, 2015). It also partly accounts for shifts within SoTL from a focus on scholarship as a form of public engagement to develop and improve knowledge about teaching to a focus on *impact* (Trigwell, 2013) which must be *demonstrable* and *evidenced* (Boshier, 2009:9). Boshier (2009: 8-9) laments this shift to a preoccupation with impact – which 'reeks of performativity' - as being 'anti-intellectual' 'just in time

scholarship' or knowledge with an 'expiry date' (Servage, 2009:32) and 'drags SoTL into a narrow, functionalist, applied framework' entailing 'a premature foreclosure on ideas, ambiguities and problems' and the emergence of technocratic and standardised outcomes in teaching (Hanson, 2005; Kreber, 2005; Servage, 2009) within a framework of 'best practices, benchmarks, outputs and deliverables [and] competencies' (Boshier, 2009:8).

This section has highlighted a range (but not a comprehensive list/litany) of *challenges to scholarship*: conceptual, theoretical and definitional concerns; the emergence of hierarchies of scholarship; the perceived marginalisation, recognition and low esteem of scholarship within universities, and the evolution of SoTL from a vehicle for social and educational transformation to a neoliberal metric to measure and rank the quality of teaching. Combined, these represent formidable challenges to scholarship but *despite* and *because of* these challenges I argue in the following section that this makes it all the more imperative to engage with SoTL and contribute to public discourse in various communities to envisage and enact scholarship *differently*.

Challenging Scholarship: Contributions to scholarship

> [T]he core values of professional communities revolve around the expectation that we do not keep secrets, whether of discovery or of grounded doubt.
> Schulman, 2000:50.

What Schulman is suggesting is that we have a duty to make public our knowledge, contributions and doubts – we 'assume the responsibility for passing on what we learn' (idem). Engaging in scholarship is not compulsory and nor should it be as a distinction should be made between SoTL and *scholarly teaching* (which should be obligatory and has been articulated as teaching which is informed by theory, research and pedagogy). However, withdrawing from SoTL or non-engagement with SoTL carries risks. We are all subjected to (and part of) multiple *norm circles.* A norm circle is '[a]n entity with the emergent causal power to increase the dispositions to conform to the norm endorsed and enforced by the norm circle concerned' (Elder-Vass, 2012:26).

A norm circle consists of a group of people 'who are committed to endorsing and enforcing a particular norm' and they have 'the causal power to produce a tendency in individuals to follow standardised practices' (idem:22-23). A norm circle is different from a community in that its members may not be 'aware that a group as such exists and has known boundaries' but 'its member are influenced by the relations they have with each other, irrespective of how strong their consciousness is of this group as such' (idem:23). Individuals are sites of 'normative intersectionality' in which 'the differential influence of competing norms depends on the influence of power' (idem: 28-29). As language educators, whether we are aware of this or not, whether we participate or not in these circles, norm circles are *real* (ontologically real) and exert differential normative and dispositional influence over us. These circles include professional bodies, the school, students, colleagues, the disciplines that inform our knowledge and so on. Scholarship is a means to exert some influence over these norm circles, to shape the dispositions, knowledge and practices that are endorsed and enforced. Put more prosaically, by withholding contributions to scholarship we are potentially limiting our own agency, limiting our ability to influence structural change and accepting of changes and practices defined and decided by others.

Following on from this a key but neglected potential contribution to scholarship resides in reflexive critique and advocacy. Who we are is a 'matter of what we care about most and the commitments we make accordingly' (Archer, 2003: 120). Perhaps interrupted and over extended periods of time, the self moves from *discernment* to *deliberation* then *dedication* to a course of action or project. According to Archer (idem: 105), it is imperative that we know our powers, our liabilities, our objective position in the world, our resources and our values. In short we can critique our social ontologies and can attempt to change them. If we take this idea seriously, then

> The only way that the tension between personal aspirations and social expectation can be resolved is by practical action. Self-transformation entails projects which involve self-modification but which are also expressions of social critique and quests for social transformation.
> Archer, 2003:123.

This would suggest that an important dimension of SoTL resides in: attempting to articulate our own values and principles relating to education; analysing the values and principles that dominate our contexts and professions, and through praxis and scholarship attempt to shorten the gap between what is and what ought to be. Reflexivity, then, is related to the value, desirability and transformative potential of teaching - not only about 'what works' nor only about 'efficiency' but about commitment to transform aspects of education that we find incongruent and dissonant with fundamental values and principles. This entails a scholarship of policies and established orthodoxy in language education with a view to transformation and to have a chance of succeeding in this scholarship must be made public (and by going public to acknowledge that this scholarship is *fallible*, requiring others dialogically and dialectically to contribute critically to this scholarship):

> Though our experience of knowing is individual, knowledge is not...It is through a process of communal involvement, including all the controversies, that a body of knowledge is developed. It is by participating in these communities – even when going against the mainstream – that members produce scientific knowledge.
> Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002:10).

SoTL is still typically governed and framed by notions of 'problem-solving' (Franghanel et al, 2015) and classroom-based pedagogy. Whilst perhaps inevitable that much of scholarship (including critique and advocacy discussed above) is somewhat instrumental and often geared to practice and improvements in pedagogy. Maton provides a reminder that there is 'epistemic capital' in research and I would add scholarship:

> actors within the intellectual field engage in strategies aimed at maximising not merely resources and status but also epistemic profits, that is, better knowledge of the world.
> Maton, 2003:62.

We have cognitive interests as well as social ones and these should not be neglected in scholarship. There is a prevalent and long-standing discourse in SoTL and especially in TESOL which points to ambivalence to theory and claims of impoverished and undertheorised discourse (Kreber, 2015; McLean, 2006). This has proved to be an endemic debate in TESOL where the following quote is quite

typical. 'Theory is a problem. Not everyone is keen on theory, and some teachers say they would like to have as little to do with it as possible' (Trappes-Lomax and McGrath, 1999:1).

However, Lawes offers a rebuttal: '[S]uggesting that teachers are not interested in theory is offensive and demeaning' (Lawes, 2003:27). Widdowson adding that we need practitioners who 'are not easily persuaded to join the mindless march behind the latest banner' (Widdowson, 1984:33). This last point is important if scholarship is partly conceived of in terms of epistemic capital as this carries the potential of, over time, developing expertise in a specific domain (such as assessment for example). The gaining of expertise enables greater recognition from within the professional community and discipline and, importantly, enables the language educator to exercise greater influence over language education practices. Challenging scholarship also implies a rigorous 'answering back' and critiquing research(ers) and commercially driven pedagogical innovations and imperatives – to hold them to account. On one reading of language teaching pedagogy its teleology appears to be one of incessant innovation leading to ever improving theoretical and pedagogical understanding and practices. Scholarship should be cautious of innovation as it often appears that it is *innovation* itself which is prized not the substantive content of the proposed innovation. Change is not always good and a respectable aspect of scholarship also consists in preserving practices and 'raiding the archive' to revisit out-of-favour ideas, theories and practices.

The last substantive comment I wish to make about scholarship in this thought piece is to evoke the question of students and scholarship initially through the lens of *service*. Teaching, traditionally, has been viewed, through its professional ethics, as a *vocation*, a *calling*, a *moral imperative* and *service* to students and learning (Servage, 2009). However, this idea of service to students has been somewhat lost or conflated with more neoliberal notions of service – where service indicates monetary exchange, a commercial contractual relationship and where language educators 'deliver' a product which entails the enactment of *effective*, *efficient* pedagogies.

There are two short points I would like to make: firstly, despite the voluminous discourse on the nefarious effects of neoliberalism on education it would be impoverished to assume (and then act on this assumption) that students primarily see themselves and behave as consumers: this only offers them a very reductive identity and role and will curtail any possibility, *in eventus,* of a more meaningful educational relationship.

The second point I would like to make is to repeat a (long) observation made by Bass, (1999):

> One telling measure of how differently teaching is regarded from traditional scholarship or research within the academy is what a difference it makes to have a "problem" in one versus the other. In scholarship and research, having a "problem" is at the heart of the investigative process; it is the compound of the generative questions around which all creative and productive activity revolves. But in one's teaching, a "problem" is something you don't want to have, and if you have one, you probably want to fix it. Asking a colleague about a problem in his or her research is an invitation; asking about a problem in one's teaching would probably seem like an accusation. *Changing the status of the problem in teaching from terminal remediation to ongoing investigation is precisely what the movement for a scholarship of teaching is all about*. How might we make the problematization of teaching a matter of regular communal discourse? How might we think of teaching practice, and the evidence of student learning, as problems to be investigated, analyzed, represented, and debated?
> Bass, 1999: npng.

Bass grasps an essential aspect of scholarship: the framing of problems or puzzles we all have when teaching languages. This is where many who advocate SoTL fall short because they relegate pedagogy to 'technical' issues, remedial scholarship. A second facet of scholarship is often to speak on behalf of students, to examine them, analyse them, explain them, modify them. What is needed is a scholarship of language education which engages students, opens up dialogue and investigations that are of mutual concern and interest, that enable students to participate and with the underlying aim to:

> being open to and integrating another's horizon of meaning in such a way that one's own perspective is altered in the process. Such integration… must involve active engagement with the perspectives of others in a manner that encourages a critical re-examination of our own perspectives and attitudes.
> Martin et al 2010: 131.

This approach to students and scholarship, to return to the initial comment on service, mitigates against instrumental and transactional relationships and enables students' voices and perspectives to

be fully integrated into not only in problem solving scholarship but also wider educational discussions concerning ideas, theory, values and purposes.

In Lieu of a Conclusion

In the second part of this piece I have hinted much more than stated where challenging scholarship resides. The first point I made argued that abstaining from SoTL entails abdication of agency and relinquishing the possibility of transforming the structural conditions that shape if not determine our professional lives and activities. Abstention from scholarship is also hardly likely to lead to a rebalancing of esteem and power from research to scholarship (although I have my doubts that this should be conceived in such a binary and reductive manner).

I have suggested, obliquely, that rather than a hierarchy of scholarship there are different dimensions relating to; the theoretical and conceptual, the ethical and political, the epistemic, and the pedagogical relationship. Challenging scholarship will invariably focus on one of these dimensions and what we choose to focus on will be guided by our circumstances, interests, needs, concerns, capabilities and also our identity. SoTL should, I believe, be democratic, open to all educators (regardless of experience and status) with the freedom to pursue interests and ideas in collaboration with students, other stakeholders, and colleagues elsewhere.

Scholarship is, in a way, an invitation – a challenge - to reconsider our identity as language educators: it suggests an identity that expands into areas often occluded in the past to one that is more visible, more vocal, making contributions to professional knowledge, exerting influence, shaping practices and policies, engaging with students differently and accumulating social and epistemic capital and recognition.

