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# TRAINING, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

*'Clear language engenders clear thought, and  
clear thought is the most important benefit of  
education'*

*– Richard Mitchell*

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# TRAINING, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

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# Introduction to Issue 5(1)

by Co-editor Barry Tomalin

Welcome to our first issue of 2021, Volume 5 of Training Language and Culture. After a difficult year for teaching and training and with personal contact drastically reduced due to lockdowns as a result of the Covid-19, our educational programmes and contacts have had to transfer to on-line delivery and discussion and maybe, who knows, been introduced to a 'new normal' for much of training and teaching.

Meanwhile, research has continued apace and we are proud to publish academic research helping us to better understand attitudes to organisational culture around the world, the relationship between intercultural communication and national identity, the role of authentic materials in language teaching and learning, the relationship between human translation skills and neural translation machines, the development of pre-service teachers' digital communication skills and the development of remote teacher training programmes.

Three topics dominate our articles in this issue – international cultures, digital competence in language learning and teaching and teacher training, and the importance of authenticity and authentic materials in language teaching and learning. One especially interesting application on digital technology is the value of neural machine translation as compared with professional human translators. So, plenty to get on with.

Richard Lewis is a world leader in intercultural studies, especially with his ground-breaking book, *When Cultures Collide*. In this issue he addresses the problem of organisational culture in business and challenges a 'one-size-fits-all' approach often based on assumptions about US and Western management culture. Reflecting on Edgar Schein's organisational culture grid, he reviews his own experience in the US, Germany, France and Japan and argues that each country's organisational culture

must be studied and considered on its own terms. He offers a two-phased approach for undertaking this process of cultural due diligence in the study titled *Organisation culture – a fallacy?*

In an interesting article titled *National identity in international education: Revisiting problems of intercultural communication in the global world*, Anna Pavlovskaya compares Russian and Chinese cultures and shows how the differences affect the attitudes to learning and teaching in Russian universities with Chinese students. Talking to Chinese students in her own university, she learns their first impressions of Russia and how their views have changed during their stay, and draws conclusions as to what they need in order to feel more at home in Russia and Russian universities and make the most of their studies. She concludes by drawing lessons, not just for Russia but for all universities benefiting from Chinese student enrolment and also for teaching students from other countries, to help them adapt to a new environment and a different academic system.

As global communication explodes, what Richard Lewis describes as 'vigorous globalisation', more and more official and literary communication is being translated into different languages for different audiences. How can this be done most efficiently? By professional translators or by artificial intelligence (AI)? Surveying the literature and conducting an exploratory survey in the study titled *Re-framing conceptual metaphor translation research in the age of neural machine translation: Investigating translators' added value with products and processes*, Gary Massey concludes that although AI translation has a value and is likely to increase, the training of translators and interpreters is vital in appreciating the nuance of the document to be translated and rendering it in a way that will be fully understood and recognised by a reader used to using a different language.

In *Developing pre-service teachers' digital communication and competences through service learning for bilingual literacy*, Aoife Ahern and Beatrice Lopez-Mendoza address both the role and value of digital instruments in training language teachers. Working with teachers doing a de-



gree in education for primary school teachers the authors worked on a project to get trainee primary school teachers to use digital tools to help language learners in two underprivileged schools in Madrid improve their literacy in two languages (Spanish and English). The results of the project endorsed the value of digital technology in supporting learners, and the authors emphasise the importance in teacher training courses of the development of the digital competence of student teachers.

Still on the subject of remote teaching and learning, in *Introducing German pre-service teachers to remote teaching: Policy, preparation and perceptions of competence development of future foreign language teachers* Sandra Stadler-Heer explores the role of remote foreign language teacher training in German universities, examining the Dev/TPC (Developmental Model of Teacher Professional Competence) introduced in 2020. Analysing the results of two pilot studies she notes the advantages and disadvantages of online teacher training and, while recognising its value, she lists additional steps that need taking and the importance of further research. Nevertheless, as she concludes, remote teacher training is very likely to increase, as is the demand for digital competence and both present exciting opportunities for language teachers and learners.

Finally, in *The implementation of authentic language input in second language (L2) teaching: Pedagogical arguments* Maria Skiada examines the role of authenticity and authentic materials in language learning and teaching. After outlining the main theoretical and pedagogical principles behind the use of authentic materials, she explains how authentic materials shed an important light not just on language but also on the society and culture(s) of the language being learned. Authentic input is a positive and motivating driving force for learning, even at elementary levels. Finally, she discusses how the teaching strategy and tasks need to be adapted to ensure the correct degree of challenge for learners at different levels.

We also review a study of bilingualism by Albert Costa, and a new study by Dr Helen Spencer-Oatey and Daniel Z. Kadar on how to build and manage relationships across cultures. We conclude as usual with RUDN University, ICC and EUROLTA news. So, plenty to get on with, learn from and enjoy.

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# Original Research

## Organisational culture – a fallacy?

by Richard D. Lewis

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*In a global economy with such an increase in the role of information technology in global communication more and more national business are forming links with companies in other countries. There is a tendency to expect a degree of uniformity of approach as management behaviours can be argued to express the same aims and broadly similar approaches. However, research shows that although certain concepts may be held in common they are viewed very differently in different cultures perceived and acted upon by managers according to the culture they live and work in. This can lead to disagreements over operations management and communication. Using a two-phase approach this paper explores these cultural differences and their influence on the idea of a common organisational cultures. It argues for a cultural due diligence approach to examining and reconciling potential cultural differences to optimise the international business relationship.*

**KEYWORDS:** *organisational culture, cultural due diligence, globalisation, cross-border merger, cross-border acquisition, communication style, management style*



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### 1. INTRODUCTION

In this area of vigorous globalisation, it is not surprising that 'organisational culture' has become a buzzword, enkindling a vast amount of literature attempting to describe and define it. In the reference section of his admirable book, *Organisational Culture and Leadership*, Edgar Schein lists 237 books and papers written between the years 1950-2010 of which 107 were published in the 1990s and the 21st century (Schein, 2010). They deal with many aspects and perspectives pertaining to international business, including mergers and acquisitions, organisational leadership, cultur-

al intelligence, transitions and transformations, corporate architecture, strategy and structure, behavioural expectations, organisational science, decision making, the global challenge, organisational science, decision making, management consulting, intercultural competence, psychodynamics of organisational life, leading business teams, culture gaps, organisational symbolism and so on.

This paper argues that to impose a monocultural western and US-based approach to understand international business culture is a mistake, whatever the influence internationally of western management principles and practice. Based on person-

al experience and research, I would argue that to achieve the aims listed above we have to take into account the very different ways in which key markets operate culturally. In making this point I refer to leading companies in Japan, Germany and France and offer a two-phased approach to taking cultural differences into account in international business.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The literature deals with a variety of organisations, mainly in the sphere of private enterprise, some with state ownership or intervention. Since the turn of the century joint ventures as well as mergers and acquisitions have grown apace. Bigger and bigger countries have demonstrated appetite for growth. Even big names like Jaguar, Nokia and Alcatel have been swallowed up. In the UK, huge British-owned industries such as textiles, automobiles ship-building and coal-mining have almost disappeared. Survival of the fittest (or biggest) seems to be the order of the day. In the midst of transformation and transition, the organisation and re-organisation of the companies involved (often giants in their field) is a subject of great importance and no little fascination. Can two strong corporate cultures develop compatibility? How do they seek best practice? Edgar Schein and others have confronted and analysed a plethora of issues that arise in a country in transition, whether in a merger or simply improving/transforming its structure. The current literature on organisational culture offers a series of possible solutions and (dare I say) not infrequent recommendations surrounding such issues.

It is understandable that the issues presented are ones that normally arise (though not only) in an Anglo-Saxon environment and consequently are discussed (usually in the English language) from an Anglo-Saxon perspective. In the opinion of this writer, such a perspective is invalid when a strong non-Anglo culture (Japan, France) is involved, particularly in an M&A situation, where transformative measures encounter reluctant or negative acceptance. Given the current and future economic preponderance of China, India, Japan,

*'Which elements of company organisation are we talking about? They are, of course, innumerable and can be looked at from different angles'*

Germany and, possibly, South America one has to take into consideration that organisational culture precepts, as commented on in current literature, are often both non-applicable and even meaningless in cultures comprising four fifths of humanity.

The authors referred to above have not failed to take into account the influence of national characteristics in multinational business, but the often cursory manner in which these are mentioned indicate (to me) that these embedded traits are grossly underestimated by writers who have only second-hand experience of cultures other than their own. I have worked five years inside an American corporation, five years inside a French multinational, five years in a Finnish company, five years in a Portuguese one, two years in a German broadcasting company (Deutsche Welle) and a dozen more dealing with major firms in Sweden, Spain, Italy, Brazil, Denmark, Japan and the United Arab Emirates. With all these I would say that the models of organisational culture described or proposed in ninety percent of books on the subject are inappropriate, misdirected or bear little relevance to all the countries I have worked in, with the exception of the United States, Finland and Denmark.

## 3. RESEARCH AIMS

Which elements of company organisation are we talking about? They are, of course, innumerable and can be looked at from different angles (e.g. customer orientation or measurement of success). However, Schein (2010) and others commonly refer to the following issues (see Table 1).

Without imposing a personal interpretation on how writers on organisational culture treat these issues, I find that their descriptions do not stray far from the routines I was subjected to in two sizeable US corporations and which form part of the case studies described below.



Table 1

*Common issues in company organisation*

hierarchy	criteria of success	communication style	dress
layers of authority	incentives	face	use of space
command and control	punishments	disagreement	use of time
empowerment	expectations	brainstorming	rolling forecasts
types of leaders	appraisals	feedback	working hours
decision-making	promotion	error detection	individualism
consensus	loyalty	code of ethics	subcultures
mission statement	baronies	whistle-blowers	human rights

#### 4. CASE STUDIES

In these case studies we will take common features of organisational culture and see how they are interpreted in different countries, beginning with the USA.

##### 4.1. The USA

Hierarchy is respected in most American firms but officers would describe themselves as ‘democratic’. Layers of authority would be restricted in number – the pyramid would be flat and wide rather than tall and narrow. Command and control sounds all right, but empowerment is ok too. American managers leading a subsidiary abroad are expected to make decisions ‘standing on their own two feet’ but, in fact, are controlled by a strict three-month rolling forecast to HQ. US leaders in general are expected to make firm decisions without unnecessary delay. They are not too concerned about consensus among colleagues but will ‘take the rap’ (bear the consequences) if they err. Expectations of work rate are high for employees and incentives and punishments are often effected through bonus systems. Inefficient employees are ‘let go’ (which means fired).

Appraisals are common and promotion is on the line. A certain amount of loyalty is expected but American individualism and career ambitions are taken into account. The communication style between leaders and colleagues is essentially di-

rect. In the US you ‘tell it how it is’. This may involve challenging a decision made by a senior colleague, certainly applicable to error detection, irrespective of whether someone loses face or not (Lewis, 2018; Lewis 2019). In such cases Americans usually acknowledge readily, so loss of face is infrequent. Disagreement in American firms is also direct, often expressed without rancour. Brainstorming is popular and common, innovative ideas are welcomed. Whistle-blowers can be admired rather than demonised. Dress varies according to the company code but office employees must be scrupulously clean and considered smartly dressed. Americans are used to working in ample personal space – offices are generally light and airy, crowded conditions frustrate. As for the use of time, Americans are very punctual, work hard and will stay late at work at times of crisis for the firm. Subcultures are tolerated equally and human rights, in accordance with the Constitution of the United States, are a given. It is worthy of note, however, that Americans willingly accept that duties are in tandem with rights (which is not always the case in some other countries).

##### 4.2. Japan

In 1966, I was sent to Japan to establish a branch of an American multinational in Tokyo, I stayed 5 years there, eventually opening 6 offices in Tokyo, Osaka, Kobe and Yokohama. It did not

*'The concept of hierarchy, trumpeted by the sage Confucius in 1500 BC, is firmly implanted in Japanese society and applies equally to family life, business companies and government'*

take me long to realise that I had entered a different world and that Japanese companies are run in a completely different way from US firms or, for that matter, those in any other country. If we go through our table of issues and see how they impact Japanese people, we will discover the following.

The concept of hierarchy, trumpeted by the sage Confucius in 1500 BC, is firmly implanted in Japanese society and applies equally to family life, business companies and government. If there are 100 persons in a firm, each one will know his number or rank and will instruct or obey accordingly. If you are number 98, you will take orders from 97 people of higher rank, particularly from no. 97, who may well be taking care of your development. In turn, you will advise numbers 99 and 100. Hierarchy is decided by longevity – age or how long you have been with the company. If a batch of people joined in the same year, age will count. If two people are the same age, the date of their university degree will decide. There are strict layers of authority: *Shacho* (CEO), *Bucho* (senior director), *Kacho* (junior manager), *Kakari-cho* (section chief). Command and control is the norm in Japanese companies, full empowerment is rarely granted, except for minor assignments. Leaders of corporations tend to be dignified, often aloof, and are not involved in day-to-day operations, as many American managers are. A Japanese president is expected to set guidelines for the next year's activities and later to ratify proposals which filter upwards from *kachos* and *buchos* for approval. Decision-making in Japanese companies seems shrouded in mystery, particularly to foreign executives who negotiate with them. Decisions which take a week or a month with Americans may drag on for 6 times as long with Japanese firms, who often

seem to decide on a course of action when all other options are no longer viable. The collective nature of Japanese people means that consensus is valued at all levels, though seniors often exert pressure. Collectivism also impacts systems of incentives and punishment: individuals may not be seen to benefit from personal bonuses. Such rewards must be conferred on the department, e.g. to which a crack salesman belongs. Accountants, too, play their part in sales. Expectations with regard to new recruits are always high, as loyalty and work ethic are taken for granted. Periodic appraisals are not popular in Asian companies. Promotion will be achieved in due course, not based on exceptional performance, but on longevity, departmental loyalty and obedience. Criteria for promotion causes problems for Japanese companies. What can one do to promote a brilliant performer aged 25-30? He is destined, whatever his talents, to accept guidance (and orders) from men in their forties and fifties. He simply cannot be promoted above them. The corollary is the mediocre manager in his forties or fifties who is blocking the upward mobility of younger men with superior intellect. What can be done? In the US, Britain and Australia, young stars are simply promoted and rewarded. This cannot be done in Japan and some other Asian countries.

I was fortunate enough to be befriended, during my own sojourn in Japan, by Akio Morita, the then president of Sony. He was an outstanding, but atypical, Japanese executive, well-known among foreign managers and with acute insight of Western practices in business. He confided to me how he dealt with the promotion dilemmas referred to above. *'I cannot promote young stars officially, neither can I give them big salaries or impressive job titles. My best advertising man is 28 years old and has the title of second assistant in the packaging department. His pay is modest, but he knows that my door is always open to him and I listen carefully to all his ideas. I have given him scholarships to spend one year in the United States and plan another year for him in Britain and Germany. Of course, he has introductions and a generous expense account'*.

I asked him, 'What do you do with your less talented fifty-year-olds?' He answered, 'We keep them away from the real business. Some of them we train to be good golfers. We call them Vice-presidents and they entertain visiting American Vice-presidents for days on end. Older ones manage Sony buildings in Tokyo – we rent out many to foreign firms'.

In Japan, loyalty to one's company is rarely discussed, as it is taken for granted. Appointment to a reputable Japanese firm is regarded as a job-for-life. Loyalty is to one's *kaisha* (company), which is often referred to as *uchi* (home). Fidelity feeds straight through to the President. This is fairly common in Asia, though in China baronies are often created, which affect the chain of command.

The communication style between managers and subordinates in Japanese companies is quiet, subdued, polite and indirect in comparison with that in Western companies. Orders are issued very often in the form of hints ('Perhaps we should tidy up the office' or 'We might try to put a call in to Coca Cola today'). Underlying all forms of instructions, suggestions, criticism or reprimand is the vital question of face, which affects all matters of control and compliance in Japanese society. For this reason, superiors invariably communicate with subordinates in a courteous, often paternal, tone and manner. Disagreement is disguised as possible consent ('I suppose that could be true'), the word 'no' is absent in Japanese business. Subordinates always know when there is a difference of opinion and quietly comply (with a smile). Quite a difference from American and Australian discourse!