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Thinking the grammar: Teaching a cognitive grammar using digital tools in a blended-learning context

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Abstract

The teaching of certain aspects of Spanish grammar has always been challenging for both teachers and learners. Additionally traditional approaches to the teaching of grammar based on behaviourist views of learning promoting memorization and repetition have been disputed and the need to teach a cognitive grammar that responds to rules that can be understood according to the speaker's communicative intention and should be reflected upon has been proposed. This article is aimed at showing two activities, which have been designed using digital tools with the purpose of helping undergraduates studying Spanish at the University of Leeds to reflect on the grammar. On the one hand, the digital tool *Twine* has been used for creating a game-like story in which learners need to reflect on the difference between simple past and past continuous in Spanish. A second task has been proposed in which learners need to watch some videos showing different uses of the modes indicative and subjunctive in context and then share on a discussion board their hypothesis about grammar use. Both these activities are intended to promote and facilitate the learner's reflection and understanding of the grammar. On the other hand it is also the aim of this article to show that a blended-learning design constitutes the ideal framework to promote such a teaching and learning approach to the grammar based on reflection. Both traditional teaching through lectures and online tuition by using digital learning environments show benefits and constraints. However, a combination of both traditional and online tuition enhances the learner experience by facilitating the understanding of the grammar while also developing the learner's strategies for autonomous learning.

Key words: Second language teaching, Cognitive grammar, Digital tools, Gamification, Blended-learning.

1. Aims and teaching context

The teaching of certain aspects of Spanish grammar has always been challenging for both teachers and learners. More specifically, the differences between the Spanish modes indicative and subjunctive and the differences between past tenses (simple past/indefinido and past continuous/imperfecto) appear to be difficult to acquire by learners of Spanish. The aim of this article is to show two activities that have been designed using digital tools and which are intended to promote a teaching and learning of a cognitive grammar based on reflection and taking into account the context and the communicative intention. Such activities have been designed for undergraduates of a Spanish Module

in the third and final year at the University of Leeds who are expected to achieve a C1 level in Spanish according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). Accordingly, a good command of the Spanish modes indicative and subjunctive as well as the past tense is required to achieve that level. Undergraduates attend grammar lectures every week over the academic year, therefore, the purpose of the activities proposed in this article is to combine attendance to lectures with tasks and activities on the digital learning environment of the University of Leeds (VLE) according to a blended-learning design thus providing learners with more time to reflect on the grammar and to work at their own pace. For a better understanding of the context table 1 shows the main characteristics of the Spanish module for which this tasks were designed, table 2 illustrates the learner's profile in this module and table 3 includes the learning conditions and digital resources that made possible this project.

Table 1. Module Characteristics

Module Characteristics	
Name of the module	SPPO3010 Practical Language Skills in Spanish 3
Module's Structure	Lectures: 2-hour weekly grammar lecture over 20 weeks Seminars: 1-hour weekly seminars over 20 weeks (seminars on the second semester will mainly consist of oral debates and presentations).
Method of Assessment	30% 1,000 words written project 20% Individual Oral presentation 15% Participation in oral debates 35% Grammar test
Number of participants	Aprox.130

Table 2. Learner's profile

Learners' Profile	
Type of learner	University undergraduates studying Spanish as foreign language.
Level of competence in the target language	B2+/C1 according to the CEFR

Preferences of learning	Learners have different styles of learning ranging from more deductive approaches (applying rules) to rather inductive and experiential learning approaches (observation, reflection and extraction of rules).
Level of digital literacy	Participants are already familiarised with the virtual learning environment (VLE) used by the University of Leeds through the platform *Blackboard*.

Table 3. Learning Conditions

Learning Conditions	
Accessibility to the VLE	All students have personal usernames and passwords to access the VLE of the University of Leeds. They can access the platform from their personal digital devices or through the many computers available on campus.
Current uses of the VLE	The VLE of the University of Leeds is being used for the Module SPPO3010 for the following purposes: ● Displaying information about lectures (notes, worksheets), seminars and assignments. ● Providing text-based and audio/video information (articles and papers) to prepare for oral presentations and debates. ● Discussion boards for exchange of ideas among students. ● Lecture capture: making the recording of lectures available to students.

2. Pedagogical approaches underpinning the design: Thinking the grammar and learning through dialogue and interaction

Two main pedagogical approaches underpin the design of the activities proposed in this paper: On the one hand, the idea that a cognitive grammar focused on meaning and not exclusively on form needs to be taught and be reflected upon. On the other hand a sociocultural approach which regards learning as the process and the product resulting from dialogue and interaction.

Llopis-García, Real-Espinosa and Ruiz-Campillo (2012) advocate for a shift in the way Spanish grammar has been traditionally presented to students of Spanish as a foreign language, namely, through a traditional and prescriptive grammar. On the one hand, traditional grammar has been developed from classic Aristotelian logic whereby language utterances are analysed according to how true they are in the reality outside the language. However, languages are not directly connected to an objective reality that exists outside the language but they are limited and constrained by speakers' perceptions of the world. Additionally, there might be different utterances that express the same true event or idea, meaning, that the language offers different perspectives and ways of approaching and expressing the same objective reality. On the other hand, the teaching of Spanish grammar has been based on principles of a prescriptive grammar, that is, a grammar usually focused on forms, and in which rules are regarded as 'characteristics of the system instead of options that depend on the speaker's communicative intention' (2012:11). Grammar rules are linked to meanings and, therefore, they should be considered in relation to the context and the message that the speaker's is trying to convey. Thus, according to Llopis-García, Real-Espinosa and Ruiz-Campillo, contrary to this traditional prescriptive or descriptive approach to grammar, a cognitive and operative grammar should be developed. Traditional descriptions of grammar have emphasized the importance of the form over the meaning. Conversely, a cognitive or operative grammar understands grammar as a system in which form and meaning are intertwined and communicative intention plays an important role. Grammar structures are not formed randomly but they are the formulations of the speaker's thinking (2012:16). This conception of language structure and grammar derives from Slobin's concept of *thinking for speaking* whereby a speaker is filtering his/her experience of the world through the linguistic possibilities offered by the language he/she is using (1996:76). Thus, a speaker's choices when formulating utterances are not arbitrary but the product of thinking and encoding experiences in the language according to communicative intentions. Accordingly, different grammar uses like, for example, the indicative and subjunctive modes in Spanish —which are particularly difficult to acquire by learners of Spanish— respond to rules and can be explained if form, meaning and context —including communicative intention— are considered. However, traditional ways of teaching the grammar have prioritized memorization over reflection. In tune with such a conception of grammar, Ruiz-Campillo in an interview conducted by Estevan Molina (2008) argued that it is necessary to teach students to think about the grammar and to reflect about grammar uses because the grammar responds to logical rules that can be understood instead of being learned by heart. Ruiz-Campillo further points out that such an approach to teaching proves to be more effective in terms of how learners will incorporate contents in a more meaningful way. By meaningful way Ruiz-Campillo is referring to Ausubel's definition of meaningful learning whereby new ideas are linked to already existing ideas thus enabling a better understanding of those news ideas (1968:108). Therefore if learners get to understand the mechanisms ruling the target language (in this case Spanish), they may establish connections and comparisons with their own native language and in doing this they make sense of how the systems work similarly or differently. Such a non-arbitrary understanding of how language works has implications in terms of retention. Meaningful learning thus facilitates that 'newly-learned' meaning becomes an integral part of a particular ideational system. […] As a result, the temporal span of retention is greatly extended' (Ausubel, 1968:108). An approach to teaching grammar that relies on reflection contributes to both understanding and, consequently, to long-term retention of the contents. Such an approach to teaching grammar has guided the design of both activities proposed in this paper as outline in table 1.

Table 1: Thinking the grammar

Learning Principle	**Digital Tool**	**Task in the VLE**
Learners should think about grammar uses taking into	Game: *Twine*	While playing with *Twine* students have to reflect on uses of the past tense and

account form, meaning and context.		make choices that will shape the development of the story.
	Videos and participation in discussion board	Learners will watch videos showing different uses of grammar, they will reflect on the specific example of grammar use and make hypothesis about why speakers made those grammar choices. They will share the hypothesis on a discussion board.

Aligned with the above-mentioned idea of learning as a process that involves reflection and thinking is the socio-cultural approach to learning. According to Vygotsky (1978:33) learning occurs through dialogue and interaction between previous and new ideas in what he called the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), an area in which the tension between those ideas lead to the development of new skills. Ausubel (1985:75) also claimed that interaction facilitated the incorporation of new concepts in the cognitive structure of pre-existing ideas. This constructivist conception of learning has underpinned the design of a task in which students have to share their hypothesis about grammar use on a discussion board. Accordingly, the interaction and dialogue generated on the discussion board would promote learning as well as the development of learner's strategies to infer meanings and uses of the language as shown in table 2.

Table 2: Learning through dialogue and interaction

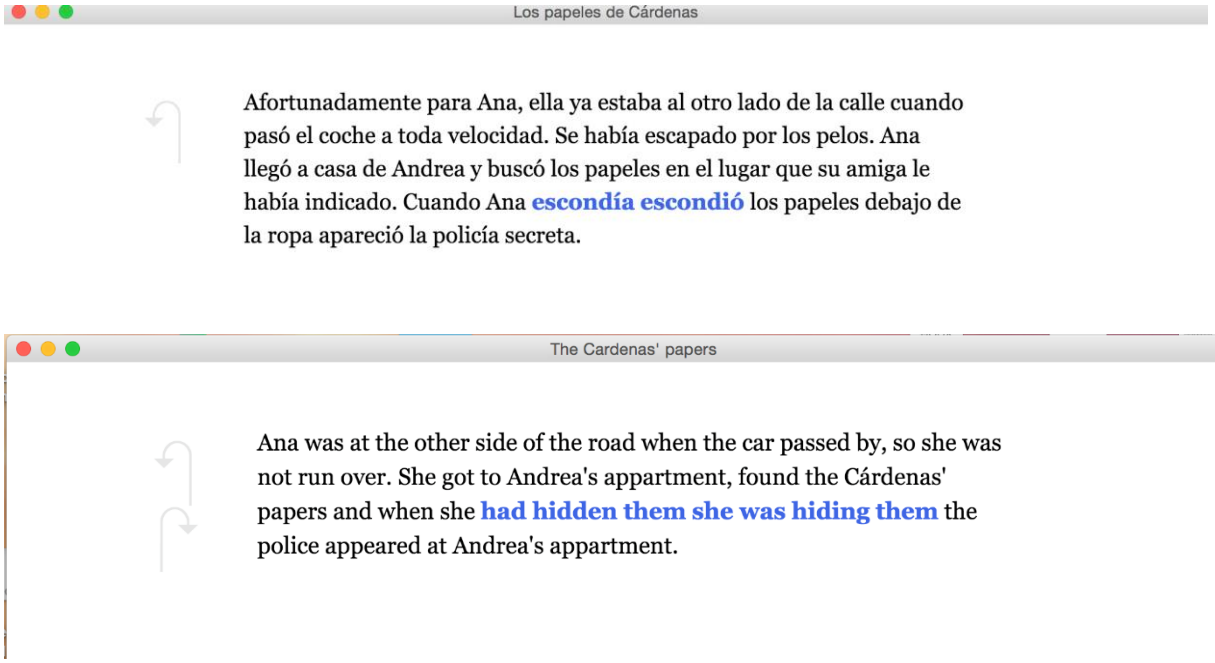
Learning Principle	Digital Tool	Task in the VLE
Learning occurs through dialogue and interaction with others.	Discussion board	Prior to attending the grammar lecture, learners have to watch some videos showing specific uses of grammar and post their hypothesis about why certain tenses and modes are being used on a discussion board. They will comment each other posts and they will decide which hypothesis they are going to propose in the face-to-face lecture.

It must be emphasized that the selection of digital tools for designing activities should be informed by pedagogical approaches promoting the learning of a language and not the other way round. In this sense Boyle and Ravenscroft (2012:1225) explored the concept of deep learning design, whereby approaches to learning and teaching are reconsidered and digital tools are identified to best respond to those learning purposes. This means that digital tools or technology should not shape the designing of activities in digital learning environments but be accommodated in them according to specific conceptions and pedagogies of how learning occurs. According to this, and once the pedagogical approaches have been explore, the next section will give an account of how those specific digital tools work and respond to the learning pedagogies already discussed.

3. The digital tool *Twine* and the practice of past tenses

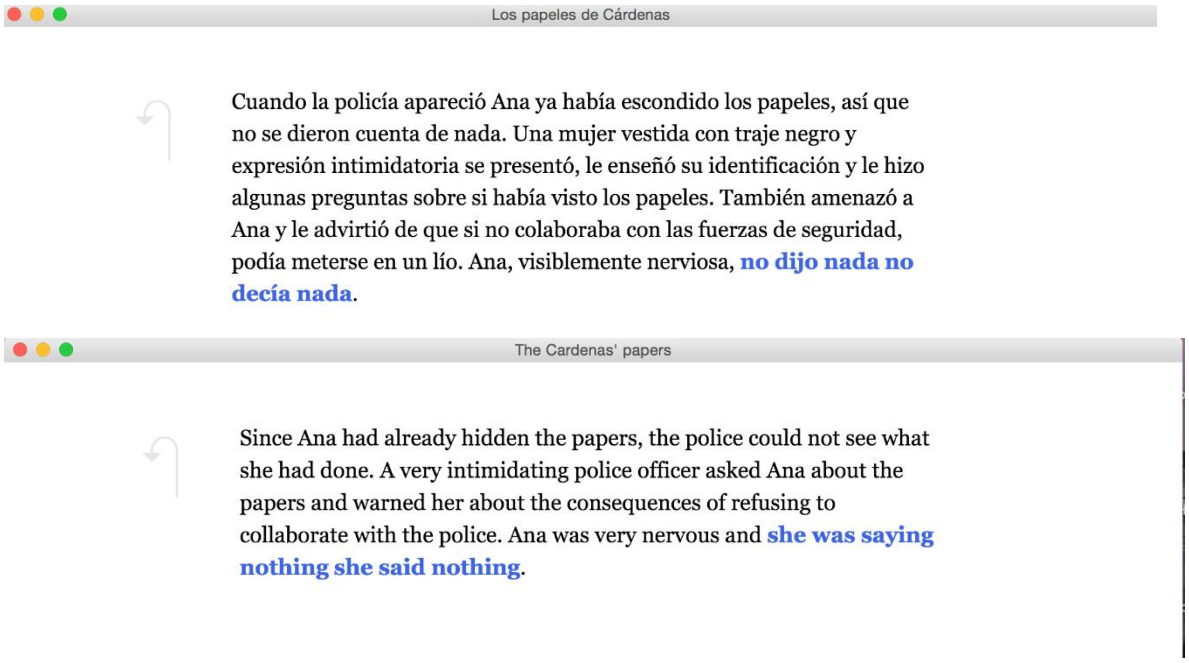
Twine is a digital tool that allows the designer to create a story that unfolds according to the choices that the reader makes between two options that are given. *Twine* has been conceived to serve as a game and it works like the 'choose your own adventure' readings. Thus, depending on the reader's decisions the story will follow one path or another and will progress or not accordingly. In this sense, *Twine* constitutes an effective tool that offers a good opportunity for students to practice the differences and nuances in the use of the past tense in Spanish in context and always taking into account the communicative intention and the implications in terms of meaning when using one past or the other. Accordingly, a story was created in which users were always given two options to choose, namely, simple past/indefinido or past continuous/imperfecto. The aim was to practice and understand the difference between a finished action (expressed with simple past/indefinido) and a non-finished action (expressed with past continuous/imperfecto). The story is about two friends, Andrea who is a journalist and Ana who is a writer. Andrea has been arrested by the secret service in relation to information uncovering a scandal of political corruption that would involve the Spanish Prime Minister. Ana needs to help Andrea to get the papers including that information from Andrea's apartment and take them to the newspaper's editing room where Andrea works before the police have access to them. Each step of the story gives the reader the opportunity to choose between one option (simple past/indefinido) or the other (past continuous/imperfecto) and according to what the reader chooses, the story may progress and Ana accomplishes her mission or the story gets to a dead end in which Ana fails to take the papers to the newspaper's editing room. These are some screen shots of the activity and the different paths:

Screen shot 1 (Spanish and English translation)



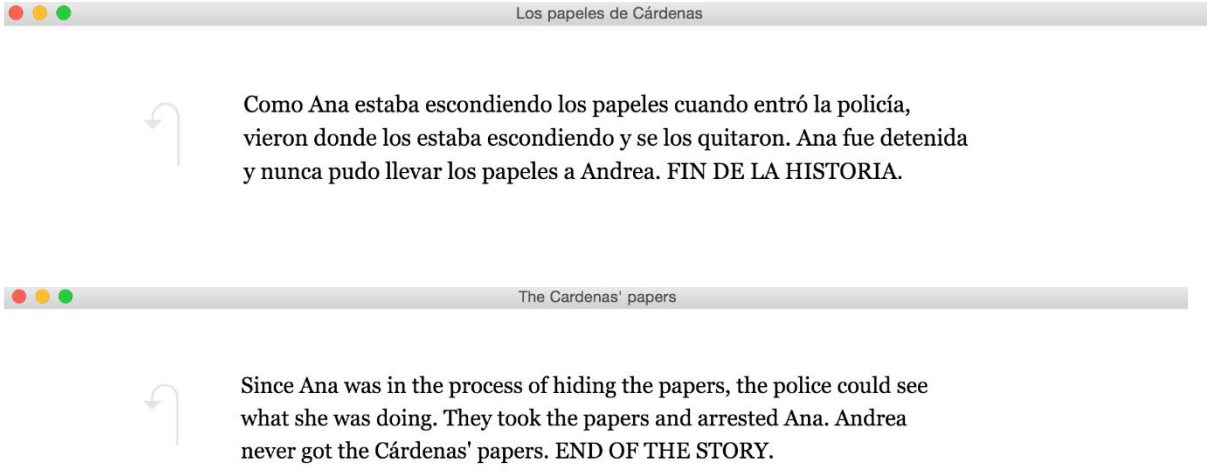
Screen shot 1 shows a crucial point in the story in which Ana has found the papers but the secret service has been following her and two options are given. Screen shot 2 shows what happens if the reader chooses and clicks on the first option 'had hidden them'

Screen shot 2 (Spanish and English translation)



If the reader chooses the past form that expresses that the action is finished (past perfect in English/indefinido in Spanish) the story progresses. An explanation is also given whereby Ana successfully hides the papers before the secret service could see her. However, if the second option (past continuous/imperfecto) is chosen, 'was hiding them', the action of hiding the papers is not finished and the secret service is able to see what Ana did. Screen shot 3 shows how the story ends with this option.

Screen shot 3 (Spanish and English translation)



What this activity shows is that in order to make the story progress the students/readers need to have a fully understanding of the differences between the two forms of past tense. They need to choose the option that will lead the main character to the next level and if they do not understand the difference they will not be able to make the right choices. Thus, this is in tune with a conception of grammar teaching that emphasizes the meaning, the context and the communicative intention over the form. Also, it is an activity that promotes reflection since the conflict between the options is not a question of what is right and what is wrong (both uses of the past tense are possible and accurate) but the difference in what is meant when using one of the past forms or the other.

Accordingly, there are several benefits of using this type of activity. Firstly, it is a meaningful teaching of the grammar, in the sense that it shows how different uses of the past tense (both correct) have different implications in terms of what it is being meant—a focused on meaning approach versus a traditional focused on form teaching. Secondly, the fact that the information is presented as a game can be both motivating but also it may serve those students who still struggle with the past tense to understand it more easily.

4. Understanding indicative and subjunctive: Watch, reflect, share and check

The online task presented in this section has been designed in combination with attendance to face-to-face grammar lectures and, therefore, it responds to a blended-learning design. According to Graham (2006:5) blended learning is a combination of face-to-face instruction and computer mediated (CM) instruction. Thus the purpose of this activity is to take advantage of the affordances offered by online instruction while also taking into account the benefits of attending face-to-face lectures. Table 3 outlines the advantages and disadvantages of both environments in relation to the teaching of grammar.

Table 3: Strengths and weaknesses of face-to-face and online instruction (based on Graham 2006:18)

	CM Environment	**Face-to-face lecture**
Strengths	►Learners have time to think and reflect about the grammar at their own pace.	►Human connection: the tutor explains using various resources (examples, body language, drawings) any questions that learners may have regarding the grammar. Such a connection with the tutor may help some learners to develop trust and reassure them.
Weaknesses	● Learners still need the guidance of a tutor to check and confirm their hypothesis about grammar use.	● Learners do not have enough time to reflect about the grammar, especially if there are faster or more participative students as opposed to shy students in the same group.

Taking into account the analysis of strengths and weaknesses illustrated in table 3, the following task has been designed:

Step 1 Watch: Prior to the face-to-face lecture, students will access the VLE to have a first contact with the grammar contents of that specific lecture. Learners will watch at least two short videos in which two different uses of the same grammar structure (one with indicative and the other with subjunctive) are being used in context.