Brainstorming, so popular in the US, Britain and the Netherlands, is almost impossible to achieve in a Japanese company, where employees simply have no wish to air their views in front of superiors. Feedback in response to exhortation is normally minimal. Disinclination to challenge views or decisions of superiors is quite contrary to US or Canadian practice and can cause problems in error detection or willingness to admit defects in production (Toyota late recalls in 2014). Whistle-blowers in Japan are unpopular. The Fukushima af-

### *'The organisation of a Japanese corporation is ideologically, structurally and culturally inherently different from the Anglo-Saxon model'*

fair has cast serious doubts concerning the code of ethics at higher levels in large corporations.

As persons, the Japanese executives – or 'salary-men' – appear boringly uniform compared with Westerners. Nearly all wear a grey or dark blue suit, white shirt and unexciting tie. Their lack of individualism gives foreigners the impression that they behave like a shoal of fish, arriving at work on time, swimming in the same direction, staying on at their desk till the sector leader goes home. This is no criticism of their behaviour. Working side-by-side with Japanese men and women can be a harmonious and rewarding experience. Sub-cultures hardly exist in Japan, as they do in the US, and tolerance is high as long as one follows the rules. Questions of human rights are barely discussed: one's job is one's job.

This quick survey of life in a Japanese company indicates that procedures, aspirations and conduct have little in common with Anglo-oriented firms, except perhaps a disciplined, civilised pursuit of wealth in the form of company profits. Even here, goals differ. While quarterly profits, demanded by shareholders, are often the target in US corporations, Japanese firms see progress more in enlarging their market share (Toyota vs Nissan, etc.) therefore guaranteeing steady profits at a later stage.

The organisation of a Japanese corporation is ideologically, structurally and culturally inherently different from the Anglo-Saxon model. Any work outlining or proposing maxims and solutions in the sphere of Organisational Culture cannot afford to ignore or neglect the potent lessons to be learnt from the powerful currents of implacable collectivism, intrinsic harmony, patience and stamina, nurture and tenacity, deference, theism, ambiguity and long-termism that flow from Asian and other durable cultures around the world.



### 4.3. Germany

In terms of organisational structure, it is not only in Asia that we find models that diverge sharply from the Anglo-Saxon. Germany, too, is a world of its own. The spectacular failure of the DaimlerChrysler merger revealed startling cultural differences between Germans and Americans. One assumed that certain comforting commonalities such as a driving work ethic, a linear approach to tasks and keen results-orientation would facilitate smooth integration. This was a fallacy. An intercultural meeting of the minds never took place. Misunderstanding and miscomprehension were rampant. The merger triggered the loss of billions of dollars as the share price plummeted. Where did German norms fail to calibrate with other Western ones?

Scanning our approach to organisational issues again, we discover the following.

Hierarchy is much stricter and more firmly established in Germany than in America or anywhere else in Western business. Layers of authority are distinct. The hierarchical pyramid is much steeper than in most cultures (Hammerich & Lewis, 2013). Communication in a German company is vertical rather than horizontal. Orders are passed downwards to the person immediately below you. Instructions are rarely horizontal; cross-departmental communication is rare and may be frowned upon. US firms usually have strictly centralised reporting. Large German companies often feature decentralisation and compartmentalisation. Each department reports vertically to its head. Departmental rivalry is much more acute than in most countries.

Germans are class-conscious. Senior managers are usually intellectuals. In classless America, intellectuals are often called 'egg-heads'. Decision-making in America often features spontaneity, flexibility and adaptability. Germans give pride of place to well-tested procedures and processes. If these structures have brought the company so far, why change things? In Germany, consensus carries more weight than Anglo-Saxon individualism. German collectivism is almost as potent as Asian. Criteria of success is not based on profits but on the

*'Working for Deutsche Welle, I noticed that my German colleagues, though friendly enough, were quick to pounce on any mistakes I made. After a while, I realised that constructive criticism is expected in German corporations. It is personal, but seen as helpful to the individual (to avoid future mistakes).'*

relation of debt to equity. Incentives for employees may involve bonuses but tend, as in Asia, to recognise departmental achievement. Loyalty is expected in German companies and job tenure is lengthy. Both upward and horizontal mobility is less than in the US. Step-by-step hierarchical promotion is slow but sure. In Germany, there is no substitute for experience. The most qualified person in this regard is likely to be on the highest rung of the ladder.

Germans have their own distinct communication style. Entering a room, they are initially unsmiling; though they relax afterwards, their attitude remains formal. Greetings are with surnames and official job titles. There are many 'Doktors' in Germany. Orders are given crisply and factually. Context is always provided. Germans like to know why they are embarking on a certain course of action and why at this time. Humour and charisma are often both lacking at this stage (at least in American eyes). Germans ask serious questions to which they expect serious answers (not always provided by North Americans, Brits and Australians). Brainstorming is a rare event in a German company, feedback from staff is limited. Working for Deutsche Welle, I noticed that my German colleagues, though friendly enough, were quick to pounce on any mistakes I made. After a while, I realised that constructive criticism is expected in German corporations. It is personal, but seen as helpful to the individual (to avoid future mistakes). Some of my French and British co-workers were offended by such directness. Japanese and other Asians find it unacceptable. Germans express dis-

*‘German ‘Ordnung’ is more orderly than its British or American equivalents. It demands orderliness in the home, the office, one’s general environment, one’s car and other possessions, neatness of dress and accessories, orderliness of one’s social manners, working habits – above all, orderliness of mind’*

agreement openly, shunning Brit-style coded speech or Italian diplomacy and are consequently accused of lacking in tact by many nationalities.

German executives dress in good quality, generally new, clothes and expect others to do the same. They are jealous of their personal space and are non-tactile. Seniors have large, private offices and generally keep the door closed. They love privacy, especially in a work situation. They lack American gregariousness, where people wander from office to office to exchange ideas (*‘How’s it going, Jack?’*). As far as the German concept of time is concerned, it is extremely linear. They wish to complete every phase before going on to the next one. They could be described as slow and steady, do not like to be rushed. US-style 3-monthly rolling forecasts they generally despise, considering the interval too short to be meaningful. They prefer to write a detailed annual report. As far as working hours are concerned, Germans like to finish at 5 and begin their leisure time. They prefer to separate as clearly as possible their working and private lives. They are, of course, diligent workers and excellent planners. Human rights are important for them, though they rarely shirk from related responsibilities.

Most German enterprises conform to the national reputation. *Ordnung* (orderliness) is perhaps the most important word in their language. German *Ordnung* is more orderly than its British or American equivalents. It demands orderliness in the home, the office, one’s general environment, one’s car and other possessions, neatness of dress and accessories, orderliness of one’s social man-

ners, working habits – above all, orderliness of mind. When all these conditions have been fulfilled, one can say, *Alles in Ordnung*. This is almost a definition of German organisational culture. It is *their* version and they may be reluctant to abandon well-trying, proven processes that have served the nation well in the past. Many German firms have lengthy manuals prescribing how tasks should be carried out. Re-organising or re-structuring a German firm entering a merger will have to take into account the nation’s bureaucratic realities and deep-rooted national caution.

#### 4.4. France

France has a distinct and durable national culture which strongly impacts the nature of French enterprises and makes them less amenable to change and external influence. French self-esteem parallels and equals that of the Americans or Chinese. French self-centredness resides in the belief that French are intellectually superior to others and that they are the flag-bearers of European civilisation. They resent the replacement of French by English as the language of international trade and diplomacy. French business norms are very different from Anglo-Saxon ones. They use English less than any other Europeans, except the Spaniards, and they distinguish themselves at international conferences by being the last signatories to agreements concluded by organisations such as WTO (World Trade Organisation), OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development), etc. Their persistent anti-Americanism and distrust of Anglo-Saxon precepts make French executives poor candidates for organisation change or adaptation in mergers and acquisitions.

French corporations are as hierarchical as German, often even more so. While German CEOs frequently sound out opinions emanating from unions and the factory floor, the French President-Directeur-Général brooks little opposition to his or her directives. Most French CEOs, especially those of big corporations, are alumni of France’s elite business schools, HEC (École des hautes études commerciales de Paris) and Ecole Normale Supérieure. They bring with them the appropriate

cultural baggage – a sense of history, deep respect for culture and language, elegant theories of business and administration and an in-built suspicion of and distaste for Anglo-American commercialism. Such Chief Officers make all major decisions – consensus is often assumed rather than sought. Errors are frequent but CEOs are rarely fired. The assumption is that the best-qualified man (or woman) was elected in the first place, so change will not improve things. The system has proved detrimental to French business, but criteria for success is not based on profits.

The reputation of the company is the primary concern and the government has shown little hesitation in times past when bailing out iconic firms such as Renault and Citroen. Incentive systems have more to do with correct behaviour than profits, and promotion is linked to cronyism and ‘old boy’ networks.

French communication style is essentially Latin in character. Discourse is long, rambling and digressive. Agendas are rarely adhered to and conclusions are postponed to the end of the day. It is often said of the French that they will not agree to anything until they have agreed to everything.

The speech style is eloquent, oratorical, often charismatic. They are stubborn negotiators, re-state their opinions and positions and shy away from compromise, which they regard as Anglo-Saxon wheeling and dealing.

Their obstinacy and long-windedness can be exasperating for pragmatic Brits and Scandinavians. Their strength is adherence to logic. They consider that they, better than anyone, have a holistic approach.

Disagreement is open rather than diplomatic. Brainstorming is ok, though presidents impose their views. French business people have their own code of ethics and tend to disregard others’. They rival Italians in dressing smartly, they are relatively punctual but can be finicky about working hours. Their 35-hour week has gained them few friends. They are lukewarm about US-style statistics, rolling forecasts and personal appraisals. To be French is to be an individualist with one’s own personal views on subcultures, ethnic issues and human

*‘Re-organisation is obviously imperative in the case of M&A, but where two cultures are involved, no meaningful organisation can be achieved without first attending to the problem of conflicting national traits’*

rights. They are sometimes less than successful in dealing with their sizeable minorities but seek little advice from others.

## 5. DISCUSSION

### 5.1. The primacy of national culture and nation-state traits

This summarised survey of three non-Anglo cultures shows deep-rooted core beliefs which form the basis of mindsets that diverge sharply from those of North Americans, British, Australians and New Zealanders. Japanese, Chinese and French are all convinced of their intellectual and cultural superiority, and the Germans are not far behind. Then there are El Mundo Español and O Mundo Lusitano, whose adherents number 500 million in South America alone. These powerhouses of culture evince little or no inclination to be Americanised, Anglicised or organised by anybody else. Mergers and acquisitions abound and many of these are multinational but few acquired entities surrender their corporate culture. Microsoft has not taken the Finnishness out of Nokia. The other way round, neither has Tata (Indian) taken the Britishness out of Jaguar and Land Rover, nor has Volkswagen completely Germanised Rolls Royce.

It is natural that writing of books on organisational culture has a worthy aim in trying to create a model for modern, smoothly-running companies. Re-organisation is obviously imperative in the case of M&A, but where two cultures are involved, no meaningful organisation can be achieved without first attending to the problem of conflicting national traits. Organisational culture procedure is necessarily a two-phase operation. Phase 1 is the analysis and (attempted) alignment of both companies’ national characteristics (Figure 1).



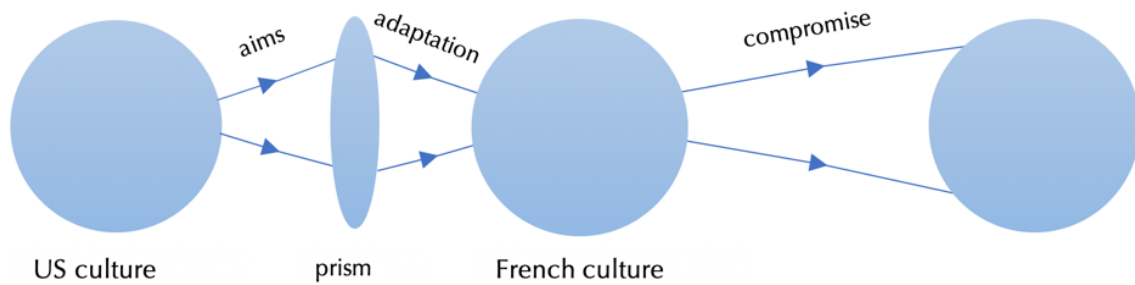


Figure 1. Phase 1 of organisational culture

Phase 1 represents the Anglo-Saxon model of organisational culture. It takes the example of an American firm joining forces with a French firm in a cross-border JV (joint venture) or M&A (merger and acquisition). The American firm approaches the French firm with its own organisational cultural ideas which, as we have discussed, may be very

different to the French firm. They approach the alliance through their own cultural prism. What needs to happen is a process of adaptation to the French culture leading to compromise and to an accepted degree of cultural adaptation by both sides in the interests of cooperation. Phase 2 is the organisation of this alignment (Figure 2).

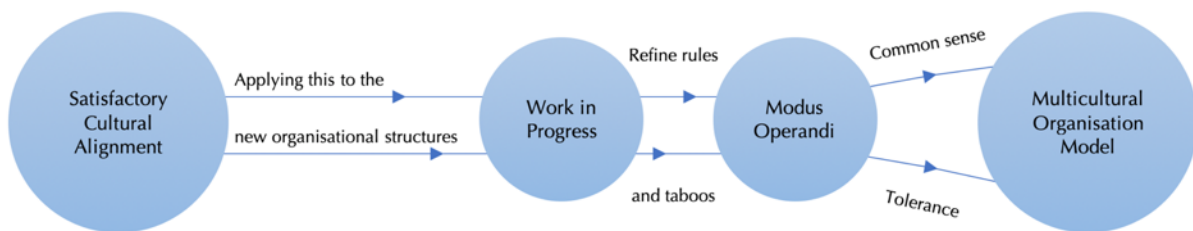


Figure 2. Phase 2 of organisational culture

Phase 2 follows the same overall process as Phase 1 but is inevitably more complex. First, there is an agreement that the two cultures can work together. This then needs to be applied to all the organisational areas of operation involving the two parties to the agreement. This needs to be regarded as work in progress. In other words, the two partners go through the process of refining the rules (and taboos) of each of the departments working with each other. This is an important process in ensuring mutual understanding and reaching agreement on day-to-day operational management issues that might arise. This then leads to a commonly accepted modus operandi which with mutual tolerance and common sense allows both sides to arrive at a multicultural organisational mode, accepted by all parties to the

agreement. The second phase is vital to the settling of differences that may arise and the order of the two phases cannot be reversed, otherwise planners are whistling in the dark.

One of the most important ways of achieving Phases 1 and 2 successfully is to undertake a cultural audit of each partner as part of the negotiation. We call this part of doing your cultural due diligence. We are all familiar with due diligence, an accounting term, which describes the process of examining the financial details of the two parties in order to establish financial viability. Cultural due diligence involves the same process but looks at the values and attitudes of each organisation and the operations management of each relevant department. It then identifies areas of different ways of working which might lead to disagreement

and conflict and explores ways of resolving issues that might arise. Most companies don't do this with the result that an estimated 50% of joint ventures and mergers and acquisitions fail to meet their projected share value (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2012). At the same time managers interviewed all over the world stated that culture was one of the key issues in the success of companies working internationally. Of the CEOs surveyed, 51% cited differences in cultural traditions and 49% cited differences in workplace norms (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2012). Undertaking a cultural due diligence survey of organisational cultures at the beginning of an agreement is an investment of time and resources but saves enormous amounts of time wasted in misunderstandings and delays as work progresses. If done, it creates a forum where managers on both sides of the agreement can discuss, agree on solutions to issues arising and collaborate more effectively.

## 5.2. Communication

One of the key issues in cross-border agreements is the problem of communication between managers. One of the problems is how managers talk to each other, even when they are using a common language such as English as a *lingua franca*.

In the ill-fated failed merger between Daimler Benz (Germany) and Chrysler (US) between 1998 and 2007, commentators noted the attitude of German managers who were reportedly irritated by the typical and more relaxed US communication style. On the other side, a Chrysler in-company joke went, '*How do you pronounce Daimler Chrysler? Answer: Daimler. The Chrysler is silent*' (Lewis, 2016).

Table 2 illustrates the Lewis model of linear-active, multi-active and reactive cultures of the communicative features of each type of culture and how this affects business relationships.

Table 2  
*The Lewis model of linear-active, multi-active and reactive cultures (Lewis, 2012, p. 187)*

LINEAR-ACTIVE	MULTI-ACTIVE	REACTIVE
Talks and listens in equal degrees	Talks most of the time	Listens most of the time
Rarely interrupts	Often interrupts	Never interrupts
Confronts with facts	Confronts emotionally	Never confronts
Frank, direct	Indirect, manipulative	Indirect/courteous
Truth before diplomacy	Diplomatic, creative truth	Diplomacy before truth
Cool	Excitable	Inscrutable
Partly conceals feelings	Displays feelings	Conceals feelings
Speech is for information	Speech is for opinions	Speech is to promote harmony
Defines problems and solves in quick sequence	Goes for all-embracing solutions	Prefers gradualist solutions
Admits own mistakes	Finds an excuse	Hides, covers up mistakes
Likes clarity and accuracy	Tolerates ambiguity	Likes ambiguity
Talks in turns	Often talks over the other	Takes turns slowly
Tolerates some silence	Cannot tolerate silence	Likes sharing silences

Obviously, these are generalisations and individual managers may communicate differently but as generalisations they give a good indication of how linear-actives (US, Germany), multi-actives (in some respects, France) and reactives (Japan) might misunderstand each others' attitudes and behaviours through the failure to recognise communication patterns.

## 6. CONCLUSION

In this paper I have contested the idea that a 'one size fits all' approach to organisational culture covers the variety of organisational cultures around the world. Especially in an age where global business has progressed as never before due to ease of communication and the use of ICTs we are now dealing with companies from all over the world. Although there are some commonalities in ap-

proach, people's expectations or the business relationship differs immensely and needs to be recognised and adapted to. As we have seen in our discussion of the USA, Japan, Germany and France managers have very different approaches to operations management and leadership and decision making and Schein's (2010) grid of issues commonly faced by international organisations is valuable but each area is approached very differently by managers in corporations in different cultures following their own cultural organisation and communication patterns. The key to a successful relationship is to do your cultural due diligence on both organisations seeking collaboration before it starts and identify and iron out potential difficulties. This is never going to resolve all the issues that arise but creates an effective platform for co-operation.

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# Original Research

## National identity in international education: Revisiting problems of intercultural communication in the global world

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*This paper discusses the need to develop new approaches to the problems of intercultural communication under modern conditions. The established theories were formulated in the mid-20th century in a specific historical context and for specific purposes; today they are outdated. The ongoing globalisation, changing global balance of power, increased mobility of the ever-growing masses of the world population, mainly in the spheres of tourism, education and labour migration, call for new concepts and theoretical frameworks. Cultural globalisation revived interest in national cultures, creating a desire to preserve national traditions, lifestyles, characteristic features of everyday life and even those of the worldview. This process is stimulated by the opposition between increasing globalisation and attempts to uphold national identity. Thus, most nations today find issues related to national identity increasingly important and sensitive. The clash between the two opposing vectors – cultural standardisation, on the one hand, and a kind of cultural nationalism, on the other – leads to a growing number of cross-cultural misunderstandings and conflicts. This study relies on a variety of sources, including the results of a survey of Russian and Chinese students studying at the Lomonosov Moscow State University. The discussion of the need to design new approaches to intercultural communication is illustrated by the experiences of Chinese students studying at Russian universities and Russian academics teaching Chinese students. The number of Chinese students is steadily growing, but Russian educational institutions are not prepared to handle this increased inflow. Students, in their turn, are not prepared to integrate into an alien culture. Apart from the need to develop new principles and techniques for cross-cultural studies, the paper also emphasises the importance of providing practical information and advice in various forms – the Internet, guidebooks, induction courses to help international students to adapt to the Russian education system and everyday life. Of great importance are professional advancement courses for the Russian faculty teaching students from China, which would offer them an introduction into Chinese education traditions, behaviour patterns and mentality. Some other ways of addressing the current issues in integrating Chinese students into the Russian world are suggested.*

**KEYWORDS:** international education, intercultural communication, Russian-Chinese relations, national mentalities, traditions of education, international students, clash of cultures



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Russian education has encountered a substantial problem: the increasing number of Chinese students in Russian universities. Internationalisation of education is a logical development in the modern world. This process started a few centuries ago, and it has intensified quite remarkably nearly everywhere in the last decades. Russia, however, has encountered some unexpected difficulties connected, above all, with the student-teacher interaction in the classroom. This is a paradox, because the modern world appears to have everything needed to ensure successful international interactions within the field of education: worldwide cultural globalisation; theories of intercultural communication that have stood the test of time; and, in the case of Russia and China, a long history of co-operation.

To grapple with the current situation, this paper seeks to: (1) explore issues related to the worldwide cultural globalisation; (2) analyse the existing theories of intercultural communication; (3) discuss difficulties in communication between Russian teachers and Chinese students arising from differences in the education traditions of the two countries; and (4) suggest ways of overcoming the current challenges. The study uses data obtained from surveys, case studies and media reports, as well as historical sources that provide a historical and cultural perspective for the issues under discussion.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The 21st century can be called the era of pervasive globalisation of culture in all its spheres, from high art to everyday culture. Standardisation of the larger part of cultural phenomena has swept across the entire world, and this is especially true for everyday life, consumption, food traditions, etc. On today's world map there are hardly any 'blind spots' where you would find no Coca-Cola, or trainers, or the Visa card. Modern supermarkets of Shanghai, Moscow, Frankfurt and Chicago will only differ, as yet, in prices and the language that the shop assistants and customers speak. Everything else – the choice of goods and brands, adver-

tising techniques, space layout, card payment system, discount policies and many other things – will be very similar or absolutely identical.

Globalisation of everyday culture has also given rise to standardisation in the spiritual sphere: ethical codes, behaviour patterns, ideals and ideas are gradually being brought to a common standard. Uniformity is especially evident among the youth: even those young people who have no opportunities to travel abroad absorb the dominant cultural elements through television and computers. Clothes, food, popular music, films, role models, information about celebrities' personal lives (which has become a substitute for literary reading, and, in fact, a source of young people's notions of the meaning of life and their place in it) – all these are now the same in Russia, the United States, South Africa, Japan, Australia, UK, Brazil, China, and even the so-called 'Muslim states' that wage a systematic, yet unsuccessful, war against these phenomena. The country's geographical location or political system does not matter. People all over the world hold their breath following the intricacies of the private lives of the British royal family, scandals involving American pop singers, divorces in the families of famous American actors. When you enter a lecture room at a university anywhere in the world, you have virtually no chance of working out your location by looking at the students' clothes, gadgets in their hands, or coffee cups on their desks.

Time cannot be stopped, and cultural globalisation is a mark of the modern era.

In the early 1960s, Canadian philosopher and culture theorist Marshall McLuhan (1964) coined the term 'global village'. He believed that the new information and communication technology had led to the erosion of 'time and space': '*As electrically contracted, the globe is no more than a village*' (McLuhan, 1964, p. 30). McLuhan mainly wrote about the impact of television, but he also foresaw other, more powerful methods of exerting impact, such as through the modern Internet. At the same time, he tried to avoid value judgments: '*I don't approve of the global village. I say we live in it*' (McLuhan, 1964, p. 30). Yet, he pre-

dicted that globalisation would inevitably lead to cultural integration, and would become a powerful tool exerting influence on national cultures: *'Whole cultures could now be programmed to keep their emotional climate stable in the same way that we have begun to know something about maintaining equilibrium in the commercial economies of the world'* (McLuhan, 1964, p. 30).

Today, even the biggest assumptions made by researchers have proved correct. As of December 31, 2020, the number of Internet users in the world comes to nearly 5 billion. It is well over half of the current world population, which is around 7,8 billion people. This is truly impressive, considering that this figure includes babies and very old people. What is more, in some regions of the world – Europe or North America, for example, – the percentage of Internet users comes to nearly 90% (Internet World Stats, 2021; Worldometer, 2021). It might be assumed that computer skills are among the earliest skills that children develop in those countries.

The global village seems to have become a fact of life, cultural uniformity has been achieved nearly everywhere, and all we need to do is agree on a common language, after which we could live as a single global family – at least in what concerns everyday life and cultural values. However, cultural globalisation and standardisation are accompanied by the opposite process – increasing interest in one's own national culture, determination to uphold national traditions, way of life, and even certain features of the national mindset. This process was probably triggered by the clash between the intensifying globalisation and attempts to preserve national authenticity. Consequently, issues related to national identity have become extremely important and sensitive for most nations.

As a result, every now and then our 'global village' gets rocked by scandals related to some national cultural characteristics, which have not only survived in the globalised world but have become even more salient. What is more, we are not talking about the traditional cultures of various indigenous peoples that have been preserved in some distant parts of the world, or have miraculously

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survived in the 'global' environment (Abi-Hashem, 2020). We are talking about the 'civilised' and industrialised countries. To give an example, the informal meeting between Iran's President Hassan Rouhani and French President Francois Hollande was disrupted because the two sides failed to agree on some aspects of the state dinner: Rouhani objected to wine being served at the meal, while the French refused to take it away. It should be noted that for Iran this was a matter of religious principles, while France was simply defending its right to cultural identity.

In 2010, McDonald's botched its massive campaign trying to win over Italian consumers. The McItaly burger, made entirely of the ingredients produced in Italy and representing the colours of the Italian flag, was met with indignation by Italians who saw that as a travesty of the 'food culture of unparalleled richness and diversity', i.e. Italian food culture, and showered newspapers with resentful letters calling for a stop to pervasive 'gastro-globalisation' (Fort, 2010). In 2019, a wave of protest arose in Rome, where McDonald's was planning to build a restaurant next to the ancient Baths of Caracalla (The Local, 2019), and in Florence, where the local authorities eventually managed to block a fast-food outlet on the much-revered Piazza del Duomo causing McDonald's to file a multi-million lawsuit against this historic city (The Local, 2016).

McDonald's has long become a kind of symbol of globalisation. In the early 1990s, American sociologist George Ritzer (2011) coined the term 'McDonaldisation', declaring the advancement of

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the restaurant’s outlets, as well as the principles underlying this successful business, to be a major element in the globalisation of social life.

He also suggested the term ‘grobalisation’ describing ‘the imperialistic ambitions of nations, corporations, organisations, and the like and their desire to impose themselves on various geographic areas’ (Ritzer, 2011, p. 5). Grobalisation encompasses three modern processes which the author believes to be crucial – capitalism, Americanisation and McDonaldisation. Curiously enough, in the Russian language this term is especially telling (*grob* in Russian means *coffin*). It suggests that McDonaldisation, i.e. cultural globalisation, is equal to *coffin*, i.e. death to regional cultures (Strelets, 2020). Ritzer, however, derived this term from the English word *grow*, referring to one of the objectives globalisation pursues – growth in profits (Ritzer, 2011, p. 5).

The expansion of McDonald’s restaurants in the context of globalisation is a striking example of active resistance to the standardising impact of the global trends, and this is especially noticeable in countries with a rich food culture, such as France or Italy. At the same time, here are some statistics illustrating the futility of efforts to oppose the global developments: today France ranks second in the world by the number of McDonald’s outlets, and Italy ranks fourth (Statista, 2020).

A couple of years ago Italian fashion brand Dolce & Gabbana suffered a major intercultural failure. To promote their upcoming runway show

in Shanghai, the company launched an online ad titled ‘Eating with Chopsticks’. The video featured a beautiful Asian woman who was unsuccessfully struggling to eat Italian food, including pasta, pizza and cannoli, with chopsticks. A male voiceover said: ‘Is it too big for you?’ The ad provoked public outrage with far-reaching consequences: on the first day the ad was viewed by over 120 million people; the fashion show in Shanghai was cancelled; Dolce & Gabbana’s boutiques were closed down all over China; the Chinese e-commerce companies withdrew D&G’s products from their online stores; Chinese film and showbiz celebrities issued statements refusing to wear the brand’s clothes; and when the Italian designers offered their apologies, these were ignored. The failure was even more epic as Chinese consumers are the world’s leaders in the purchase of luxury goods, and Dolce & Gabbana has 44 trading outlets in China, not to mention online sales (Romanova, 2018). Of course, the clamour soon died down, D&G’s shops were reopened, but the clash of cultures is evident here.

A number of experts argued that Dolce & Gabbana, known for their scandalous reputation and propensity for provocation, created the scandal deliberately to attract attention to the brand. As is well known, despite the scandalous reputation, the sales of the Italian fashion house are steadily growing. Yet, in China the situation seems to have gone out of control. One reason might be that the notion of ‘provocation’ (*épatage*) is completely alien to Chinese culture. And those who developed the ad campaign for D&G should have been better informed about the reverential attitude of the Chinese to chopsticks, which they view as part of their cultural heritage.

Experts on Chinese cultural traditions are unanimous in stating that ‘for China, chopsticks are something more than a tool for eating food; it’s a sign of belonging to the Chinese culture’ (Maslov, 2014, p. 33). Historically, they represented the borderline separating civilised people using chopsticks during meals, i.e. the Chinese, from ‘barbarians’ who used fingers or, later, such ‘indecent tools’ as knives and forks for that purpose

(Dawson, 1964, p. 342). Throughout millennia, chopsticks were the subject of poems praising their hard-working nature and tireless care for people. Many of those were love poems, as chopsticks are only useful and make sense when they are together, the two of them. They have become a symbol of love and marriage, are often given as a present for wedding, and are still a symbol of love and fidelity (Wang, 2015, p. 122-132). There are a great many traditions and rituals related to chopsticks: dropping them on the floor is a bad sign; picking them into food or tapping them on the plate is unacceptable; one must not lick or bite them, or poke food with them. A large number of taboos emphasise the role and place of chopsticks in Chinese culture and life.

It is revealing that, wishing to 'get revenge' on the European fashion house for the insult to their traditions, the Chinese launched a 'retaliatory' ad in which a clumsy European is attempting to eat Chinese food using a knife and a fork. The problem is that in the West the knife and the fork are mere utensils for taking meals; they do not bear any symbolic meaning, and such a commercial could not be offensive for Europeans. People tend to measure others by their own yardstick.

Thus, we have pervasive cultural globalisation and the global village, on the one hand, and the aggravating intercultural misunderstandings and conflicts, on the other. This is not a historical paradox but a logical course of development. The world has become more mobile and interconnected, which resulted in the escalation of cross-cultural clashes and the growing urge to preserve one's cultural identity.

There is one more important aspect to it. In the last 20-30 years, new players, such as Russia, China and many other countries, have emerged on the global cultural arena. This does not refer to politics or economy but to the intensive use of such global achievements as tourism, education, and labour force. Importantly, these areas of cross-cultural interactions are especially problematic in terms of adaptation. Business is driven by money; politics is driven by power; and we are talking about ordinary people living their everyday lives. Modern

cross-cultural studies must focus on this target group. It should also be noted that today we are witnessing an unprecedented rise in mobility in the above-mentioned areas – tourism, education and work.

Another major factor complicating the current issues in communication and mutual understanding is the low level of awareness and a decline in what American cultural theorists described as 'cultural literacy' (Hirsch et al., 1987; Hirsch, 1988). The spread of the Internet, among other factors, has left no room for the traditional mass media, print books, documentaries, news and current affairs programmes, especially among young people. For example, in Soviet times the role of TV news and print press was very high; today it is extremely limited. The Soviet Union practised an effective, though not very popular, method of information dissemination known as political information meetings. Such meetings were regularly organised for servicemen, schoolchildren and university students to provide them with information, albeit ideologically tinged, about different countries and peoples. Now they are gone, and there is nothing to replace them. As a result, although globalisation, travel opportunities and the Internet have made this world a smaller place, knowledge about the world is decreasing among the general public.