Step 2 Reflect: Once students have watched the videos, they will have to reflect on that grammar point and make hypothesis (why are the speakers in the video using indicative or subjunctive?).

Step 3 Share: Students will post their hypothesis about the grammar use showed in the videos on a discussion board. They will read and comment other peers' posts (discussion boards will be organised in small groups) in order to come to a conclusion about the use of indicative/subjunctive in that specific grammar structure.

Step 4 Check: Students will then attend the face-to-face lecture to check and confirm their hypothesis and for further practice of the structures.

Tables 4 and 5 include the transcript of the dialogue shown in video 1 and 2.

Table 4: Dialogue/video 1 ¿Por qué indicativo? [Why indicative?]

Marina	(Marina está mirando por la ventana) Aunque está lloviendo vamos al cine.
	[(Marina is looking through the window) Although it is (indicative) raining we are going to the cinema, aren't we?]
Aitor	(Aitor no está mirando por la ventana) ¿Está lloviendo?
	[(Aitor is not looking through the window) Is it raining?]
Marina	Sí.
	[Yes]
Aitor	Bueno, pero vamos al cine igualmente.
	[Well, we are going to the cinema anyway]
Marina	Vale.
	[Ok]

Table 5: Dialogue/video 2 ¿Por qué subjuntivo? [Why subjunctive?]

Marina	(Marina está mirando por la ventana junto con Aitor) Aunque esté lloviendo vamos al cine, ¿no?

[(Marina and Aitor are both looking through the window) Although it is (subjunctive) raining we are going to the cinema, aren't we?]

Aitor Sí, sí, vamos igualmente.

[Of course, we are going anyway]

The aim of the videos is to focus the student's attention on the so-called 'concessive clauses' in Spanish. In both dialogues the structures are very similar since both sentences are introduced by 'aunque/although'. However, in the first example 'aunque' is followed by indicative while in the second a subjunctive is used. The dialogues include some cues that may help the student to infer the different uses of indicative and subjunctive in this particular case. In dialogue 1 Aitor asks Marina for confirmation when asking 'is it raining?' thus indicating that he did not know that it was raining. Moreover he was not looking through the window as Marina was. All this pieces of information lead us to think that Marina is using indicative because she wants to make a statement 'it is raining' (LLopis-García, Real Espinosa and Ruiz Campillo, 2012: 119-121), probably because she assumes that Aitor doesn't know that it is raining because he is not looking through the window. In dialogue 2, however, since both Marina and Aitor are looking through the window, we assume that they both know that it is raining. In this context, there is no need to make a statement about a fact that is already known by both speakers and, therefore, Marina uses the subjunctive (LLopis-García, Real Espinosa and Ruiz Campillo, 2012: 119-121).

As in the case of the activity designed with Twine to practice the past tense, this activity consisting in watching videos, reflecting on grammar uses in context and sharing hypothesis about language use may have several benefits: Firstly, it is promoting a meaningful learning of the language whereby rules are not applied randomly but they respond to communicative intention. This, in turn, has implications in terms of retention of information. Secondly, it provides students with strategies (making inferences or sharing information with each other) to develop themselves as autonomous learners.

5. Conclusions

This paper was aimed at showing two online tasks designed for blended-learning which promote a teaching and learning of the grammar based on reflection and focused on form instead of repetition and memorization. In one of the tasks, the digital tool Twine has been used to create a game-like story that, progresses depending on the reader's choices about two possible grammatical options. The second task presented in this paper has been designed according to socio-cultural conceptions of learning which regard dialogue and interaction as elements that trigger learning. After watching a series of videos showing different uses of the same grammatical structure, students reflect on grammar uses and share their hypothesis on a discussion board. This task is not only facilitating a meaningful learning of the grammar but it is also developing the student's strategies to keep on learning autonomously. Finally, these tasks have been designed after considering the affordances and constraints of both online and face-to-face instruction, which accounts for the decision of a blended-learning design.

Although the proposed tasks may offer some benefits according to specific pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning discussed before, there are also some constraints. On the one hand, the tasks have been designed but they have not been tested yet with undergraduates since design of the tasks overlapped with the end of the second semester. In this sense, it will be interesting to carry out a further analysis of the actual impact of such tasks in students in the following years. However, since undergraduates are in their final year at University, there is no possibility of following up students' progress in this respect but they could fill out a questionnaire assessing the whole experience with this new approach to teaching the grammar. Conversely, in order to determine the real impact of this approach to language learning, the project could be introduced in other Spanish modules that enable us to monitor in the following years students' progress.

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Exploring internationalisation and the international student identity

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Abstract

This study explores the phenomenon of internationalisation within higher education institutions in the UK and its various effects on the identities of the international postgraduate students at these institutions. I conducted the research through focus groups and interviews with students from the University of Leeds, and extrapolated key themes relating to their particular experiences from the discussions. I argue that it is essential that higher education institutions consider these themes, such as the implications of the label of international student, the desired amount of interaction with UK students, and the motivation to attend a university abroad, when looking towards the future of international study.

Key words: interculturality, internationalisation, student experience.

INTRODUCTION

This study addresses issues of internationalisation within higher education institutions (HEIs) in the UK on a small-scale basis, and aims to provide a better understanding of how the international postgraduate student (IPGS) perceives his or her own identity when analysed in the context of the UK university student life. As the primary researcher, I was drawn to this topic as it relates to my own experience as an IPGS at the University of Leeds, as I understood my own identity and connection to the university to be shifting constantly throughout the year spent in the programme. I felt that my position as a colleague amongst other IPGSs would allow me to better understand the issues being

discussed, and would also provide a useful way of holding my own judgements and opinions up to the light for further questioning and personal analysis.

It is the aim of this study to provide insight into the individual experiences and expressed identities of a small group of IPGSs at the University of Leeds, and to relate what they express to findings from other studies focusing on internationalisation and the international student experience in the UK. After laying out the findings of the study, I will discuss common themes that emerge through the data, and in this way aim to provide an approach that is based both in theory and in practice for the future of internationalisation of HEIs. It is essential that the reader understand that my aim here is not to affix any of the opinions expressed in this study to all IPGSs; however, it is my hope that by listening to and considering the opinions of these individual IPGSs, administration staff of HEIs can more effectively analyse the overall repercussions of university policies with respect to international students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

When considering the topic of internationalisation within the context of higher education, it is pertinent to get an understanding of some key terms in the discussion, and to problematise such terms so as not to simply accept them at face value. It would be useful to keep in mind that most of these terms, such as 'internationalisation' and 'international student', have been constructed within the university society, and typically consist of a multitude of varied meanings and implicit assumptions about how this society does, or should, function. While there are many terms within the realm of the internationalisation of HEIs that deserve 'unpacking' and further analysis, for the purposes of this study I will be focusing on the terms internationalisation, integration, and international student, all of which I believe to be of central importance to the findings of the research.

Internationalisation

Much of the current literature centring on the topic of internationalisation of HEIs is concerned with problematising certain ideas that we take for granted when engaging in discussions on internationalisation (De Vita & Case 2003; Ilieva, Beck & Waterstone 2014; Knight 2011; Stier 2004). Jonas Stier (2004), when discussing the concept of 'internationalisation' within the context of HE, points out that although different cultures have been coming into contact with one another ever since the existence of human beings, we still somehow consider the concept of internationalisation to be a phenomenon of recent times. This new conceptualisation of the idea of internationalisation, Stier (2004) argues, contains within it three implicit ideologies: idealism, whereby we assume that internationalisation is of benefit to everyone, instrumentalism, which focuses on the end goal of providing a large group of skilled workers to the global labour force, and educationalism, which argues that internationalisation automatically enriches the academic experience of every student. By challenging common conceptualisations of internationalisation, Stier (2004) allows his readers to understand that in taking the concept of internationalisation at face value, we blindly accept the ideologies that are packed into this single term without considering possible exceptions to these assumptions.

For the purposes of this study I have chosen to incorporate the definition of internationalisation as 'an ongoing process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education' (Knight 2003, p. 2), and being 'associated principally with an ethos of mutuality and practices geared at strengthening cooperation' (Kreber 2009, pp. 2-3). I found this combined definition to suit this study in particular because it stresses the motivations behind internationalisation as well as the benefits HEIs aim to achieve through its implementation. Noted amongst the many aims and benefits of internationalisation are: a curriculum that incorporates educational aspects from different cultural systems, the development of

intercultural networks and relationships (Arthur & Flynn 2011), a more diversified educational experience for the home students (Hanassab & Tidwell 2002; McMurtrie 2011), and, as stated during a meeting of the International Association of Universities in 2000, a way of showing 'commitment to international solidarity, human security…[helping] to build a climate of global peace' (Fielden 2011, p. 8).

When considering different ways in which to address the continued development of internationalisation, it seems helpful to analyse the approach taken by Ilieva, Beck, and Waterstone (2014), whose study examines practices of the internationalisation of HEIs in terms of the sustainability of those practices. The scholars analysed salient practices of internationalisation in order to view their long-term effects, and by this method they determined whether they understood the practices to be beneficial or detrimental to the goals of internationalisation. They concluded that practices which were seen as both 'valuing diversity and mutuality/reciprocity' (2014, p. 883) were to be viewed as practices that should be continued in the future, and that practices which promoted 'commercialisation, lack of awareness or understanding of internationalisation, and containment of diversity' (2014, p. 882) constituted unsustainable practices. Though their definition of the long-term goals of internationalisation may very well differ from others', I have chosen their model to include in this study because their goals match up with my own personal goals for the direction in which I would like to see internationalisation progress in the future.

Integration

Within the discussion of internationalisation of HEIs it is common to encounter the word 'integration' with reference to international students at these institutions. I agree with many of today's scholars who suggest that in order for students and staff to fully reap the benefits of an international HEI, the university should promote an environment incorporating interaction between international and home

students (de Wit 2011; Trahar & Hyland 2011); however, we must exercise caution when using the word 'integration', which carries connotations of efforts to combine separate factions in order to create a single homogenous group. Previous studies have discussed the dangers of attempting to integrate international students completely into a host country, and suggest that efforts to simply instruct international students on stereotypical behaviour in the host country denies them the opportunity to develop and co-construct innovative ways of interacting with other host and international students (Dervin & Layne 2012; Marginson 2014).