### **3. A CASE STUDY**

#### **3.1. Premise**

A survey conducted at the Lomonosov Moscow State University in 2019, produced some indicative results. The survey included students of the Lomonosov Moscow State University: Chinese (about 200 respondents, aged 18-25) and Russian (about 250 respondents, aged 16-22). Let us look at the data and comment on it.

#### **3.2. Russians about China**

Five most common association words: (1) Chinese cuisine (including tea, rice, noodles, exotic dishes, sushi); (2) overpopulation, excessive number of people; (3) no association words; (4) the Great Wall of China; (5) equally divided responses: hieroglyphs – red colour – technology.



The majority of Russian students surveyed had never been to China and had no interests connected with this country (except for a small number of students who were studying Chinese, but they did not improve the overall picture). It is obvious that their knowledge is highly stereotyped and extremely superficial. Chinese cuisine ranked first probably because of the large number of Chinese restaurants in Moscow and the popularity of Asian cuisine among young people, who believe it to be 'healthy'. Quite obviously, technology got onto the list due to the spread of Chinese gadgets all over the world. Conspicuous is the fact that quite a few Russian students had no China-related associations at all.

### 3.3. The Chinese about Russia

The situation with Chinese students is different: the respondents were quite motivated to gain knowledge about Russia as they had come to this country to study, and they had been learning its language for a number of years. Moreover, the Russian language was their specialist area, which would imply a certain interest in the country itself. Yet, their most common associations are quite superficial and primitive. (Let us note that many similar surveys were conducted among US and European students, and, with the exception of *vodka* and *Putin*, their associations and impressions were noticeably different, though they were just as superficial and stereotypical.) More sadly, they do not change much even after Chinese students have spent some time in Russia and have gained first-hand experience of the country.

The Chinese suggested the following five most common association words about Russia before arrival: (1) cold (including frost, winter, climate); (2) large country (some added 'but few people'); (3) beautiful; (4) bears; (5) vodka; (6) Putin.

The five most common association words after arrival were: (1) cold (one comment – 'but beautiful'); (2) large; (3) beautiful; (4) clean air; (5) old; (6) not like I imagined the country at first.

Things the Chinese stated they liked about Russia: (1) fresh air; (2) beautiful women and men; (3) few people; (4) kind.

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Things the Chinese stated they didn't like about Russia: (1) food; (2) weather; (3) work slowly and ineffectively; (4) discrimination and racism; (5) backwardness and under-development; (6) unsafe.

Most difficult things about living in Russia: (1) the Russian language; (2) misunderstanding; (3) lack of a Russian friend; (4) communication; (5) bureaucracy.

Finally, food is a special topic: it creates many problems and provides little enjoyment. Things the Chinese stated they liked about food in Russia: (1) borscht; (2) blinis; (3) plov; (4) soup; (5) nothing. Things the Chinese stated they didn't like about food in Russia: (1) rye bread; (2) all food; (3) dairy products, especially cheese which is added to all dishes.

It must be stressed that the survey mainly included first and second-year students. We may assume that the time they had spent was not sufficient to get to know the country better. One of the master's students provided a detailed account of how his attitude to Russia changed (his text will further be quoted verbatim): from disliking to loving – a rather typical progression for a senior student. Before he started learning Russian, Russia for him was '*an empty designation that only exists on maps and in the news*'. He started learning Russian using a textbook from the 1990s, which was not the best source for developing his knowledge: '*I decided that both the Russian language and Russia itself were a long way away from our life. In fact, we were learning the Russian of the Soviet period*'. He first visited the country in 2009 when he was accompanying a Chinese businessman to Chi-

ta, and he spent most of the time in the hotel out of fear *'even without a reason. I refused to go out in my free time. And I sighed with relief when the work was over and I could leave'*. The turning point came when he arrived in Moscow for his studies: *'I've been living in Moscow for the last 4 years, and I've got used to my life here. Russia is no longer a mysterious country. People fall in love with Russia because of its biological cleanliness, fascinating beauty, passionate people... The Chinese adore Putin, because he has the qualities that we would like to see in our leaders. He never panders to the US or Western Europe, which reminds us of Mao. And the Russian babas (women) are simply a legend! All this suggests that Russian people are brave and strong; they look quaint from an outsider's perspective'*. Unfortunately, not many international students who come to Russia to study develop such an understanding of and love for the country.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

Today the world is faced with a major problem: the research area that emerged in the mid-20th century and sought to address the increasing number of communication issues caused by globalisation – this area of study has proved to be useless. I am talking about intercultural communication – a field of applied knowledge that, according to one of its founders Edward Hall, was meant to help *'decipher the complex, unspoken rules of each culture'* (Hall & Hall, 1990, p. 4). The problem is that this scholarly discipline, which has recently come into fashion again, is closely connected with the place and time of its emergence.

The foundations of intercultural communication were being laid in the post-war period, predominantly in the United States where the government allocated substantial subsidies to develop the field. The political factor was dominant from the very beginning. It was vitally important to define the character, behaviour patterns, mentality and culture of the nations that the US was coming into direct contact with at that time, and knowledge about allies was just as important as knowledge about enemies.

Quite soon, however, not only politics but business, too, started playing an increasingly central role in cross-cultural research, and the pragmatic approach in this area became increasingly prominent. The focus shifted from theoretical investigation to attempts to create scientific models that could be used to identify characteristic features of other nations – mainly for the purpose of ensuring good understanding and smooth communication, as well as for predicting behaviour. Such were the objectives pursued by most Western scholars in the field in the mid-20th century. Research became dominated by the aspiration to find simple solutions to complicated problems, and researchers focused on developing culture parameters that would make it possible to fit all the nuances of behaviour, thinking and feelings of different peoples into some rigid frameworks.

That set the scene for the rise of a new area of research – intercultural communication – a scientific discipline that made the study of national characters and cultures exclusively practice-oriented. This work involved researchers from a great variety of fields – anthropologists, linguists, sociologists. It was necessary to promptly devise methods of teaching people who had no relevant training in how to communicate with people of other nations – without spending too much time on gaining knowledge about their history and culture. This resulted in the development of clear-cut concepts that attempted to ram diverse cultures into definite parameters suitable for teaching practical communication skills. Let us note right away that such an approach inevitably leads to oversimplification and stereotypisation.

To be fair, the scope of the work accomplished was impressive. Moreover, it apparently brought practical benefits to the United States, creating conditions for this new world leader to advance on the global arena in various spheres, including politics, business and culture. However, all research efforts were limited to those narrow practical goals.

Besides, those studies were extremely Eurocentric or, more exactly, they were informed by Western values and interests. Today, however, the pow-

er structure in the world is different. Here is just one such example. Development of the theoretical tenets of intercultural communication coincided with the peak of the Cold War, on the one hand, and the heyday of Russian-Chinese relations, on the other. It is not surprising that Russia and China were invariably placed in the same group in all concepts developed by American scholars, which implied that Russian and Chinese cultures and national characters were identical. This alone shows the 'usefulness' of such studies. It is still more surprising that in the last two decades the works from the 1950-1960s got their second wind in many countries, including Russia, where the triad of Hall, Hofstede and Hirsch is revered almost like the classical Marxist thinkers in the past. At the same time, in the United States, the UK and some other countries scholars have created new modern theories and published a great many studies dealing with cross-cultural communication and adaptation issues, and some of them address cultural barriers for international students studying in these countries.

Today we need to review the theory of intercultural communication in Russia. We must borrow the best concepts developed over the decades, apply them to the new conditions of the global world, and, most importantly, reject the 'West-centric' view of the world. Though in the recent years some new studies have been published that cover certain aspects of cross-cultural communication (for example, Ter-Minasova, 2017; Voevoda, 2020), there are no synthetical works in this area. New concepts must be based on research conducted in Russia, and they must be applicable in the Russian context. Intercultural communication is an applied discipline that seeks to achieve very concrete goals, and, as we have learnt from experience, it cannot be universal for all nations. That would go against its own aims and objectives – facilitating adaptation in this large world, helping to avoid conflicts and establish good-neighbour relations. Ways and methods of achieving this will be different for different nations. We must look for new perspectives on the problem, and approaches that appear to hold the most promise are those con-

nected with the cultural competence training in the English-speaking world, and a new educational field in Russia called 'Area Studies', as it is understood in some higher education institutions, for example Moscow State University.

Issues related to Russia's interaction with the East Asian nations, which are becoming increasingly active on the international arena, are gaining greater prominence, especially in what concerns China. In recent years, the inflow of Chinese students into Russian universities has grown dramatically. This is a rapidly developing process, and, according to projections, it has not reached its peak yet. Government data suggest that the number of Chinese citizens studying in Russia has doubled in the last six years, coming currently to around 30 thousand. The opposite process is also taking place: more and more Russian students are studying at Chinese universities, with the current figure standing at 18 thousand (RIA Novosti, 2019). (The data for 2020 are less indicative, as the number of students grew less dramatically than expected due to the Covid-19 pandemic.)

Russian higher education institutions have a long history of working with international students, the Chinese in particular. However, such an intensive international inflow has proved to be a serious challenge for many universities, as well as for students. This refers not to the methods of teaching the Russian language but to cultural interactions at various levels – from classroom activities and off-campus practical training to living in the student dormitory and shopping.

The current situation is paradoxical. Chinese students are known all over the world for their diligence, perseverance and a strong sense of responsibility. In 1995 I obtained a grant to conduct research at Amherst College (Massachusetts). Apart from myself, there were two other grant holders – a British historian and a Chinese chemist. Throughout the six months of our stay, the work of a whole laboratory hinged on the Chinese researcher: he left for work at 6 am and came back at 12 pm. As it turned out, he was growing some special kind of crystal, and no one else could do it. I was told that, under US legislation, the American laboratory

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employees had fixed working hours, mandatory lunch and coffee breaks, not to mention their entitlements to vacations, sabbaticals, etc. But the crystal required constant attention. It was only the Chinese intern, with his work ethic, commitment and disregard for his own private time, who was able to complete this important work.

In Russia, Chinese students have developed a reputation for being crafty at skipping classes and dodging homework and other responsibilities. Some journalists try to explain that by claiming that Russia attracts the so-called ‘fourth wave’ of Chinese youth: those from the first wave go to study to Britain and other European countries; the second wave goes to the United States; the third one heads for Australia, and the fourth wave ends up in Russia. But such an explanation is not theoretically valid because the choice of the university is connected with the students’ financial capacities, rather than with their potential academic ability. Yet, we need to consider that universities in the above countries require candidates to demonstrate a certain level of English proficiency confirmed by international certificates, while Russian universities have to be content with regular entrance exams that do not test the candidates’ knowledge of Russian.

So, what are the roots of challenges that Russian professors (let me stress that this does not refer to the teachers of Russian as a foreign language – professionals in teaching international students – but to the vast group of academics who were only recently exposed to the presence of students from East Asia at their lectures and seminars) and Chinese students are facing today?

Let us begin with what might be called social and psychological causes. These include difficulties in identification and self-identification, mutual lack of knowledge about the characteristic features and lifestyles of the peoples of the two countries. This breeds misunderstanding, alienation, a sense of insecurity and even fear, which hinder work and normal communication. At first sight, we seem to know a lot about China and the Chinese – probably, more than about other nations. We know that we are neighbours, and that historically we have been tied by trade links, and in some periods of the 20th century we were close friends and allies standing up together against world imperialism. Yet for the older generation this knowledge is essentially limited to memories about Chinese thermos flasks that Russian families kept with great care, and to a phrase from a song from Soviet times: *‘Russians and the Chinese are brothers forever’*. The song is very cheerful and is quite enjoyable to listen to even today.

And if we delve deeper, we will find that we know next to nothing about our ‘little brother’ represented by so many people. Over the long history of the Russian state, we have gone through the stages of spiritual unification with Byzantium, cultural interaction with Italy, idolisation of Germany, admiration of Britain, imitation of France, and copying of the American way of life. Western nations, and more particularly Europeans, have long become ‘our’ people, close and understandable to Russians. This does not eliminate the issues of misunderstanding and cross-cultural conflicts, but the Western world is essentially easy-to-understand and close to us. Our worlds are connected by the ties of blood; we have borrowed many things from there, adapting them to the Russian context, while trying out and rejecting some others.

The situation with China is completely different. Relatively close relations with this country only began in the 17th century, though there had been some vague mutual perceptions between the two countries before that time. Moreover, starting from the 18th century the notion of ‘foreigner’ was increasingly linked with westerners. In the earlier times it was broader, encompassing people of oth-



er faiths, of non-Slavic origin, as well as barbarians (Sreznevsky, 1993). And as for phrases similar to the one found in the 18th century periodical *Zritel* (Beholder) – ‘our high society is more foreign than Russian’ – they would refer exclusively to European influences (Sreznevsky, 1993).

Russians perceived the Chinese as a curiosity, some exotic and bizarre off-worlders. Ekaterina Andreeva (who would later marry poet Konstantin Balmont) recalled in her memoirs how her father, a wealthy merchant, received his trade partners in their Moscow home: ‘Sometimes in our father’s house we saw real living Chinese with long braids, wearing silk jackets embroidered with birds, flowers and dragons, and wearing soft shoes with white felt soles. They treated Father to their tea, drinking it from tiny cups of the finest porcelain. Greeting us, they would screw up their narrow eyes, bare their yellow teeth, which was apparently meant to represent a smile, and touch our palms with their skinny hands with very long nails. I was terrified of them...’ (Aleksandrov, 1997, p. 63). Those were characters from a fairy tale, not the real world.

In the early 20th century journalist and doctor Vladimir Korsakov wrote about the differences between Europeans and the Chinese, including Russians into the notion of Europeans: ‘One must not measure the spiritual nature of the Chinese and Europeans by the same yardstick. For centuries, the life of the Chinese went its own way, and it is still following that path, which is completely different from the life of Europeans. The Chinese have everything in their own way: childhood, adolescence and old age. The Chinese have their own way of thinking and their own, absolutely unique, range of feelings. To understand the spirit of the Chinese people, get a grasp of their thinking, gain an insight into their soul, one must live with them for many years, study their daily routines and spend a lot of time watching their life’ (Korsakov, 1901, p. 217-218).

In the first half of the 20th century, after the 1917 Revolution, contacts with the Chinese intensified. They took part in the Russian Civil war, ran the famous laundries in Russia’s capital cities dur-

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ing the New Economic Policy period, made appearance in the literary works by Mikhail Bulgakov and Vikenti Veresaev, as well as in novels about the Russian Revolution such as *Red Devils* (in the first film adaptation of 1923 the Chinese character was replaced by a black-skinned boy, and the famous film of 1967, *The Elusive Avengers*, had a Gypsy character). But even during the period when Russia had quite close relations with China, the image of the Chinese among the Soviet people was very vague and blurred. One of the characters in a tale by Samuil Marshak says: ‘In China? Is it where people have squinty eyes and long braids?’ (Marshak, 1968, p. 221). Such were the limited perceptions about the distant brother, who sometimes would turn into a distant foe, depending on the historical period.

Consequently, when Russian professors today hear that they are going to have international students in their class, they think about the French or Italians. And when they learn it is the Chinese, they get slightly disappointed.

Russians cannot gain knowledge about China from the customary sources of information, which they can use to learn about many European countries without leaving their homes. These include, for example, fiction books that introduced us to the France of Dumas and Remarque, or music which gave us insights into the British world through the Beatles and Queen, or the cinema industry that unveiled American, Indian and Brazilian life to us. In China even the Internet is different: it does not have Wikipedia, Google, YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp and many other applications and platforms that are habitual to us but have been blocked in China for political reasons. This also impacts the dissemination of knowledge

about Russia in China. The Chinese study Russian using old textbooks that are good in terms of language teaching techniques but are out-of-date from the perspective of cultural knowledge. Besides, teaching Russian as a foreign language has historically prioritised Russian classical literature, which provides excellent examples of fine literary work but is not very helpful for understanding modern life in Russia and its people (Ivanova, 2018).