One of the more prominent discourses that emerges through discussion on internationalisation and integration presents the idea that a higher number of international students in attendance is equivalent to a greater degree of internationalisation on the part of the HEI. This is especially poignant in UK policies, as in recent years the UK has enjoyed one of the highest global rankings as a destination for international students, and the increased flow of international students into the UK is a constant goal in order to maintain this status. However, as the study performed by Peacock and Harrison (2009) discovered, higher numbers of international students on campus often correlate with more instances of home students reporting feeling threatened, experiencing subversive competition, and constructing and perpetuating negative stereotypes with regard to the international students. Therefore, it is advisable that the HEIs do not simply aim to increase international student participation without taking into consideration how the numbers will affect the overall dynamic of the university population.

The International Student

The label of 'international student' is an intriguing one, as it is used all across HEIs around the world in a variety of different ways to address specific groups of students within the university. For example, the University of Leeds uses the label primarily in order to distinguish between those students who

pay home fees and those who do not, and secondarily to provide supportive services to students who come from outside the UK to study at the university. Even though the variation in use for the label of 'international student' across HEIs can prove to be quite problematic, this labelling practice still continues within the HEIs as a simple way to address what the university sees as issues relating specifically to those students it deems 'international', whether those needs be sociocultural, academic, or psychological (Nancy 1997; Ward & Kennedy 1993). Altbach (1991) notes that there is a gap in the current literature when it comes to individual issues relating to international students, and points out that often times Western-oriented counselling services provided by the HEIs are ill equipped to address the specific health and psychological needs of many international students. This example demonstrates that as we look towards the future and as internationalisation of HE becomes an increasingly complex issue, the need may arise for a different approach in order to better address these issues without claiming to have a 'one size fits all' remedy for all matters relating to international students.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The methodology chosen to carry out the research consisted of discussions with twenty IPGSs from the University of Leeds in their first year of study. These discussions were held in the form of focus groups and individual semi-structured interviews with students. The students were each asked a series of thirteen questions during both the focus groups and the individual interviews, beginning with more close-ended questions (pertaining to basic information about the students, their programme, and why they chose to study in the UK), and gravitating towards more open-ended questions (seeking their opinions as to the university's label of 'international student', and inquiring as to changes they had noticed in themselves throughout the year).

The twenty participants interviewed through the research process consisted of students from the following countries of origin: China (five), Japan (four), India (two), Iran (one), Italy (one), Malaysia (one), Poland (one), Romania (one), Saudi Arabia (one), Slovenia (one), Taiwan (one), and USA (one). Most of the students were studying in the School of Languages, Cultures and Societies (eleven), while others studied in the School of Design (two), the School of Engineering (two), the Leeds University Business School (one), the School of Civil Engineering (one), the School of Media and Communication (one), the School of Mathematics (one), and the School of Politics and International Studies (one).

KEY FINDINGS

Motivations for Studying in the UK

To begin each discussion with the participants, I chose to explore the reasoning and motivations behind these IPGS's decisions to come to study in the UK. Ninety per cent of the students mentioned the specific programme they were enrolled in at the university as their main motivation for coming to Leeds, while forty-five per cent noted the university ranking, and thirty per cent simply wanted to study in the UK. The students also consistently mentioned the desire to improve their English, their wish to join family or friends who were already living in Leeds, and their efforts to improve their prospects in the future job market, as Romanian student Emilia remarks:

'…it's the UK and it's a high standard all around the world. If you studied in the UK, then you must be good…People have this in mind, and you will not have a problem with English. They don't ask for an English certificate, and it's [much] easier.'

Interaction with UK and International Students

Nearly all of the students discussed a desire to build relationships particularly with students from the UK in order to gain a deeper understanding of British culture, lifestyle, and academics, as well as to

improve their English; however, over half of those students noted that this proved more difficult to do than they had hoped it would be. The students generally attributed their difficulty in forming connections with UK students to the feeling that the UK students were not as open to meeting international students as they would have hoped, as Chinese student Daiyu explains:

'English people are very lazy here because they are in their own country, so they don't want to be changed. If they go to China, I'm sure they will change.'

This remark gives insight into the notion that making friends from other nationalities can sometimes be challenging, and that it would often be much easier simply not to make the effort. This general feeling from my participants complements the findings from Peacock and Harrison's study (2009) which analysed the same phenomenon from the perspective of the UK students, and found that those students also tended to stick with 'what was easy'. However, this conflict between an inner intellectual desire for intercultural communication and a more basic fear of putting oneself into an unknown situation applies to the international students as well, as Romanian student Emilia says:

'I didn't really have the chance to meet UK students because in our small group there were no students from the UK. But, yeah, I kind of regret it. I also would like to improve my English…and also to know more about what life is like here.'

In this case, she recognises that interaction between international and UK students is something that needs to be supported from both sides, and she expresses regret at not having made more of an effort to pursue those relationships. A number of my participants noted having initial contact with UK students, but lamented that these relationships remained rather superficial throughout their time

spent in the UK, a finding that correlates directly with the findings in other previous studies (Urban & Palmer 2014; Montgomery & McDowell 2009).

A majority of the participants expressed a strong desire to make connections with other international students upon arrival in the UK. These students mainly explained their aspirations to form these bonds as a way to learn about cultures which were different from their own, to help each other out with problems they were having while adjusting to life in the UK, and to support each other in the areas of academics and speaking English. Overall, the students recognised the mixing of cultural backgrounds within one's social sphere as something inherently beneficial to all parties involved.

'International Student' Label

When questioned as to their feelings regarding the label of 'international student' as used by the university, half of the participants responded that they felt entirely comfortable with it, typically citing their status as a student outside their home country as the only necessary requirement to be labelled in this way. The other half of the students claimed either to identify with only certain aspects of the label of 'international student', or not to identify with the label at all. Most often the students who identified only partially as 'international' originated either from countries inside the EU or from other mainly English-speaking countries, and cited their familiarity with various aspects of life in the UK as the reason for this. Overall, these findings suggest the identity of the IPGS in the UK to be an extremely nuanced and dynamic phenomenon, constantly shifting and changing its meaning for each individual categorised in this way by the university.

Many of the students made comments concerning the perceived benefits and drawbacks of the label 'international student', and of being categorised in this way. Among the benefits noted were the activities and amenities provided for international students, an increased level of 'helpfulness' from

the university staff, and a better ability to relate to other international students. On the other hand, many of the students expressed that they strongly disliked certain implications of the label, including increased university fees for international students, the requirement to take pre-sessional English courses, and, more generally, a feeling that the label created a barrier between the international students and the UK students, as Chinese student Hua explains:

'I don't really like this label, because I have the feeling that it separates the international students out from the local students. But I think the UK is a very multinational country, so I think both international students and local students should be treated equally…I feel that it separates us, so I dislike this label.'

Hua's comment draws attention to a perceived barrier that is automatically built between international and UK students by the mere label of 'international student' by the university. This separation has most likely purposefully come about in order to facilitate communication between the university and its students, and in order to address particular needs of different students. As the data from my research suggest, however, many of the students who are put into the 'international' category by the university do not feel that the international services apply to them, and so perhaps this system for student categorisation may not be the most productive.

Marketisation Discourse

A few of the participants mentioned feelings of discomfort with regard to the university's attempts to connect with them, because they felt that these efforts were presented under the guise of creating a relationship between the university and the student, but that in reality these efforts were made in an attempt to promote a different agenda, as Malaysian student Hani says:

'I feel a low attachment with University of Leeds…sometimes because I am studying business, that's why I think some campaign, or activities, or the slogan that they provide is a marketing skill…So for me, it's just a business thing.'

This 'marketisation discourse' has been previously identified by many scholars (Ilieva, Beck & Waterstone 2014; Robertson 2011; De Vita & Case 2003) whose studies proclaim that modern HEIs view the student as a client, and their education as a commodity to be bought and sold. This argument has considerable weight in the UK upon consideration that international students provide more than seven billion pounds annually to the UK economy, and that the HE department currently receives approximately one-eighth of its revenues from the tuition fees of international students (Universities UK 2014). As of 2014, nearly thirteen per cent of all the world's international students were attending university in the UK, putting it only behind the US in top destinations for international students. These numbers are impressive, but the competition has only increased since then (Universities UK 2014). A combination of recent changes to visa requirements and tougher laws on immigration has contributed to a decline in the numbers of international students coming to the UK in recent years, and postgraduate courses have been affected the most as a consequence of these policies (Universities UK 2014).

While there is clearly significant economic motivation behind the promotion of international study in the UK, it seems important that these students feel themselves to be an incorporated member of society rather than a mere tuition check. I believe Dr Camille Kandiko Howson, research fellow at King's College London and co-editor of the Global Student Experience: An International and Comparative Analysis, states it best in an article of The Guardian (2014) that claims that 'international students need to be treated as people and learners, not numbers on a balance sheet.' She argues that HEIs should consider students as individuals, and their needs as specialised, in order to better create

a more positive UK university experience for more international students. I believe that this approach will help to increase student connection with the university, which will, in turn, help to increase the overall appeal of coming to study in the UK for international students.

Changes Noted in Self

Nearly all of the participants interviewed through this study claimed to have noticed changes in themselves since coming to the UK. In some cases these changes were small, such as gaining a few extra interests, but in other cases the changes were much more significant, such as an increase in self-confidence and independence. The students often noted that this increase in self-confidence directly correlated with an increase in their English-speaking abilities, as they felt they could more easily express themselves in their new surroundings. The most common change noted by the students when reflecting on the past year, however, was not directly related to academics nor English speaking abilities. In fact, fifty per cent of the students reported a change in their tolerance and cultural awareness levels, and this seemed to stem mostly from close bonds that had formed with international students from other countries, as exemplified by a statement from Indian student Eila:

'I have a really, really nice Iranian flatmate…A lot of things you learn about the people, their culture, the general notion which is created by the world and the media is just gone.'

Like Eila, some students chose to use such examples of friendships they had established with students from other countries in order to better illustrate how they came to their new sense of cultural tolerance and understanding, while others stated that this heightened awareness came merely from being surrounded by different cultures throughout their daily lives. All those who professed to have gained this awareness and cultural tolerance over the past year appeared to express this idea with much pride and satisfaction.

DISCUSSION

Reasons for Coming to the UK

By far, the most popular reasons for my participants' decision to continue their education at the University of Leeds included the desire to improve their English, to get a better understanding of UK culture, and to gain more worldly knowledge as to other cultures and ways of life. In the end, the students generally felt able to achieve these goals, with the sole exception of their interaction with UK students and knowledge of British culture. By listening to these students we can get a better understanding of certain trends in these motivations to study in the UK, which may allow universities with the intent of improving the IPGS experience to better address the goals of these students.