Effective communication with Chinese students in the classroom requires at least some basic understanding of Chinese culture and mentality. It is important not only in terms of expanding the teachers' general knowledge – it is a prerequisite for success. This is a separate topic, and a large one. It is not well covered in the existing Russian academic literature, although some solid studies, including translated works, have recently been published addressing the national character of Italians, the British, the French and some other nations. As for studies on East Asian peoples, the Japanese are best represented. Information about the Chinese is scarce and is usually limited to rather primitive and not very reliable travel Internet resources.

Despite the radical transformation of the Chinese society, rapid globalisation of many aspects of their culture, especially among the youth, penetration of Western traditions and lifestyles, which just like in other regions of the world are gradually becoming a symbol of 'civilisation' in this country, the basic features of the Chinese national character and mindset remain the same. According to a well-known scholar, *'the globalised Chinese remain Chinese in their own eyes, and in the eyes of other peoples'* (Malyavin, 2007, p. 16). Furthermore, sociological studies conducted in Taiwan, which has always been more exposed to Western influences, show that the Taiwanese are more committed to traditional values and norms than citizens of the People's Republic of China (Malyavin, 2007, p. 16). Just like with other nations, behaviour of the Chinese is largely governed by historical tradition that contributed to shaping their mentality and character.

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Commitment to traditional values, the system of hieroglyphs that isolates China from the rest of the world, a mindset moulded over centuries by Chinese philosophers, as well as the overall course of the country's historical development, have formed one of the key features of Chinese culture – its closed nature, which is two-edged. On the other hand, it implies non-admission of foreigners to their world and a desire to keep all the wealth of their culture to themselves. Consider just one historical riddle: why was it the black tea that Europeans initially brought from China, while the Chinese themselves had always preferred green tea? It almost looks like the Chinese deliberately 'spoiled' their most treasured product before selling it to outlanders. On the other hand, the Chinese reject the outside world and, when they have to go there, they shut themselves up in small communities where they stick to their habitual rituals and communication patterns. This certainly complicates their learning at a foreign university.

It is well known that the Chinese attach enormous importance to interpersonal relationships, social relationships, and public image. However, all this only applies to 'their own people': there is striking contrast between their highly polite and courteous treatment of the 'insiders' and the cold, indifferent and, quite often, blatantly hostile attitude to the 'outsiders' (Malyavin, 2007, p. 25). A Hong-Kong sociologist Sun Longji points to the lack of 'public virtue of the group' and egotism of the Chinese (Sun, 1983, p. 314). In Chinese culture each person, from birth on, is enclosed in a network of interpersonal relationships that define and organise their existence and control their

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minds. When a Chinese individual leaves this zone of control, he or she becomes extremely egotistical leading a disorderly life and involving others in this disorder (Malyavin, 2007, p. 26). This is, perhaps, the root cause of the unusual behaviour of Chinese students when they find themselves in an alien environment.

Equally important is understanding of aspects that at first sight might appear to be irrelevant to the learning process: the daily routines and habits of the Chinese. When this is lacking, Russian teachers get baffled when Chinese students refuse to come for an extra class at 6 pm, saying that this is dinner time. Russians do not attach much importance to the time of meals – they eat when they have time for that. But for the Chinese meal times are vitally important as they structure the day, set the right pace of living and generate the needed energy.

Chinese students also complain about the lack of a long lunch break, which in their home country they use not only for meals but also for rest. When it is absent, they feel tired and distracted in classes, which results in lower academic performance (Xiapin, 2017, p. 156; Ye & Deng, 2020). There are many other instances of misunderstanding, not limited to eating habits, that affect the learning process.

We are not saying that every faculty member working with Chinese students should obtain an additional degree in Sinology, but they certainly must have some basic understanding of their students' life and mentality – at least from a practical perspective, and in what concerns the learning process and communication in the classroom. The

same should be expected from the students. Apart from studying the Russian language, they must undertake some adaptation course introducing them to the Russian life and education system.

The European model of education, which we have known since the 18th century, reached China only in the 20th century, and in a fragmented form. In its entirety, it was adopted only in the recent decades, when the country entered a new stage of societal modernisation. A book by Chinese writer and philosopher Lin Yutang *My Country and My People* (2012), written almost 100 years ago, demonstrates the traditional attitude to education. The author notes the difference between the Chinese and European approaches to education. Both Western and Chinese scholars are devoted to their learning. The devotion of some Western professors to their special subjects is more impressive, even though it sometimes amounts to 'a morbid pride', but the respectful attitude of the Chinese for a scholar has a different source. They respect *'that type of education which increases his practical wisdom, his knowledge of world affairs, and his judgment in times of crisis'* (Yutang, 2012, p. 97).

China had no science in the Western understanding of the word, with the exception of philology and history. Yutang (2012) makes a witty remark alluding to Chinese pragmatism: *'Astronomy is very near astrology, and zoology and botany are very near cuisine, since so many of the animals and fruits and vegetables are eatable'* (Yutang, 2012, p. 270).

In the old days, educational institutions had the tutorial system, *'where the teacher knew exactly what his pupils had or had not read, and where there was a very close and intimate relationship between teacher and student'* (Yutang, 2012, p. 277). There were no marks, submission deadlines, no promotion from grade to grade, and no graduation diplomas. Quite a different matter was the formal examination to obtain the scholastic degree, which opened the way to a career as a government official – the ultimate aspiration for the Chinese in all times. But that was a different ambition, one that was not related to scholarship or knowledge.

Praising the old traditional Chinese system, which had more to do with accumulation of knowledge rather than actual education, the philosopher speaks ironically about the new, Western, system: earlier *'no one believed, or tried to make others believe, that by piling up 'units' of psychology, religion and salesmanship and English constitutional history on a person, you can create an educated man out of him'* (Yutang, 2012, p. 277).

Many things have certainly changed over the century. China has made a major breakthrough in scientific knowledge development and reformed its education system along the Western lines (today a Chinese university campus looks very much like one in the United States). It borrowed the best practices adjusting them to the Chinese context. But the mentality and attitudes to the fundamental things in life, sustained by rituals, philosophy and religious doctrines, change very slowly. And this is not necessarily a drawback, since it allows people to retain at least a tiny bit of their national identity in the globalising world.

In this light, of great importance is the study of differences between the Russian and Chinese education systems, which are rarely considered in dealing with international students. There are quite a few of them, and they affect various aspects of the educational experience. Let us consider the teacher-student communication, for example. Beginning from childhood, the Chinese are taught to respect teachers. Teachers are always right, so pupils must listen to them and agree with them. Chinese students do not accept the Russian system of debates and discussions because it makes them feel confused.

*'He who knows, does not speak (does not get into arguments). He who speaks (gets into arguments, tries to prove his point), does not know'*. This famous quote by the ancient Chinese philosopher Lao Tsu explains the very essence of the problem.

There is a similar saying in Russian – *'Speech is silver, but silence is gold'* – which might be true from the perspective of conventional wisdom, but has little to do with the 'talkative' academic world.

University teachers often lose interest in such 'silent' audiences and complain about the students' passivity.

Knowledge accumulation in Chinese education is a progressive process, in which elements are strung like beads. Conversely, Russian professors like to digress from the main topic; they build arguments and counterarguments, challenge the universally accepted wisdoms, and require the students to solve complicated problems on their own. All this perplexes Chinese students.

Such attitudes are rooted in the nature of Chinese logic, which is based on their understanding of truth. Yutang (2012) argued that truth, according to Chinese, can never be proved. It can only be suggested. This demonstrates the opposition between logical reasoning and common sense, which in China *'takes the place of inductive and deductive reasoning'* (Yutang, 2012, p. 112). Analytical reasoning cuts truth up into various aspects for the purpose of finding the supporting arguments; as a result, truth loses its internal links and content. Yutang (2012, p. 117) points out the 'superstitious belief in the power of words', which is so characteristic of the Chinese.

Malyavin (2007), one of the most well-known modern researchers of Chinese culture and civilisation, holds that *'cognition in the Chinese way means settling oneself into the very quality of the given environment, the bodily absorption of it. Hence, the inability of the Chinese to take part in open discussions, to provide progressive argumentation for an adopted viewpoint, or to develop it. In China, the collision of arguments is replaced by exchange of specific and aesthetically pleasing formulas, quotes and allusions'* (Malyavin, 2007, p. 18-19).

It is not surprising that the purpose of education was understood as mere learning of as many indisputable 'truths' as possible: pupils carefully wrote down and learned the teacher's words, and then passed them on to their own pupils. In old China scientific study was limited mainly to reading and memorising a vast number of works. This required enormous effort, incredible assiduity and outstanding memory. Some scholars were able to repeat



Ssu-Ma Ch'ien's famous *Shih Chi* (Historical Records) compiled in 2nd–1st centuries BC. This monumental work describing the history of China from its mythical founders to the author's contemporaries includes 130 voluminous chapters (Yutang, 2012, p. 271).

In Chinese tradition, knowledge transfer was facilitated by the written word, or rather graphical symbols. Book reading, written tests and written exams prevailed. In Russia, oral speech dominated the academic life from the inception of the first universities: captivating lectures, debates, heated discussions formed the foundations of Russian education. Reforms seeking to make a shift from oral to written exams did not find favour with the teachers because in written exams students always have opportunities to cheat or guess the right answer, while in an oral exam a more or less experienced teacher can always adequately assess the student's level of knowledge. 'Papers' have never been trusted in Russia, in any field of activity. Here is a curious example: during a conflict between the founders of the Moscow Artistic Theatre and their main 'sponsor' merchant Savva Morozov, the renowned theatre director Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko insisted on signing a written agreement with Morozov that would limit the patron's interference in the theatre's life. Konstantin Stanislavsky, who himself came from a merchant's family, was against it: *'I do not advise you to do this, as I know, from my own experience, that such agreements only lead to arguments. If two persons, driven by a common goal, cannot reach an oral agreement, how would a piece of paper help?'* (Stanislavsky, 1960, p. 109). This historical anecdote is a good illustration of the Russian attitude to written documents.

The Chinese tend to be reserved in expressing their feelings. During conversations, they try to keep their facial expression and body posture fixed, sitting straight and with very little movement. They try to avoid looking the other person in the eye, as they believe this is only done by enemies or people that hate each other. When talking to teachers, the Chinese avoid body movements or facial gestures; it is just their lips that move, and

*'Reforms seeking to make a shift from oral to written exams did not find favour with the teachers because in written exams students always have opportunities to cheat or guess the right answer, while in an oral exam a more or less experienced teacher can always adequately assess the student's level of knowledge. 'Papers' have never been trusted in Russia, in any field of activity'*

their voice is so low that it is close to whisper. Very loud talk is unacceptable. When asked the typical classroom question 'Is everything clear?', Chinese students always say 'yes' and nod their heads, following their academic etiquette (Afonasenko, 2004; Xiapin, 2017). Russian professors interpret this as indifference and lack of interest in the subject.

Reasons for such behaviour also lie in the Chinese national character and traditional behaviour patterns. The key concept of Chinese ethics is 'face' – a notion that is difficult to define through words. It includes perception of a person by society, their social status and public image. It emphasises what other people think of a person, and what impression he/she makes on them. This concept also involves the person's dignity and dignity of other people, with the focus, again, not so much on the substance as on the exterior form – how the person is perceived by others. Loss of face is worse than disgrace as it is understood by Russians. In Russian culture humiliation can evoke sympathy and compassion, while in China a loss of face is almost impossible to restore.

*'Those who are good do not argue; those who argue are not good'*, says the Tao-Te Ching, a primary text of the Taoist Canon. Therefore, in a lot of cases the Chinese pursue one goal in their behaviour – to assert and preserve 'face', both their own and that of other people. The principal means to achieve this is to avoid conflicts, if only at the expense of being insincere and telling lies. Here is

what a nonconforming thinker of the 16th century Li Zhi (1527-1602) wrote about his contemporaries: 'A liar tells lies to another liar, and both are content' (Malyavin, 2007, p. 24). This critical portrayal of a society that values the 'face' of their members above everything else is not ungrounded, albeit exaggerated to become almost a caricature.

University teachers are certainly not obliged to adjust themselves to a foreign education system: international students come to study in a different country and immerse themselves in a different learning environment – that is part of their education. At the same time, the academic staff must understand the difficulties their students face, and should explain to them what is happening in the classroom and why.

Reverential attitude to teachers among the Chinese is supplemented by the establishment of rather intimate teacher-student relationships: they have meals together, visit each other at home, and communicate beyond the classroom. Relationships between Russian professors and students are more distant and limited to the time spent at the university, which causes quite significant discomfort in the Chinese students, especially at the beginning of their stay. Studies dedicated to the adaptation of the Chinese to Russian universities often suggest introducing the institution of 'tutorship' for them.

International students coming to Russia have to overcome the difficulties of adjusting themselves to an alien cultural environment wholly on their own, without proper professional support and assistance. Of course, the personality factor is often at play. There will always be enthusiasts who spare no effort trying to help international students to adapt to a foreign culture.

But there is a need to develop comprehensive, *professionally informed* systems, principles and techniques aimed at relieving the stress of the adaptation period. Such systems should not be universal; they must be developed in Russia (not borrowed from the English language sources, which is often the case in Russia) and should target, for example, students from East Asia, or even more specifically Chinese students.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, let us list some of the potential strands of work and principles of devising programmes dedicated to assisting international students with their adaptation to Russian universities, as well as providing support to a Russian faculty that has just begun teaching Chinese students.

1. The theory of intercultural communication must produce new concepts which would take account of the current situation in the globalised world, and would be applicable in the Russian context. We must elaborate *our own* approaches to addressing the issues. Some Russian scholars have published cross-cultural works focusing on problems peculiar to Russia. Special mention should be given to Ter-Minasova's (2004) *Language and Intercultural Communication*, a book dedicated to issues in 'human communication with a particular emphasis on language as the main – but not the only! – means of communication' (Ter-Minasova, 2004, p. 4); and a study by Leontovich (2003) examining cross-cultural interactions between Russia and the United States. Yet, these works deal with individual aspects of cross-cultural contacts, while there is a need for an overarching systemic framework for intercultural communication.

2. Studying the fundamental and applied aspects of what may be called 'national character' or 'area studies'; identifying parameters and factors that shape them.

3. Introducing a single Russian language examination for candidates who want to study at Russian universities, a Russian version of TOEFL. This will eliminate one of the key problems that both Russian faculty and international students face in the classroom.

4. Developing practical recommendations to help students (tourists, business people, labour migrants) to adapt to life in Russia, as well as to gain some insights into the Russian mentality (national character). Here we could draw on the experience of Western countries that publish various Survival Guides (e.g. Davey, 2008; Quick, 2017), or my own humble work – *How to Deal with the Russians* (Pavlovskaya, 2003) and *How to Do Business in Russia* (Pavlovskaya, 1999).

5. Universities that enrol international students should offer, as part of the curriculum, some cultural adaptation courses dedicated to the practical aspects of living and studying in Russia, as well as to understanding the Russian mentality. It might also be expedient to introduce a system of tutorship supervised by the universities' international offices or administrative divisions.

6. A wider use of the new tools for information dissemination and awareness-raising – the Internet and social media, in particular – with an emphasis on visual technologies; attracting Russian students to this work; organisation of joint events.

7. It is vitally important to use immersive learning techniques at the early stage of the students' stay in Russia (commonly, international students, especially from Asia, often stick together in closed communities, creating their own microworld and having little contact with the external environment). This could be done through organising special interactive tours, off-campus practical training, and various events involving Russian students.

8. The academic staff members should be offered professional advancement courses, including in the online mode, focusing on the special aspects of teaching students from East Asia, their national education traditions, mentality and customs. Such courses could use the valuable experience of the staff who have worked with these student audiences for a long time (especially, teachers of Russian as a foreign language).

It goes without saying that all the above is equally important for other groups of international students. The emphasis on the 'Chinese problem' is explained by its current relevance, and the specific difficulties that university faculty have recently encountered. Implementation of these measures must be supported at the highest level of authority, from the universities' senior officials to the state government and administrative bodies. This will improve the quality of student teaching, attract more students to Russia, and, eventually, promote mutual understanding between countries and peoples.