'International Student' Label

One of the central aims of this study was to address issues pertaining to the label of 'international student', and how the university's use of this label matches up, or does not match up, with the way these international students perceive their own identity. The findings in this study indicated that only half of the participants labelled by the university as 'international students' feel that they fit completely into this category, while the rest either claim not to fit the label, or to find themselves fitting only in certain aspects. Eva Hartmann's warning that 'research on higher education needs to overcome a methodological nationalism that has dominated the field of study so far' (2011, p. 2) should be heeded, as I believe that by labelling all students from other countries 'international students' the university is potentially glossing over the modern reality of a diversified and complex global system in which the boundaries of nation are becoming less and less relevant.

While this may be the case, it is still the author's own opinion that at this point in time the use of the 'international student' label is of greater benefit to the students than it is detrimental to their university experience. One's time spent in university is often a process of self-discovery, as well as

coming to understand how the student perceives himself or herself in a context of other students from backgrounds that are different from their own. As the 'international students' at the University of Leeds were constantly exposed to messages targeted towards this group, the first necessary step to take was to decide whether or not they felt these messages applied to them individually. It was my understanding from talking to these students as well as from my own personal experience that each individual made a decision, whether consciously or unconsciously, regarding to what extent they sensed they fell into this category, and how much they felt that this label could be beneficial to their university experience.

All of the students were able to articulate in some way how they related to the label of 'international student'. Those that did not identify in any way with the label chose not to engage in the various activities and assistance provided for these students, and those that felt themselves to be fully 'international' were able to feel that the overall support provided to the students by the university could be helpful in their transition. Others, like myself, found themselves to relate to certain aspects of the label without feeling fully 'international', and were able to pick and choose which aspects of university support we might like to utilize to create a more involved and meaningful university experience. Considering these points, it is my opinion that the 'international student' label is still useful, as it allows for students to take advantage of certain resources available to them if they choose to, and it does not typically take any enjoyment away from their time in university if they choose not to identify as a part of this group.

The central complaint that the students made regarding the label is the feeling of separation between student groups that occurred whenever the label was applied. For this reason, I believe it to be imperative that the label be used with caution, and that members of the university faculty and student union communicate consistently with the students as to how they feel being an 'international student'

impacts their experience overall. It may also be helpful to, when holding events for 'international students', encourage attendance from all students as more of an international community in order to foster increased interaction between different groups. In this way, the students can feel free to pick and choose the aspects of the aides targeted towards international students in which they are interested, without the same feeling of separation between the different groups of students.

After the Discussions

Although the discussions that were held provided valuable insight regarding the IPGS experience at the University of Leeds, one of the most significant aspects of this study to me as the researcher was what occurred directly after these discussions. Once the recording device was turned off, it was often the case that students would elaborate on a particular issue that was discussed, or would offer some personal insight that they did not choose to share while the formal session was taking place. What was discussed once the recording device was turned off was of great relevance and would have perhaps provided more candid insight into the issues than what was offered during the formal session, but what I believe to have been of more importance than the comments themselves is the fact that these students chose to continue talking about these topics even after they were no longer required to do so. To me, this indicated a general interest in these issues and a potential for similarly engaging discussions to take place in the future.

CONCLUSION

As HEIs look towards the future of their institutions and of internationalisation, I would choose to reiterate the importance of the idea of sustainability within practices of internationalisation as put forth in the study by Ilieva, Beck, and Waterstone (2014). If the goal of internationalisation of HEIs does indeed reflect the feelings of the International Association of Universities of 2000 in that it aims 'to build a climate of global peace' (Fielden 2011, p. 8), then surely incorporating the idea of sustainability can help determine which practices are to be continued in order to continue towards

that goal, and which practices would be best left behind. Through my research I was able to get a glimpse into the experiences of just a handful of IPGSs, and yet I came to understand that the only way to achieve HEIs that successfully implement the sustainable and beneficial processes of internationalisation is to allow this student voice to be heard. These IPGSs will continue to hark back to lessons learned while interacting in such a multicultural environment as a university all their lives, and I believe it to be essential that they come away from their studies with the skills required not only to engage with diversity, but to learn and grow from it as well.

Current research on the subject of internationalisation, alongside my own findings, presents a picture of a system that is functioning but flawed. However, I believe that continued conversation with international students pertaining to their particular experiences as IPGSs would provide an effective method for keeping the communication open and the systems flexible. As I have attempted to explain through this article, internationalisation of HEIs is a complex and multi-faceted process that will not be implemented successfully through a 'one size fits all' approach, but which must continuously be examined and negotiated as global patterns shift and bring about IPGSs with increasingly diverse backgrounds. I believe that if HEIs keep their long-term goals in mind and maintain a policy of open communication with their IPGSs they will have greater success with the results of their institution's processes of internationalisation in the future.

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Discussion Questions

1. Please state your name, your home country, and your area of study here at the University of Leeds.

2. Why did you choose to study at the University of Leeds?

3. What do you like to do in your spare time, and with whom?

4. How important was it to you to try to establish relationships with other students from the UK?

5. How important was it to you to try to establish relationships with other international students?

6. What has helped the most in making new friends here in Leeds?

7. Have you noticed any changes in yourself since coming to Leeds?

8. How do you feel about the label of 'international student'? Do you believe that you fit neatly into this category?

9. Do you feel that the university has provided the right kind of support for you as an international student adjusting to life in Leeds?

10. How connected do you feel to the university as a student?

11. How do you think your experience would have been different if you had been attending the university to complete your undergraduate degree?

12. How often does the conversation topic of 'differences between cultures' come up when talking to someone from another culture?

13. Is there anything else about your experience as an international student at Leeds University that you would like to share that hasn't been covered?

Reviews

Duolingo App

www.duolingo.com

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Keywords: Duolingo, Spanish, English, gamification, gamificación, blended learning.

Duolingo is a web-based language programme that aims to teach languages through a sequence of online tasks. As well as a web-based site there is an app available for Android, iOS and Window-based mobiles. Its manifesto aims to allow access to free language education with no hidden fees, which is the case for the main site and the Duolingo app. For English learners, there are two further apps available that solely concentrate on English testing, both of which require a fee.

As most of the activities are based around translation, the languages available vary according to the student's native language. For an English speaker there are an impressive twenty-seven different languages available in the current portfolio/version. Duolingo not only concentrates on the most widely spoken languages, but includes less far-reaching languages such as Welsh, Dutch, Vietnamese, Esperanto and even Klingon. Although English is the only option for speakers of many of the remaining languages, some of the possible combinations are very interesting, offering Spanish speakers the option to learn Guaraní.

Both the website and mobile application are ad-free and very well designed using basic colours and user-friendly menus which are very easy to navigate. The mobile app requires users to register and create a profile to monitor progress. Your profile sets a daily goal that can be personalised, and encourages you to share your progress by inviting friends to compete with you to keep the learner motivated. The final touch of the profile-setting process in the app allows you to establish a practice reminder every day on your phone. Non-beginners will be asked to try "a placement test" that only takes around 15 minutes to complete and will place you at the start of your learning path.

Each of the levels consists of different units organised either grammatically (basics, adverbs, past. per.) or by topic (feelings, sport, nature) that are described as "skills". The activities in these units are mainly based around translation, matching up and listening exercises, which, given their limitations, constrain the construction of meaning created by the automated scoring. Depending on

previous answers, an algorithm determines on which items the student will be tested.

In spite of the positive move to include listening and speaking activities, the automatized pronunciation exposes learners to a monotonous and unrealistic intonation. Furthermore, structures and vocabulary are mainly focused on Peninsular Spanish, despite the majority of Spanish speakers being geographically located in South and Central America.

After completing each skill students earn two 'lingots'. Lingots are a currency-like reward students attain for their accomplishments. Inviting friends to Duolingo, translating documents or completing your goal for 10 successive days, amongst others, will give you additional lingots which can also be donated. Lingots can be used to gain access to Bonus Skills activities, which include learning about culture, idioms and proverbs. After completing a series of skills, checkpoints are greyed out to highlight that the student has reached a certain level.

Whilst Duolingo quantifies fluency (via another algorithm) and offers the possibility to add a badge to your LinkedIn Profile, levels are not mapped on an easily interpretable model, so there is no clear correlation between Duolingo levels and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) or any other frameworks to that purpose, making it difficult to ascertain the level achieved.

One of the most important shortcomings of a web-based platform to learn languages is the lack of opportunity to engage in interactive conversation. Over the last 40 years, research in language learning and teaching the central focus of second language instruction has been to prepare learners to use the target language in order to communicate with other speakers of that language. Duolingo's section 'bots' is an attempt to use the language interactively in a conversation. In this section, you hold a real-life conversation with a "bot" (virtual tutor with different roles, changed over time). This section presents the expected constraints of an automated conversation, where the app recognises as you type that the exchange is not going towards the expected response. At this point a "help me answer" menu appears and gives you a clue as to what to ask or talk about next.

According to Vesselinov and Grego's Duolingo effectiveness study in 2012, more than a third of students were satisfied with their results using Duolingo. Although this is an impressive figure, a high

number of learners stopped using the website at an early stage for unknown reasons. Furthermore, learners with a high level of competency in the target language were excluded from the experiment. This clearly reflects the abovementioned constraints that an online platform poses when using language interactively.

Duolingo's goal is "to give everyone access to a private tutor experience through technology. This is certainly the first impression for beginners or intermediate students as, within seconds of registering there is immediate access to a plethora of activities which helps the learner operationalize a limited construct of the language they are studying. However, this is definitely not the case for more advanced students that might feel frustrated by the limitations that the platform presents. In whichever case we have to be extremely cautious when evaluating long term results of using such platforms and more research is needed to analyse the effectiveness of these types of online applications.

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Is Italy and Italian still on your mind? Talk Italian 2 is the course for you! BBC active is the: Best - Bold - Concise way to continuing learning Italian.

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Key words: Italian, BBC Active, language learning, foreign languages, grammar

Talk Italian 2 follows and is in step with the Talk Italian absolute beginner course of the BBC active series.

The course, book and CDs, is self-contained and learners that wish to improve their existing beginner's knowledge of the language can easily use it for independent study.

The book and CDs of this course can also be used in the classroom and some of its activities can be assigned as homework. Teachers can choose to develop methods and techniques as they wish, for their classroom, however they will find the existing free support and activities available at: http://www.bbcactivelanguages.com/TeachersHome/ResourcesItalian/tabid/98/Default.aspx, very helpful.

The course has ten units related to topics of everyday life. Topics include: personal information, numbers, work and daily routine, giving and obtaining advice, leisure activities, description of people and places, shopping, giving and obtaining opinions, dealing with problems, holidays and weather, health issues, invitations and instructions.