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# Original Research

## Re-framing conceptual metaphor translation research in the age of neural machine translation: Investigating translators' added value with products and processes

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*The exploratory study reported in this article is predicated on the notion that human translators' cognition represents a key added value over disembodied artificial intelligence. It re-frames the methods, data and results of a precursor study, and supplements them with additional data and analyses to develop a new cognitive perspective on re-positioning human translation competence and translators' expertise in the age of neural machine translation (NMT). The study is centred on an investigation of culturally specific complex conceptual metaphor in translation, and it melds a more conventional product-oriented approach with experimental translation process research (TPR). It indicates that human translators' decision-making and problem-solving at different levels of training and experience take place on a conceptual level. Compared with the translations of the same metaphors by publicly available NMT systems and by beginners as well as more advanced students, the product data of the professionals involved in the study produce more varied translation solutions, with a range of deviations from the standardised output. This suggests that, after accessing the conceptual level of meaning realised in a particular lexical form, experienced professionals, as a group, are able to generate multiple potential target-text solutions in order to reach their target audience. The supplementary process data indicates that they do so situationally, based on 4EA cognition, through intuition and/or deliberative rationality. It is this, the author argues, that is the distinguishing feature of seasoned professional translators and a hallmark of their added value.*

**KEYWORDS:** conceptual metaphor theory, translation process research, product-oriented studies, process-oriented studies, 4EA cognition, neural machine translation, human added value, GoogleTranslate, DeepL, cognitive translatology



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

As artificial intelligence and machine learning make ever deeper inroads into translation ecologies and markets, researchers and educators in the applied linguistic discipline of translation studies, along with representatives and exponents of the translation industry they serve, are seeking to re-conceptualise and re-position human translation in the production chains of multilingual communication content. In particular, they have been increasingly concerned to identify and maximise the added value of human intervention during translation and (post-)editing processes. In doing so, they are participating in a broader discourse on artificial intelligence and human expertise that has been under way for decades.

Examples of the current preoccupation in the study, practice and teaching of translation are legion. The International Federation of Translators (FIT), an international grouping of associations of translators, interpreters and terminologists, with more than 100 affiliated professional associations representing more than 80,000 translators in 55 countries, has seen it necessary to issue a position paper on machine translation to support member associations, translation service providers and translators, and to advise clients and users of translation services (FIT, 2019).

Another case in point is the recent conference organised by the worldwide *Conférence internationale permanente d'instituts universitaires de traducteurs et interprètes* (CIUTI) devoted wholly to the conjunction of artificial and intercultural intelligence in translation and interpreting (CIUTI Conference 2020, 2020). Indeed, a 2018 survey of CIUTI members, comprising some 50 of the world's leading translator and interpreter education and research institutes worldwide, placed artificial intelligence – in the shape of neural machine translation (NMT) – among the most significant challenges facing training and graduate employability of the future (Massey, 2020).

In common with numerous other translation studies and translator training events, the 2021 conference of the UK and Irish Association of Programmes in Translation and Interpreting Studies

(APTIS) focuses on evolving profiles and the future of translation and interpreting training (APTIS, 2020).

The conversation about (N)MT and professional human translation has even reached the courts. The language industry business news and intelligence platform *Slator* reported a Polish court ruling from February 2021 on what constitutes a professional (human) translator, applying the criteria of educational qualifications and professional competence to do so (Marking, 2021). The court concluded that a professional translator must have proper university training in translation techniques, be knowledgeable in the rules of translation and have practical experience and substantive knowledge in the field of the translation task. The court's decision was in favour of the defendant in the case, a dissatisfied client who had refused to pay language-service provider (LSP) for low-quality work, 92% of which had been poorly post-edited output from the free NMT tool *Google Translate*.

In similar vein, a growing number of publications, professional and academic, have been addressing the position, roles and value of human translators in the current and future translation ecosystem (e.g. Joscelyne, 2018; Macken et al., 2020; Massey & Ehrensberger-Dow, 2017a; Schmitt, 2019). Indicative of this wider trend is the 2020 issue of *Cultus: The Journal of Intercultural Mediation and Communication*, which is dedicated to the topic of 'Translation plus: the added value of the translator' (Cultus Journal, 2020).

One of the key works to launch the discourse surrounding human and artificial intelligence was the seminal *Mind over Machine: The Power of Human Intuition and Expertise in the Era of the Computer* (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986). In it, the Dreyfus brothers locate superior skill in approaching and solving complex problems in the situated human experience of 'knowing how', as opposed to the 'knowing that' (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986, p. 16-21) of the calculative rationality on which artificial intelligence was based: '*Only with greater human experience comes know-how – a far superior holistic, intuitive way of approaching problems that cannot be imitated by rule-following comput-*

ers' (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986, p. 193). They propose a five-stage model of skill acquisition from novice to expert, which privileges a combination of reflective, deliberative rationality and situational, experience-based intuition in human progress towards the *arationality* of expert judgment. In a later contribution by Stuart E. Dreyfus (2004, p. 178-181), the primacy of situational, experience-based know-how is closely associated with embodiment at the three higher stages of the Dreyfus model of adult skill acquisition (competence, proficiency and expertise) – in explicit contradistinction to 'disembodied' artificial intelligence (Dreyfus, 2004, p. 178). The Dreyfus model broadly squares with key findings from expertise research (e.g. Ericsson et al., 1993) and leading models of embodied, embedded, enacted, extended and affective (4EA) cognition (Hutchins, 2010; Wheeler, 2005) from second-generation cognitive science. Experience endows human cognition with the progressive goal-oriented involvement, situational discrimination and frequently intuitive adaptivity in approaching new problems and unfamiliar tasks that are essential to the successive attainment of consistently superior expert performance. The overwhelming conclusion is that any human added value is most likely to reside here when translators engage in solving the novel, idiosyncratic, ill-defined problems that characterise the complexity of translation tasks (Muñoz Martín, 2014, p. 9; Larina, 2015).

The present article is premised on the implicit notion that the added value that human translators can and do bring to bear resides in their socio-cultural, socio-technical 4EA cognition, as opposed to disembodied, de-contextualised artificial intelligence. It reframes and re-contextualises the methods, data and results of a study, originally conducted some three years ago, in the light of attempts to identify and re-position human translation competence and translators' expertise in the age of artificial intelligence, most visibly and tangibly represented in translators' working lives by NMT. Human added value, it is argued, is manifest in translational decision-making and problem-solving on a conceptual level that transcends the surface lexi-

*'The present article is premised on the implicit notion that the added value that human translators can and do bring to bear resides in their socio-cultural, socio-technical 4EA cognition, as opposed to disembodied, de-contextualised artificial intelligence'*

cal realisations by which meaning is conveyed in source and target texts. This exploratory study seeks evidence of this in selected data drawn from an experimental translation process research (TPR) project containing salient source-text examples of culturally specific complex conceptual metaphor. Unusually for studies of conceptual metaphor in translation, the data comprise not only the source-text and target-text products, but also data elicited by established TPR methods during the actual process of translation. The target-text solutions produced by the participants were also compared with those proposed by publicly available NMT systems.

## 2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The material in the present article is drawn from a prior experimental study of how translation students and professional translators interlingually manage the original source-text domain mapping of conceptual metaphor when translating. Massey and Ehrensberger-Dow (2017b) analysed the products and processes of professional translators working into their first language (L1) from German into English and English into German, and of MA and BA students translating the same English text as their professional counterparts into German (also their L1). In all cases, the conceptual metaphors under examination appeared in newspaper articles reporting research findings in the area of marine biology. Previously unpublished findings relating to the translators' specific target-text realisations of conceptual metaphor are also used in the present article, which are compared to disembodied NMT realisations.

The processes and product data analysed were collected during the *Capturing Translation Processes* (CTP)<sup>1</sup> project and predate the general availability of public online NMT systems. The data subset comprises translations of a German source text into English and an English source text into German. None of the translators used MT in any phase of the translation process. This means that none of them were exposed to the priming effects that have been observed in cognitive investigations of the way translators post-edit MT output (cf. Bangalore et al., 2015; Carl & Schaeffer, 2017).

Both of the source texts in the present study are of comparable genre and degree of difficulty, and they treat a similar topic. The processes were recorded in a usability lab under similar conditions. The participants translated the text at a computer equipped with an eye-tracking monitor and software<sup>2</sup> in addition to keystroke-logging<sup>3</sup> and screen-recording<sup>4</sup> programmes. They were asked to translate as they would normally do, and at their own pace. They then verbalised what they had been doing, prompted by the process recordings of their screen activities overlaid with visualisations of their eye movements. The use of these recordings was intended to stimulate recall and commentary by providing richer visual cues to what the participants had been doing. Retrospective verbal protocols (RVPs) of the commentaries and screen activities were transcribed in XML-markup according to the TEI P5 guidelines<sup>5</sup>.

The German source text translated by one group of professional participants is the opening of a news report on the use of naval sonar equipment allegedly causing whales to beach (96 words long). It appeared in the quality Swiss German-language newspaper *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* in April 2009. The 95-word English source text translated

by the other three groups comprised the title and abridged opening paragraph of an article on a similar topic (the risk of naval sonar systems to whales) published in the British Sunday newspaper *The Observer* in August 2004. Both source texts were selected for their typical stylistic features and for their various potential translation problems or 'rich points' (PACTE Group, 2009, p. 212-216).

All participants were asked in the translation brief to translate the text for publication in an equivalent newspaper in a target lingua-culture. They were permitted to use any external online linguistic or knowledge resources they wished to.

In the context of the present study, the target text segments produced by the participants are also compared with those of the public NMT engines, *GoogleTranslate* and *DeepL*, in order to ascertain similarities and differences in the solutions arrived at through embodied human cognition and disembodied artificial intelligence. Both source texts were translated in full by *DeepL* twice, first in November 2019, and then in February 2021, and by *GoogleTranslate* once, in February 2020. The two translations by the *DeepL* NMT tool were made so as to ascertain possible variations over time in the NMT target-text segments.

### 3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

#### 3.1. TPR and cognitive translatology

Within the closer confines of translation studies research, there has been an upsurge of interest in how translators' minds respond to and interact with the computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools and (N)MT systems embedded in the complex socio-cognitive and socio-technical environments in which they work (e.g. Cadwell et al., 2018; Risku et al., 2019; Macken et al., 2020). This has been a key concern of the burgeoning interdisciplinary

<sup>1</sup> The corpus comprises translation processes and products from translators working with various language combinations on different source texts in workplace and/or lab settings, collected between 2007 and 2012

<sup>2</sup> A Tobii T60 screen-based eye-tracker and Tobii Studio 2 software were used. The gaze path recordings were used to stimulate recall for the retrospections in order to obtain richer verbal data

<sup>3</sup> Inputlog 2.0 was used, which was the most recent version of this logger at the time

<sup>4</sup> Camtasia Studio

<sup>5</sup> The Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) Guidelines for Electronic Text Encoding and Interchange specifies methods for marking up machine-readable texts. More information is available at <https://tei-c.org/Guidelines>



*'Within the closer confines of translation studies research, there has been an upsurge of interest in how translators' minds respond to and interact with the computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools and (N)MT systems embedded in the complex socio-cognitive and socio-technical environments in which they work'*

sub-field that is now increasingly referred to as 'cognitive translology' (e.g. Muñoz Martín, 2016), demarcated and in large part defined by the adoption and implementation of an empirical methodology centred on translation process research (TPR) (Muñoz Martín, 2013, p. 79).

The initial impulse that drove the emergence of this sub-field was an interest in the development and constitution of translators' cognition, competence(s) and expertise as these deploy strategies to solve problems and arrive at decisions during the various phases of the translation process. Krings's (1986) pioneering work to explore the black box of translators' minds launched TPR as a means of investigating the processes behind translation products and the effects of those processes on the quality of target texts. Researchers have also consistently addressed the competences and/or expertise of groups of translators with different degrees and forms of experience, from beginners to seasoned professionals, and how translators' skill sets develop over time. Situated 'within a behavioural cognitive experimental methodological paradigm' (Jakobsen, 2017, p. 21), the various methods and tools deployed in various combinations to research translation processes have been borrowed from psychology, cognitive science, psycholinguistics and writing research (O'Brien, 2015). Translation process data can be elicited and collected concurrently during the act of translation itself, or as soon as possible after this has taken place. Techniques can be sub-divided into verbal data elicitation, such as concurrent think-aloud protocols

(TAPs) or cue-based retrospective verbalisations (RVPs), and behavioural observation, either with researchers actually present as translators work or by means of workplace video recordings, keystroke logs, computer screen recordings, eye tracking and/or psychophysiological methods to collect physiological sensor data (Jakobsen, 2017). Processes render a complex web of data that makes it unfeasible to model them holistically. Process data therefore tend to be used selectively to construct partial models. Examples are Angelone's (2010) model of uncertainty management or PACTE's (Hurtado Albir, 2017) competence clusters, both of which are mentioned below.

In step with the development of second-generation cognitive science, and 4EA cognition in particular, the purview of translation process researchers has extended beyond experimental studies of cognitive acts in translators' minds to the socio-cognitive spaces and socio-technical environment in and with which translators interact (Jakobsen, 2017, p. 38-42). TPR has been moving out of the laboratory into 'the field' (Risku et al., 2019) to research socio-cognitive practices and processes (Risku & Windhager, 2013) in the authentic, situated settings of the translator's workplace, combining ethnographic and experimental techniques in mixed methods approaches.

Among other things, it has addressed the situatedness of translation work and competence (e.g. Risku, 2010; 2014), translation as human-computer interaction (e.g. O'Brien, 2012), the physical, cognitive and organisational ergonomics of translation in the workplace (e.g. Ehrensberger-Dow & Hunziker Heeb, 2016; Ehrensberger-Dow & Massey, 2017) and the role of intuition and emotion in translation performance and competence (Lehr, 2021). It has progressed 'from the microlevel of solving linguistic challenges to the macro level of the influence of societal expectations on translatorial decisions' (Ehrensberger-Dow et al., 2017, p. 116), re-embedding translation in its real-life environments and entering a new paradigm of cognitive translology that is driven by an embodied, embedded, extended and enacted approach to the way the mind works (Muñoz Martín, 2016).

TPR before and within a fully emergent cognitive translology paradigm has often been motivated by didactic considerations of how to develop the ability to translate (Massey, 2017, p. 496), and some research groups have proposed and tested models of translation competence and expertise. A leading exemplar is the PACTE group's model, validated over a number of years in a series of TPR experiments (Hurtado Albir, 2017). PACTE's research has led to the NACT translation competence framework (PACTE Group, 2018), a set of performance level descriptors for translator training and assessment. The descriptive categories used cover language competence (reception of the source language and production in the target language, in relation to the genres liable to be translated at each level), cultural, world knowledge and thematic competence (mobilising knowledge of source and the target cultures, world knowledge and thematic knowledge in specific fields), instrumental competence (using documentation resources and technological tools), translation service provision competence (managing aspects of professional practice and the work market), and translation problem-solving competence, the central strategic competence governing the deployment of all the others to solve various problem types (PACTE Group, 2018, p. 120-122). All of these categories and components are shared, in various permutations, by other key heuristic and evidence-based models of translation competence (e.g. Kelly, 2007; Göpferich, 2009).

The way some of these models have transitioned over time reflects an increasing awareness of just how relevant the situated cultural, social and technological contexts of 4E cognition are to the competent (and expert) practice of professional translation. For example, compared to its predecessor (EMT Expert Group, 2009), the influential heuristic competence framework of the European Master's in Translation (EMT) network (EMT Board, 2017), a widely applied benchmark for profiling the skill sets required of translation graduates entering the work market, clearly upvalues socio-technical knowledge and skills in the reflective handling of language and translation technology

*'In step with the development of second-generation cognitive science, and 4EA cognition in particular, the purview of translation process researchers has extended beyond experimental studies of cognitive acts in translators' minds to the socio-cognitive spaces and socio-technical environment in and with which translators interact'*

as well as digital social media. It also places distinctly more emphasis on socio-cognitive (inter-)personal competences in contexts of work. It maintains the previous model's emphasis on (inter-)cultural competence, but no longer anchors it a discrete category of sociolinguistic and textual descriptors (Smakman, 2019). Instead, it offers a transversal, situated description of the many (inter-)cultural, transcultural and multicultural aspects of a translator's work. Graduates, and by extension translators, should obviously be able to translate and mediate in specific intercultural contexts and work in multicultural, multilingual teams and environments (EMT Board, 2017, p. 8-10). But from the beginning, the framework stresses that the transcultural and sociolinguistic awareness and communicative skills making up language and culture competence *'encompasses all the general or language-specific linguistic, sociolinguistic, cultural and transcultural knowledge and skills that constitute the basis for advanced translation competence. It is the driving force behind all the other competences'* (EMT Board, 2017, p. 6).