An aspect of the Italian culture related to the topic matter in hand is introduced in each unit, enticing the learner in wanting to find out more. The subsequent activities are well structured and provide a clear path to active learning involving practices in all fours skills such as reading, writing, listening and speaking.

Learners can listen to the CDs in conjunction with the book or as stand-alone activity. The English instructions given are very clear and there are several native speakers involved in the Italian dialogues. This feature is particularly important and useful for the learner as different intonations and accents are to be found in real life situations.

Of particular interest to the independent or classroom learner is the 'Quiz' and self-evaluation section: 'Now check whether you can'… to review the work done and what is learned at the end of each topic.

In some units, the ‘In più’ section allows further practice and helps to underpin important grammar points.

© Alwena Lamping, 2009 - **Talk Italian Grammar** – Your essential guide for learning Italian – BBC Educational Publishers LLP

Is grammar not your ‘forte’? You’ll enjoy using this jargon-free book with practical examples. Get active and have no fear to speak or write, using this book as companion.

To get a better understanding of all main grammar points, the Talk Italian Grammar – your essential guide for learning Italian - is a great mini-reference book to have while learning the language independently or in a classroom.

It complements the Talk Italian 1 and 2 series and gives any learner of Italian an insight on how the language works. If you are not conversant with grammar terminology, you’ll find clear explanations of what they mean, in the last few pages of the book before the – Answers- section.

The book begins giving useful information on how it can be used and great tips on language learning and how to make the most of learning resources such as dictionaries. It also highlights differences between Italian and English grammar.

The grammar points are explained in a simple form and at the end of each explanation the ‘How to use them’ section offers many practical examples.

There are 20 ‘Checkpoints’ throughout the book, one after each grammar point covered. In the checkpoint the learner is kept active having to answer many questions related to what they have learned and the ‘Answers’ section at the back of the book provides timely feedback.

Both books are suitable for learners of Italian that wish to achieve a basic to elementary level of language learning reaching up to an A2 level within the CEFR (Common European Frame of Reference).

If I were to use these books in the classroom, I would integrate them with more cultural information to increase the learner awareness and understanding of the Italian language, traditions and its people. Also I would include more activities to foster spoken and written communication as well as integrating more grammar practice.

In my opinion, these books are more suitable for independent learners that have limited time to deepen their knowledge of the language but wish to be better prepared in dealing with everyday situations encountered when visiting Italy on holiday.

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Portcast

www.portcast.net

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Keywords: Portcast, Portuguese, Podcast, Listening comprehension, Português, blended learning.

PortCast is a website dedicated to educational podcasts to complement Portuguese language learning. It was launched in November 2015 in Stockholm to meet the demand for audio texts in different languages in the growing market for educational podcasts. What distinguishes this product from its competitors is that it offers both a European and Brazilian Portuguese version of each podcast. What's more, it offers a free-of-charge slow version of each language variant to facilitate comprehension. There is also a paid version, at normal speed, which comes with a glossary, exercises and an answer key. The podcasts are reasonably priced, ranging from €1.43 for a single podcast to €13.85 for a pack of 6-8 with supplementary exercises (correct prices at 21/09/2016). This product will particularly appeal to adult learners who enjoy working independently at their own pace. There are also plans to create materials for children, and packages for universities are in the pipeline.

With the English tagline "Portuguese has never sounded this easy", the site content is constantly growing, with podcasts being added weekly. Learners can receive updates by subscribing to the monthly newsletter or following Portcast's Facebook page where they can also read about Portuguese language events. On Pinterest, there are suggestions for places to visit in the Lusophone world and Portuguese language tips. Twitter users can receive a word/image every day.

When you first access the PortCast webpage, you can sense that this is an educational project with a difference. The page has an excellent design - uncluttered and well-maintained. There is no advertising and the pages are not crammed with images as is often the case on other websites of this kind. The webpage can be easily browsed in English or in Portuguese and the podcasts are clearly categorised into: *Free*, *Singles*, *Packs*, *Temas*, *Níveis* and *Consult* (sic), with information about the Portcast team and contacts. On other websites, the mix of languages in the toolbar could easily go unnoticed. However, as this is a Portuguese language learning resource, it seems a pity that it isn't solely in the

target language. Whilst Portuguese speakers often opt for English in tech-speak, in this case it would be enough to change "free" for “grátis" or "packs" for “pacotes". Facebook, Twitter and Instagram sites can be easily accessed from side icons. However, it would be very useful to have a tool for more advanced search options such as by language variant. It is not possible to find texts solely in European Portuguese, for example.

The site currently has 110 podcasts with accompanying exercises, of which 55 are free. These are organized into three levels: Level 1 (A1-A2), Level 2 (B1-B2) and Level 3 (C1-C2), according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, and by nine themes: *Atualidade e Curiosidades, Comes e Bebes, Dia-a-Dia, História e Estórias, Língua e Cultura, Mundo do Trabalho, Nós e os Outros, Sociedade e Tradições, Viagens e Bem-estar*. For those who just want to browse the site without additional costs, there is specific section with a wide range of free materials.

The majority of texts are original, written by Catarina Stichini (project co-ordinator) and Rosário Carvalhosa, which represents a tremendous amount work on the part of the authors. There are also interviews with transcripts, as is the case with the podcasts on the Gulbenkian Foundation and the Portuguese triathlon star, João Pereira. It is the texts, or rather scripts, that the authors use as a basis for the recordings and upon which the exercises are created. The podcasts have a rather educational slant. Whilst this might be helpful in the initial stages of language learning, the authenticity of the materials is compromised, as is, I would venture to say, the potential for real improvement in listening comprehension skills. When you hear the podcasts, even on the recordings at normal speed, you get the sense that you’re listening to a narration, a reading and not a conversation, dialogue or real-life account. At other levels, particularly in the Brazilian podcasts, it is noticeable that expressions and constructions are often more typical of written than oral language, e.g. the formal collocation of pronouns in “Linda, muito linda, lindíssima” (“primeira vez que a vejo", “sentar-se”) or the position of the adjective (“clássica missa") in “O intruso”. In essence, the recordings lack a certain authenticity and naturalness of speech, which is unfortunate because the themes and podcasts themselves are rather interesting. And there is also a very welcomed special care in addressing and reveal Portuguese and Brazilian cultural aspects. On the other hand, a wider range of speakers (most podcasts in European Portuguese are read by Catarina Stichini), would be welcome, and even speakers from other Portuguese-speaking countries, such as Angola or Mozambique. This would not only demonstrate the true global dimension of the Portuguese language but would also provide learners with exposure to a wider variety of accents and consequently be a better preparation for linguistic survival in any of the 8 Portuguese-speaking countries.

Each text comes with a glossary of keywords. Level 1 glossaries are Portuguese-English but Level 2 and 3 are Portuguese-Portuguese, which seems the most appropriate pedagogical option. The exercises and answer keys are available in a PDF document, allowing for self-study. Users can see a description of the podcast and the content of the exercises before buying. For example, the podcast “A troca" (Level 1) comes with vocabulary exercises related to clothing, travel and prepositions; while the podcast “A primeira mulher" (Level 3) focuses on word formation and the passive voice. In terms of the type of exercises, I found that they were the usual language learning activities we’ve come to expect: gap fills, word/phrase substitutions, multiple choice, etc. As this is an online learning environment, I would be tempted to suggest creating at least some interactive exercises with automatic corrections, which would make use of the true potential of Web 2.0.

To sum up, with the help of a well-organized and user-friendly learning platform, this is a good tool. Although it is let down by audio texts which lack authenticity and natural pace of speech, it is a useful addition to other Portuguese resources, especially those for beginners. It will also be of particular interest to teachers looking to teach Portuguese as a global language as it integrates the two main language variants in one course. This is the fruit of the almost exclusive work of a dedicated teacher and is certainly a project to follow!

Note from the Reviewer: This review was made possible thanks to the generosity of Catarina Stichini who made all materials available free of charge.

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https://www.portcast.net/ [last accessed 10 September 2016]

Videos

Scholarship in language learning

Dr Mathew Treherne

School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, University of Leeds

Abstract

In this video, Dr Matthew Treherne, Head of School of Languages, Cultures and Societies at the University of Leeds, talks about the importance of scholarly activity in language teaching, giving a useful introduction to how this Journal and platform can contribute to scholarship.

Key words: Scholarship**,** language learning, higher education, dissemination, journal, collaboration

The video can be viewed online on:

http://languagescholar.leeds.ac.uk/scholarship-in-language-teaching/

Or by scanning this QR code:

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Student Selfie Videos in University Language Learning

Antonio Martinez Arboleda

School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, University of Leeds

Abstract

In this video Antonio Martínez-Arboleda discusses his assessed video task for Year 1 students learning Spanish as part of their BA which he piloted in 2015/2016 at the University of Leeds with post A-Level students (B2.1 CEFR).

Key words: multimediality, multimodality, oral production, speaking, videos, student production, assessment.

This presentation focuses on some of the educational values informing the design of the task, on the integration of the task in the programme and on the support provided to students. At the end, the viewers are invited to comment on the task, particularly on the proposed assessment criteria.

The task description for students and the assessment criteria can be found below in Annex 1 and Annex 2 respectively.

The video can be viewed online on:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qKJKLt_mNU4

Or by scanning this QR code:

Annex 1

Selfie video task in Spanish

You have to do produce your own selfie video in Spanish. The minimum length is 2 minutes and 30 seconds and the maximum is 3 minutes.

In your video you are supposed to reflect in a conversational tone upon the expectations and challenges of university life for you, as a Year 1 student in a British University.

You are advised to decide in advance who your potential audience might be. For instance, young people from any Spanish-speaking country of your choice or a global audience that includes also students of Spanish or speakers of Spanish as a second language. This will help you to define the contents of your video and make it meaningful and interesting to your target audience.

You should have a plan, either in the form of a script or not, but this is only for your own benefit and you cannot submit it alongside the video.

Remember that Youtubers do not read out sheets with essays or read out of prompters, they talk to the viewer. Therefore make sure your contents are fresh and linguistically accessible for the viewer. Long sentences can make your audience switch off. Manage your style and the flow of information well.