### **3.2. Conceptual metaphor in translation**

As cognitive translation research has evolved, the potential for developing closer synergies between TPR, cognitive translology and the broader field of cognitive linguistics has been explored (e.g. Rojo & Ibarretxe-Antuñano, 2013). One major theoretical cluster that has been repeatedly identified is conceptual metaphor (e.g. Samaniego Fernández, 2011; Muñoz Martín, 2013, p. 80-81;

Shuttleworth, 2014) which, in emphasising the psychological rather than textual aspects of metaphor, offers insights into cognitive processes that are clearly applicable to TPR (Schäffner & Shuttleworth, 2013, p. 94).

Broadly speaking, conceptual metaphor theory locates metaphor not in language *per se* but in how we 'conceptualise one mental domain in terms of another' (Lakoff, 1993, p. 203), seeking to account for all manifestations of metaphorical thought, from the everyday to the poetic, which is itself merely 'an extension of our everyday, conventional system' (Lakoff, 1993, p. 246). Metaphor is understood as a process of mapping from one domain of human experience (the source domain) to another (the target domain) in order to understand and convey understanding of abstract concepts in the target domain. The mapping is realised by means of surface metaphorical expressions in lexical form. Far from being arbitrary, mapping draws on our *embodied experiences* of the world to create ontological (structural) and epistemic (inferential) correspondences between the conceptual source and target domains. Mapping between domains is often necessarily partial and asymmetrical (Lakoff, 1993, p. 245) as the focus will fall only on those features needed to establish functional analogy (Göpferich, 2003, p. 34).

The theory posits two distinct types of conceptual metaphor. Primary metaphors are '*grounded in the everyday experience that links our sensory-motor experience to the domain of our subjective judgements*' (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 255). Complex metaphors represent combinations of primary conceptual metaphors and are frequently subject to culturally specific variation (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 257; Muñoz Martín, 2013, p. 85; Fougner Rydning & Lauchaud, 2011, p. 173; Schäffner, 2005, p. 65).

As we have seen, cultural and intercultural components have recurrently featured in leading models of translation competence. It is therefore hardly surprising that the cultural specificity of complex conceptual metaphor has been the impulse behind much of the research into the way translators handle conceptual transfer as they

*'The relatively recent phenomenon of investigating conceptual metaphor in translation has built on earlier work devoted to the translation of surface manifestations of lexical metaphor, centred on issues of translatability, establishing 'laws' and procedures for their transfer or creating typologies for handling metaphor translation'*

translate from one language and culture to another. As Samaniego Fernández (2013, p. 169) puts it, '*language boundaries are at the same time boundaries of distinct cultural communities, and metaphor interpretation is strongly culturally conditioned: it does not consist in mere decoding of language signs. At the end of the day, what seems to be impeding the translation process is culture*'.

The relatively recent phenomenon of investigating conceptual metaphor in translation has built on earlier work devoted to the translation of surface manifestations of lexical metaphor, centred on issues of translatability (e.g. Dagut, 1976), establishing 'laws' and procedures for their transfer or creating typologies for handling metaphor translation (e.g. Newmark, 1981; Toury, 1995; Van den Broeck, 1981).

Göpferich's (2003) problem-solution model, specifically tailored to metaphor translation, marks a break with this heuristic, prescriptive tradition. The model is divided into an analysis phase, in which source-text metaphors are first identified, interpreted and their textual function determined, and a transfer phase, which envisages the translator verbalising a target-text solution after first selecting from four basic translation procedures: literal translation of a source metaphor, changing a metaphor into different metaphor, paraphrase a metaphor into sense and, introducing a metaphor where none exists in the source text. It thus seeks to align target-text renditions with the assumed strategic cognitive processes that have generated them.

Göpferich's (2003) approach reflects a nascent interest in the intersection of cognitive linguistics and translation that saw researchers more consistently applying contemporary conceptual metaphor theory to their work. Like the bulk of research and modelling on lexical metaphor, most of it has been text-based and therefore product-oriented, with investigators applying what Chesterman (2015) has referred to as reverse-engineering of the processes by which conceptual metaphor has been translated. In reverse-engineered processes, the researcher proceeds from products – the target-text segments – to infer and reconstruct one or more plausible sequences of thought processes, actions, decisions and/or strategies that the translators are assumed to have applied.

Various researchers have collected and analysed bilingual and multilingual corpora of textual products to describe the procedures and parameters of metaphor in translation from the conceptual perspective. Schäffner (2004) adopts an empirical, product-oriented approach to discuss authentic examples of conceptual metaphor in translations of German political discourse. She concludes that the *'analysis of texts with respect to metaphors and metaphorical reasoning processes in different languages can, thus, reveal possible cultural differences in conceptual structures'* (Schäffner, 2004, p. 1267) transcending the heuristic and prescriptive procedure-based approaches to metaphor common in previous contributions from translation studies. She elaborates on her cognitive approach to metaphor in subsequent detailed studies of English translations of German political and news texts about the financial crisis (Schäffner, 2012; 2014).

Monti (2009) examines a corpus of French, Italian and Spanish translations of Lakoff and Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By* (2003), uncovering a more-or-less shared repertoire of mental schemes across the four languages, despite the significant degree of variation in lexical realisations that he observes. Focusing on providing target-language models for translation didactics than on translation procedures, Nicaise (2011) compares and contrasts lexical realisations of discursive conceptuali-

*'Göpferich's (2003) approach reflects a nascent interest in the intersection of cognitive linguistics and translation that saw researchers more consistently applying contemporary conceptual metaphor theory to their work'*

sations in financial and economic reporting by using a bilingual Belgian corpus of French-language and Dutch-language newspaper articles. Samaniego Fernández (2013) presents a descriptive study of novel metaphors and their translation in a corpus of 122 source newspaper texts and their translations in Spanish published over a one-year period. She concludes from her analysis of actual translation occurrences that translators are 'sharp text creators', and that traditional notions we have of equivalence are a simplification that must be enlarged to cover the multiplicity of translational answers given by translators, from 'unfaithfulness' to the source text and author to the creation of new material (Samaniego Fernández, 2013, p. 192).

Shuttleworth (2011) reports on a multilingual corpus-based study, overtly framed by conceptual metaphor theory, to identify 'types of translation behaviour' (Shuttleworth, 2011, p. 302) at the conceptual level in translating popular science metaphor. In addition to stressing the sheer complexity of the product-based analysis, his findings show little clear evidence of obvious manipulation or subversion of source-text metaphors, or that metaphor presents a major problem to translators of popular science texts in his corpus-based study.

Finally, Tebbit and Kinder (2016) use conceptual metaphor theory to develop a decision-making model for analysing extended metaphors (which they refer to as 'developed' metaphors) in translation in order to *'contribute to deeper and more systematic understandings of how metaphors work in texts and the responsibility that translators assume in front of these understandings'* (Tebbit & Kinder, 2016, p. 419). Basing their study on a limited corpus four target-text products from Bible



*'Various researchers have collected and analysed bilingual and multilingual corpora of textual products to describe the procedures and parameters of metaphor in translation from the conceptual perspective'*

translation, where they find no consistency in the handling of developed metaphor, they stand very much in the tradition of early prescriptive approaches to metaphor translation by proposing that translators should choose from three possible (and rather obvious) strategies (Tebbit & Kinder, 2016, p. 418-420): retain all the metaphorical expressions; maintain some metaphorical expressions; abandon the developed metaphor in the interests of target-text-oriented transparency for each individual expression.

By contrast, and somewhat puzzlingly, studies in conceptual metaphor translation of what Chesterman (2015, p. 13) calls 'actual processes' – observations of the translation process 'as it unfolds, rather than retrospectively inferring from the end-result how this result might have arisen' – have remained very rare. There are only a handful known to the author. These include Mandelblit's (1995) early pioneering experiment to test her 'cognitive translation hypothesis' that translation of metaphors may involve, in addition to linguistic shift, a conceptual shift between different conceptual ontologies (Mandelblit, 1995, p. 486). She recorded the time taken, and additional comments, by professional and student translators asked to translate various time expressions from their L2 to their L1. One group translated from English into French, the other group from French into English. Her results showed that, over both groups of participants, conceptual metaphor translation takes significantly longer, and is presumably more effortful, if the target domains differ in the source language and in the target language.

Tirkkonen-Condit's (2002) two TAP studies, again involving students and professionals but this time in near-authentic translation conditions, was

a response to Mandelblit's (1995) experiment. Her results show evidence of her participants encountering difficulties where equivalent idiomatic expressions of equal conventionality to the source-language expression are not available in the target language (see also Anisimova et al., 2018). The degree of difficulty appears to increase with domain conflict, in other words the need to map across domains, which leads to translators stagnating in the source-language domain. The fact that translation difficulty is increased by domain conflict indicates strongly that translation does not take place primarily through word association but at the conceptual level.

In a later psycholinguistic study, Fougner Rydning and Lachaud (2011) take up the distinction between primary and complex metaphors in an experiment directed at metaphor comprehension. 50 participants processed 80 different manipulated sentences each in on-screen stimulation sequences to measure reaction times and the accuracy of their responses in interpreting metaphorical meaning at the conceptual level. Their findings show that conceptual clarity (or comprehension) among the participants was lower for complex metaphors. One final piece of research worth mentioning in this context is Sjørup's (2011, 2013) eye-tracking study of lexical metaphor in translation. Though not directed towards conceptual metaphor as such, it does indicate that metaphor production in general is more effortful than non-metaphor translation, but somewhat inconclusively points out that effort varies according to the translation procedure chosen by the translator.

Product-oriented studies of conceptual metaphor are increasingly common, but process-oriented studies of conceptual metaphor are still few and far between. Yet, it would only make sense to bring together a product-oriented, reverse-engineered approach with TPR on actual processes to obtain deeper insights into the behaviour, decision-making and problem-solving of translators as they translate. This is precisely what Schäffner and Shuttleworth (2013) suggest as a beneficial avenue for conceptual metaphor studies, and it is one that the study reported here pursues.

## 4. STUDY AND RESULTS

### 4.1. Stages of analysis

As already mentioned, aspects of the analyses undertaken here have been presented and discussed from a different perspective in Massey and Ehrensberger-Dow (2017b) and, partially, in Massey (2016). The initial studies had set out to analyse the processes and products behind source-text reception and target-text production of the concepts underlying surface lexical metaphors in order to identify patterns of conceptual mapping behaviour according to educational level, professional experience and translation direction (into L1 and/or their second language, L2).

The current study considers how a group of native English-speaking professional translators translate a complex conceptual metaphor in the first sentence of their German source text, 'Hang' (i.e. 'inclination' or 'tendency', post-modified by 'zum Selbstmord', meaning 'to[wards] suicide'). This data is then compared to the way three groups of native German-speaking professionals and students translate a complex metaphor in the second sentence of the English source text, 'race' (pre-modified in the source text by 'low-frequency'). Nine professionals working into their L1, English (ProE), translated the German source-text metaphors. Twelve professionals (ProG), ten MA students (MAG) and eleven BA beginners (BAG) translated the English source-text metaphor into their L1, German. For all translators, the process data consist of pauses identified in the keystroke logs and any comments in the RVPs.

'Hang [zum Selbstmord]' represents a personification, endowing whales with human psychological attributes to help us understand the phenomenon of mass beaching. The German term 'Hang' is itself, in its original sense, an ontological metaphor relating to topography, a downward slope, defined by the German dictionary resource *Duden Online* in the first entry for the term as a downward sloping side of a mountain (the metaphorical meaning intended in our source text is contained in the dictionary's second definition) (Duden Online, 2021). This conceptual metaphor is complex because it brings together the primary

ontological metaphors of topography and personification with the orientational metaphor of the *downward* ('abfallend' in the *Duden Online* definition) slope (lack of control is down; unconscious is down). The closest correspondence in English to the use of this metaphor in its source-text sense is 'inclination', though the directionality implied in the English word is not downward but upward. The second complex conceptual metaphor examined in this study is 'race'. This combines the primary metaphors of *action is motion* and *purposes are destinations* (implicit in the notion of the winning line that will be crossed) with the general-to-specific mapping of *a competition is a race*.

Data were analysed in four stages. First, the translation products were categorised according to the scheme of four procedures proposed by Toury (1995, p. 81-84): metaphor into same metaphor (M:M), metaphor into different metaphor (M1:M2), metaphor into non-metaphor, or sense paraphrase (M:P), and omission of the metaphor (M:0). Toury's (1995) fifth and sixth procedures (creating metaphors from non-metaphors and adding metaphors with no linguistic motivation in the source text) are irrelevant to the present study. Every metaphorical realisation was classified independently by two researchers and then compared.

Second, the process data from the keystroke logs and the RVPs were analysed for problem indicators. In line with PACTE (2005) and Alves and Vale (2009), a pause of five seconds or more (>5 s.) was taken to be a problem indicator in the keystroke logs (see Kumpulainen (2015) for a details on operationalising pausing data in translation process research). A distinction was made between pre-pausing (pauses after a target-text segment immediately preceding the segment corresponding to the source-text metaphor) and peri-pausing (pauses during the production of the target-text segment). Pausing is assumed to indicate both that a problem exists and that it is being processed with internal cognitive resources (see Langlois, 2020), either with or without external resource consultation. In the RVPs, it was assumed that any participant mentioning either of the rich points indicated their awareness of a translation issue.

*'A distinction was made between pre-pausing (pauses after a target-text segment immediately preceding the segment corresponding to the source-text metaphor) and peri-pausing (pauses during the production of the target-text segment). Pausing is assumed to indicate both that a problem exists and that it is being processed with internal cognitive resources, either with or without external resource consultation'*

Third, the RVPs were analysed in greater depth to determine participants' conceptual clarity (Fougner Rydning & Lachaud, 2011). Angelone's (2010) uncertainty-management model was used, which presents translation as a chain of decision-making activities with multiple, interconnected sequences of problem-solving behaviour that are activated when problems occur. These sequences are segmented into source-text comprehension uncertainty (Comp), mediation-based transfer uncertainty (Trans), when translators *'cannot match language structures (lexemes, collocations, standard phrases) in the source text to appropriate equivalents to use in the target text'*, and target-language production (Prod) uncertainty, indicating *'the application of conscious, deliberate strategies for overcoming comprehension, transfer, or production indecision'* (Angelone, 2010, p. 19-21).

Finally, the NMT products (labelled DL19 for the 2019 *DeepL* translations, DL21 for the 2021 *DeepL* translations and GT21 for the 2021 *Google-Translate* translations) were analysed according to the Toury (1995) scheme. The results were then compared to the human product data.

#### 4.2. Product data analyses

The product analysis of the ProE translations of 'Hang [zum Selbstmord]' shows eight (89%) participants translating the metaphor into a different metaphor (M1:M2) and one (11%) paraphrasing its sense (M:P). There were no omissions (M:0) or

translations using the same metaphor (M:M). The NMT target texts DL19, DL21 and GT21 were all translated M:M2.

The ProG translations of '[low-frequency] race' revealed eight M:M (67%), one M1:M2 (8%), one M:P (8%) and two M:0 (17%) translations. The pattern of MAG products is slightly less spread: seven translated M:M (70%), two M1:M2 (20%) and one M:0 (10%). The BAG products are a little more uniform than the ProG and MAG groups: nine participants translate M:M (82%) and two M1:M2 (18%). The DL19, DL21 and GT21 translations of '[low-frequency] race' are all M:M.