Annex 2

Assessment of video contributions in Spanish: Selfie video Youtuber style

Maximum mark: 90 - Minimum mark: 20

1. Naturality

You talked to the camera and your audience, rather than read:

Yes: 25

Mostly (except for quotes or difficult information like names): 23

To a great extent (more than 70%): 20

Maximum total points: 25

2. Style

The style of your video contribution (organisation of the information, length and structure of the sentences and verbal signposting, including pauses and intonation) was excellent.

a. Organisation of contents (0-3)

b. Length, structure and types of sentences (0-5)

(Maximum marks for the use of a variety of structures and strategies that are suitable for audio-visual communication and engage with the audience).

c. Prosodic signposting, rhythm and intonation (0-7)

Maximum total points: 15

3. Content

The contents were very interesting and suitable for the intended audience (0-10)

Maximum total points: 10

4. Audio-visual quality

Visually, the video was, technically and artistically, of high quality and the sound had no issues. (0-5)

Maximum total points: 5

5. Verbal quality

A mark of 0 is given for an inadequate performance, i.e. one that does not achieve the minimum level of competence expected in the module at the time of the assessment. Maximum points for exceptional level of oral linguistic competence.

a. The language used was precise semantically (0-3)

b. The language used was grammatically accurate: (0-3)

c. Your tone and register was appropriate for the task and the audience (0-3)

d. The pronunciation was very clear (0-6)

Maximum total points: 15

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The future of language advising at UK universities

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Keywords: future, language advising, language learning advice, language learning advising, UK.

On Thursday 19 May, Leeds University held a series of talks on the future of language advising at UK universities.

The event was led by Professor Mozzon-McPherson from the University of Hull, a lead player in the language advising arena since managing project SMILE (Strategies for Managing an Independent Learning Environment) in 1997. One of Hull's five-strong team of Advisers, Vincenzo Alfano, accompanied her, and Leeds University's expert in the field, Jadzia Terlecka, also played a key role.

The session was split into three parts. Marina first talked about her vision for the future of language advising; Vincenzo then discussed his own personal experiences in the role; and finally Jadzia led an interactive workshop based around scenarios she had encountered.

The focal point of the day was how Advisers can assist students in becoming more independent language learners. This involved encouraging them to move into the 'role of expert ', focus on self-reflection and skilful use of dialogue as a pedagogic tool. They also talked about how Language [Learning] Advisers should not 'lead' students as such, but set the conditions for autonomous learning by developing their strengths, strategies and resources. Learning from the skills and role of Counsellor/Coach was considered key to this process, and Vincenzo in particular talked about the different methods and activities he had employed for this purpose. These included advisory sessions, workshops and worksheets based on specific learning strategies.

There was some discussion around the necessity of Language Advisers. Some argued, for instance, that teachers already give the advice and use the strategies associated with the job within their language classes. Others argued that this may be the case in some languages, but research shows that this is still not embedded in teacher training. Therefore, is the role of Language Learning Adviser actually required if many elements may already be fulfilled? The speakers also considered the importance of links between the institution, the classroom and advising itself. They talked about how synergies could be created with other teaching and learning support services within an institution, and how these can greatly influence the level of autonomy language learners can achieve.

Finally, the day ended with an open discussion led by Jadzia on some of the situations she had faced since becoming a Language Learning Adviser in Leeds.

The video can be viewed online on:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5t1wlF1HXqo

Or by scanning this QR code:

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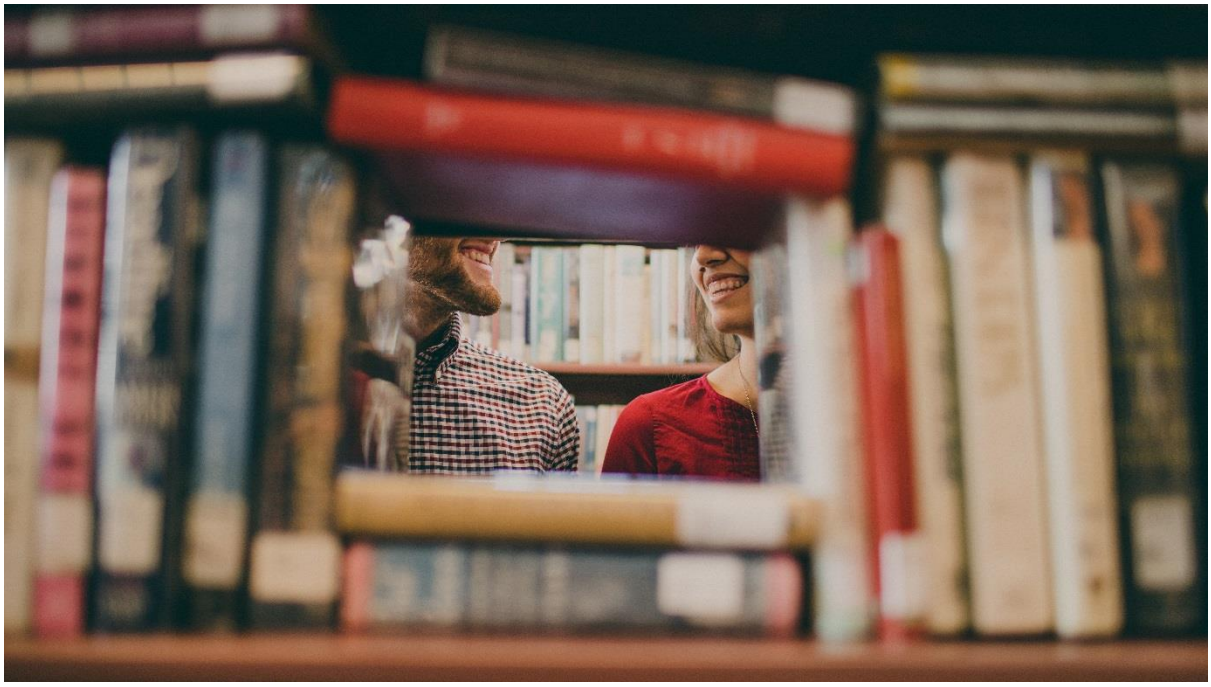
Scholarbits



Una paz europea / A European peace

Fruela Fernández

School of Modern Languages, Newcastle University

Sarah Hartley

Freelance translator

Abstract

In this contribution Fruela Fernández shares his poem *Una paz europea* (Pre-Textos, 2016) and reflects on how the poem came about as a part of his personal history. Sarah Hartley then discusses the translation she produced of the poem (*A European Peace*), which is also provided. Hartley focuses on the intercultural dialogue underpinning her encounter with Fernández's poem and its rendition into English.

Key words: poetry, poesía, translation, traducción, Spain, España, Asturias, interculturalidad, interculturality, migración, migration, economy, economía.

UNA PAZ EUROPEA

1

Por la parte de Paxumal, los abedules techan el camino

y nos oscurecen.

Sólo al pasar Riparape vuelve a abrirse

y vemos el valle, otra vez, estrecho y hondo,

entre los huecos que dejan las colinas, encajadas como nudillos.

Tenemos poco prado y es empruno. Repartos de repartos familiares que disminuyen de hermano a hermano, de primo en primo, por todo el monte.

Cada árbol tiene su tiempo. Cuando le toca, descarga. O suben los gusanos. O las nubes de la fábrica coinciden con la lluvia y el fruto cuece en la rama.

Vamos de un árbol a otro, pisando fruta podre, viendo qué nos queda: prunos, piescos, manzanas de sidra, manzanas de asar, manzanas de compota.

Mi abuelo saca dos sillas de la chabola. *Sabes tú que nun soy de muchu charrar*, pero le gusta que nos sentemos fuera, hacia los montes.

De cerca veo otra vez su lunar, el que se mueve. Una esquirla que le saltó en el taller, cuando hacían hexágonos:

uno tenía por la forma, otro descargaba el pilón.

La esquirla entró en el labio y aún avanza con la sangre, azulada.

(En el monte no se entiende el camino.

Las curvas se pliegan y se estiran, a golpes.)

Una vez me enseñaron el árbol de familia, las fechas, los pueblos de los que fuimos bajando:

Perabeles en el XVIII,

Riparape,

Les Pieces al cruzar el XX

y, monte abajo, raleando entre la maquinaria,

por El Trabanquín,

hasta El Llungueru.

Treinta quilómetros en trescientos años,

como si lleváramos el valle a cuestas.

A EUROPEAN PEACE

1

On the way to Paxumal, the birches roof the road

and darken us.

Only passing Riparape does it open up again

and we see the valley, once more, narrow and deep,

between the hollows that the hills leave, fitted like

knuckles.

What little land we have slopes steeply. Divided and dived between families, diminishing from brother to brother, cousin to cousin, right across the mountain.

Each tree has its time. When its turn comes, it disburdens. Or the worms crawl up. Or the clouds from the factory coincide with the rain, and the fruit stews on the branches.

We go from tree to tree, treading on rotten fruit, seeing what we're left with: Sloes, peaches, cider apples, cooking apples, apples for compote.

My grandfather takes two chairs from the lean-to. *You know I'm not much of a one for chatter,* but he likes us to sit outside, facing the mountains.

Close up I see his mole again, the one that moves. A splinter which flew at him in the workshop, while they were making hexagons:

One held the shape, another was driving the hammer.

The splinter entered his lip and still shifts with the blood, bluish.

(In the mountains you can't fathom the road.

The curves fold and stretch, in jolts.)

Once they showed me the family tree, the dates, the villages from which we descended:

Perabeles in the 18th Century,

Riparape,

Les Pieces crossing into the 20th

and, down the mountain, dispersing among the machinery,

through El Trabanquín,

up to El Llungueru.

Thirty kilometres in three hundred years,

As if we carried the valley on our shoulders.

THE POEM (Fruela Fernández)

This is the opening section to *Una paz europea* (Pre-Textos, 2016), a book-length poem that had been a long time in the making, but not in the writing. While my previous book, *Folk* (Pre-Textos, 2013), interrogated the meaning of belonging, *Una paz europea* retraces the experience of displacement. Shortly after publishing *Folk*, I arrived in Britain on a temporary contract, an unwilling move that brought back memories and echoes from my family's time in Belgium in the 1960s (the day before leaving, my grandfather advised me to check for job advertisements in the newspaper, as he had done in *Le Soir*). In a political and historical sense, I knew I had to complete the narrative of my family, and yet I encountered a personal resistance in the autobiographical, as if my writing was unfit yet: the feelings were there, but the places and the faces were absent, and they reclaimed their right to return. I spent a couple of years away from poetry, focusing on other texts —especially a memory of Northern England through the music of The Smiths—, waiting for the form. It came shortly after a summer visit with my grandfather to our family plot near Les Pieces, a small village on one of the hills forming the coal-mining valley of Langreo in Northern Spain. My grandmother grew up in one of the nearby houses, where her grandfather had founded the local committee of the socialist party PSOE at the beginning of the 20th century, and where he also hid during the first years after the Civil War. Listening to my grandfather on the way back, I had the intuition that the form I needed was emerging with his recollections, with our code-switching between Asturian and Spanish, with the historical burden of the landscape. The pieces fell into place after Les Pieces, so to speak.

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