#### 4.3. Process data analyses

The ProE keystroke pausing data show that two participants paused for more than five seconds (22%): one pre-paused (11%) and the other peri-paused (11%). In the RVPs, five ProE participants (56%) mentioned the metaphor: one in relation to comprehension (11%), one to transfer (11%) and three to target-text production (33%).

ProG pausing behaviour differed sizeably from the ProE group: ten participants paused for five seconds or more (83%): seven pre-paused (58%), two pre- and peri-paused (17%) and one peri-paused (8%). In the RVP data, ten ProG participants referred to 'race' (83%): five in relation to comprehension (42%), two to transfer (17%) and three to production (25%).

MAG pausing is a little less pronounced, though comparable, with seven interrupting their processes for five seconds or more (70%), three pre-pausing (30%), one pre- and peri-pausing (10%) and three peri-pausing (30%). In the RVPs, all ten MA students mention the metaphor (100%): five in relation to comprehension (50%), three to transfer (30%) and two to production (20%).

BAG pausing behaviour differed noticeably from that of the other two groups. Only four participants paused five seconds or more (36%): three before target-text production (27%) and one during it (9%). The RVP data analysis reveals that ten participants mentioned 'race' (91%), seven in relation to comprehension (63%), two to transfer (18%) and one to production (9%).

Table 1  
 Overview of results of the product and process analyses

PRODUCT DATA ANALYSES				
TT realisation	% procedures			
'Hang'	M:M	M1:M2	M:P	M:0
ProE (n=9)	-	89	11	-
DL19 (n=1)	-	100	-	-
DL21 (n=1)	-	100	-	-
GT21 (n=1)	-	100	-	-
Σ NMT (n=3)	-	100	-	-
'Race'				
ProG (n=12)	67	8	8	17
MAG (n=10)	70	20	-	10
BAG (n=11)	82	18	-	-
DL19 (n=1)	100	-	-	-
DL21 (n=1)	100	-	-	-
GT21 (n=1)	100	-	-	-
Σ NMT (n=3)	100	-	-	-
PROCESS DATA ANALYSES				
Pauses >5s.	% participants			
'Hang'	Pre-	Peri-	Both	Σ
ProE (n=9)	11	11	-	22
'Race'				
ProG (n=12)	58	8	17	83
MAG (n=10)	30	30	10	70
BAG (n=11)	27	9	-	36
RVP mentions	% participants			
'Hang'	Comp	Trans	Prod	Σ
ProE (n=9)	11	11	33	56
'Race'				
ProG (n=12)	42	17	25	83
MAG (n=10)	50	30	20	100
BAG (n=11)	63	18	9	91



## 5. DISCUSSION

### 5.1. Human translations of 'Hang'

Analysis of the product data showed all but one of the ProE group rendering 'Hang' through other lexical metaphorical realisations, such as 'propensity [to suicide]', '[suicidal] tendencies', or '[death] wish', with only one resorting to the paraphrase 'commit [suicide]'. The culture-specific realisation 'Hang' was only partially mapped by the L1 English speakers, who retained the personification but omitted the source-culture topographical and orientational elements. As an interesting aside, a tenth translator, a German L1 speaker wrongly included in the initial data analysis, was the only one seen to produce an M:M solution ('inclination [to commit suicide]') – a possible indicator of conceptual transfer occasioned by his socialisation and embeddedness in the lingua-culture that produced the source text.

The actual translation process data show that only two participants paused for five seconds or more. However, a majority of the ProE group (56%) did verbalise awareness of the metaphor as a rich point in the source text: one participant had a comprehension/conceptual clarity issue, one indicated a transfer problem and two further RVPs indicated production or formulation issues. As a group, therefore, the professionals do appear to have been engaging conceptually with this complex source-text metaphor, but they seem to have relied in large part on intuition in reaching their solutions.

### 5.2. Human translations of 'race'

The analyses show that 'race' is handled by the German L1 translators less uniformly overall. There are indications that experience does appear to make a difference in terms of both products and, perhaps more pertinently, processes.

Two-thirds of the ProG group used the identical corresponding metaphor in the target language (either 'Wettrennen' or 'Rennen'), but M:M realisations (either 'Wettrennen' or 'Rennen') in the BAG group were even higher, at four fifths. At 70%, the MAG realisations (either 'Wettlauf' or 'Rennen') are, at first glance, closer to those of the ProG

group. But a closer examination of the M1:M2 tokens reveals that two MAG participants, and also the remaining two BAG members, realise at least partially the metaphorical components of the original source-language domain mapping. When these M1:M2 solutions are aggregated with the M:M results, 90% of the MA students and 100% of the BA beginners can be said to render at least one metaphorical component from the source-language target domain. By comparison, relatively fewer professionals mapped as closely to the source-language target domain (67%). The one ProG professional with the M1:M2 solution chose the metaphor 'drive forward [a development]' ('[eine Entwicklung] vorantreiben'). While this is a realisation of the primary metaphor action is motion, it bears no direct relation to the complex culture-specific conceptual metaphor of competition and/or race.

The students therefore demonstrate a distinctly closer orientation on the original source-text mapping. How can this difference between the students and the professionals be accounted for? The process data for the entire subset can help answer that question.

Pausing for the translation of 'race' was substantially higher among the ProG (83%) and MAG groups (70%) compared to the ProE results for 'Hang' (22%). On the other hand, pausing was noticeably lower among the BAG beginners (36%). If we accept that pausing indicates the deployment of internal cognitive resources, suggesting a conceptual engagement with the metaphor, then the German L1 professionals appear to deliberate and reflect more than both groups of students, especially before beginning to write (75% in total). For their part, the MA students also seem to reflect more than the beginners (70%), though fewer do so before target text production (40% in total).

The RVP process analyses show that the proportion of mentions for the 'race' rich point among all three German L1 groups lay between 83% and 100%, notably higher than for 'Hang' (56%). In particular, the uncertainty management analysis of the BAG group shows that seven beginners remarked overtly on conceptual clarity problems in

the RVPs (63%). Strikingly, however, only *one* of those who did so actually paused before, and *none* paused during target-text production.

Pulling the strands together, therefore, we can say that the professionals seem to proceed in a markedly more reflective manner than the beginners, quite probably as a result of the experience they have accumulated, the (inter-)cultural awareness they have developed and the deliberative rationality they have acquired. Between the beginners and professionals are the MA students, who exhibit behaviour towards the professional end of a spectrum – as befits competent learners on the verge of embarking on professional careers.

### 5.3. NMT and human translation products compared

Returning to the NMT product tokens for the translations of ‘Hang’, both DL19 and DL21 used the same noun (‘tendency’) chosen by four of the nine of the professional translators. However, while all four of the latter opt for a plural noun with the standard pre-modifier ‘suicidal’, the NMT versions have a singular noun post-modified with ‘towards suicide’ (DL19) and ‘to suicide’ (DL21). The three M:M translations of ‘race’ by the NMT tools also reveal slight grammatical variation. DL21 and GT21 use the compound noun ‘Nieder-

frequenzrennen’ in place of DL19’s grammatically non-standard (and semantically ambiguous) post-modification (‘das Rennen der niedrigen Frequenzen’). In this respect, therefore, the *DeepL* engine appears to have learned.

Standardisation appears to be the rule in the NMT target-text segments. When compared closely to the human translations, an interesting pattern emerges. Allowing for minor grammatical shifts, and the use of the synonyms ‘Wettrennen’ and ‘Wettlauf’ for ‘Rennen’ in the German target texts (three instances in all), the NMT translations correspond exactly to 44% of the total solutions and 50% of the M:M2 solutions for the ProE group, to 33% of the total solutions and 50% of the M:M solutions for the ProG group, to 50% of the total solutions and 71% of the M:M solutions for the MAG group; and to 82% of the total solutions and 100% of the M:M solutions for the BAG group (see Table 2). In all other cases where omission was not used, the translators either explain the metaphor to the reader or establish more context for it. They do so by using metaphorical alternatives (such as ‘death wish’ instead of ‘suicidal tendencies’) or by expanding the source-text metaphor with additional semantic components (for example, with explicit reference to sonar systems and their development or to low-frequency ranges).

Table 2  
*Exact correspondences between NMT and human translation products*

GROUP	% CORRESPONDENCE NMT SOLUTIONS		
	Total	M:M	M1:M2
ProE (n=9)	44	-	50
ProG (n=12)	33	50	-
MAG (n=10)	50	71	-
BAG (n=11)	82	100	-

In this admittedly small sample, we can identify a distinct cline in the variation across the translator groups as degrees of experience increase, and a correspondingly growing range of deviation from the standardisation that is represented in the solu-

tions produced by the publicly available NMT systems. The variation (and deviation) is lowest among the beginners and considerably higher among the professionals, with the MA students again in-between.

What can such variation be telling us? Echoing the conclusion reached by Samaniego Fernández (2013, p. 192) above, the variation in the data strongly suggests that the principal distinguishing feature of the experienced, competent professionals as a group is their ability to access the conceptual level of meaning realised in a particular lexical form, and then to use intuition (as in the case of 'Hang') and/or deliberative rationality (in the case of 'race') to generate multiple potential target-text solutions in a specific communicative situation, in order to best serve the intelligibilities, interests and needs of a (pre-defined or projected) target audience. There is nothing particularly new about this implication – Venuti (2019, p. 1), for instance, has long and vociferously advocated a hermeneutic model of understanding translation not as *'the reproduction or transfer of an invariant that is contained in or caused by the source text'* but as *'an interpretive act that inevitably varies source-text form, meaning, and effect'*. But it does provide some empirical evidence related to Venuti's claim, and in so doing adds topical relevance and renewed force to Pym's (2003, p. 489) brilliantly pithy minimalist definition of translation competence as *'the ability to generate a series of more than one viable target text (TT1, TT2 ... TTn) for a pertinent source text (ST); the ability to select only one viable TT from this series, quickly and with justified confidence'*. More combined product-oriented and process-oriented research into conceptual metaphor translation is likely to provide the additional evidence to validate or invalidate this thesis.

#### 5.4. Further implications and caveats

The exploratory findings discussed above appear to indicate that investigating conceptual metaphor research in translation with a combined product-oriented and process-oriented approach can provide clues to precisely where the added value of human translation resides in the age of NMT. The most obvious potential application lies in the (further) development of translator competence among students and working professionals for a language industry looking to make the most

of its translators. As already stated in Massey (2016) and Massey and Ehrensberger-Dow (2017b), the results tend to reinforce didactic implications that have already been drawn as a result of previous cognitive linguistic research. The admittedly small exploratory study presented here seems to confirm work done by Nicaise (2011) and Tabakowska (2014), who stress the importance of alerting students and teachers alike to the cognitive base of all meaning by systematically introducing cognitive linguistics into translator education curricula and professional development courses. Translator education can only benefit from knowing how members of given lingua-cultural communities *'use metaphors to reflect their attitudes towards the world in general and the life of their community in particular'* (Nicaise, 2011, p. 421).

However, there are also implications to be drawn from the inescapable methodological caveats associated with the research. Although the focus on conceptual metaphor signals a fruitful avenue of research into the processes and products of conceptual transfer in translation, Shuttleworth (2014, p. 60) and Samaniego Fernández (2011, p. 268) sound a justified note of caution that is shared by the present author.

The extent to which translators' production of target texts can be said to be generalisable and to reflect target-language and target-culture norms and conceptualisations should be treated with care, given the essential situatedness of translation and the multiple actors and factors influencing decision-making processes at any given time during the situated activity of translation. Those addressing translated conceptual metaphor must bear this in mind when collecting and analysing their data and when interpreting results, and they should be prepared to do go out into the field – the actual environments in which translators work – to collect their data.

Moreover, the data in the present study, having been collected within the context of a project not specifically dedicated to research conceptual metaphor, contained a range of possible impact variables on participants' decision making that has made it difficult to interpret the results. Future field

research will therefore require not only more ecological validity by being situated in the authentic environments of translation, but also more rigorous control of tasking and setting (such as specific cross-language matching of metaphors) and more targeted elicitation methods (such as immediate retrospective interview questions) to eliminate the noise that the data caused in the original experimental studies.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Behind the exploratory study reported in this article is the notion that human translators' cognition represents a key added value over disembodied artificial intelligence. Re-framing the methods, data and results of a prior study, and supplementing them with additional data and analyses, it presents a new cognitive perspective on re-positioning human translation competence and translators' expertise in the age of NMT. Focusing on culturally specific complex conceptual metaphor, the research combines target-text product analysis with experimental TPR findings to reveal how translational decision-making and problem-solving take place on a conceptual level that transcends the lexical realisations by which meaning is conveyed in source and target texts. When compared with translation output of the same metaphors by publicly available NMT systems, the variation in the product data of professionals suggests that what

distinguishes them as experienced, competent translators is their ability to access the conceptual level of meaning realised in a particular lexical form, and then to generate multiple potential target-text solutions in order to reach a given target audience. The process data indicates that they do so situationally, through intuition and/or deliberative rationality, presumably based on their 4EA cognition. This is the distinguishing feature of seasoned professional translators and a hallmark of their added value.

Notwithstanding the caveats of the study mentioned in the previous section, the research presented here points to the fundamental logic and congruence of combining reverse-engineered product data with data from actual processes. The present author wholeheartedly concurs with other translation studies researchers, like Schäffner and Shuttleworth (2013), that an approach melding actual process data analysis with reverse-engineered product data can add an enriching and insightful layer to translation research. Given the current and likely future direction of increasingly technologised professional translation practices, it has the distinct potential to unveil precisely where and how embodied, embedded, enacted, extended and affective experience can add the tangible value of tailored high-quality services to complement the presence of NMT in the translation market and industry.

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# Original Research

## Developing pre-service teachers' digital communication and competences through service learning for bilingual literacy

by Aoife Ahern and Beatriz López-Medina

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*Learning environments have become increasingly digital in recent decades, requiring teachers and students to develop general digital competences across all educational systems and stages. This also means that for future teachers, professional digital competencies are a valuable asset that enables them to work with the technologies already fully integrated in schools and embedded in most curricula. This paper describes the use of digital communication technology throughout the different stages of a Service Learning Project, involving 2nd and 3rd year students from the Degree in Primary Education at the Universidad Complutense, Madrid. Students and their teachers involved in the project use specific digital communication tools which favour the interaction and completion of the project goal: supporting literacy programmes in two languages for underprivileged students in two local schools. This paper analyses the tools used in the different stages of the project, the digital competencies they are related to and their suitability for similar Service Learning Projects.*

**KEYWORDS:** pre-service teacher, digital communication, digital tools, bilingual literacy, professional competence, underprivileged students, ALFAPS



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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The current higher education system is more concerned than ever with finding the most appropriate teaching methodologies in order to obtain the best learning outcomes. In this respect, active methodologies have been gaining ground recently, mainly because they move away from traditional teaching and promote learner-centred models in-

stead, which involve more student participation in the construction of knowledge, cooperative work or increased interaction between students and teachers, among other practices (Crisol-Moya et al., 2020). In addition, the advent of multiple digital resources, together with the development of educational platforms and the widespread implementation of online educational programmes have

also led to significant changes in the ways content is presented and learned (Lubovsky, 2020). This paper describes the digital communication tools used in the Service Learning (henceforth SL) Project *School Languages and Literacies: Competencies and Strategies, Reading and Writing in Spanish and English* (henceforth, ALFAPS, the initials for the project title in Spanish). The project, which involves 2nd and 3rd year students in Primary Education from the Complutense University, took place in two state schools in Madrid in the 2019-2020 academic year. Led by 10 teachers, the student participants (n=60) received training in *Reading to Learn* pedagogy (R2L) to help children from two disadvantaged schools in their process of acquiring literacy in English and Spanish.

Through the whole process, different digital communication tools were used to disseminate and exchange information, compile materials, train the participants and evaluate results, among other purposes. Simultaneously, the use of these tools became one of the sources of learning for all the participants involved, thereby responding to an often-voiced concern about the lack of integration of digital competencies in teacher education in our context. In this respect, Amhag et al. (2019, p. 204) observe *'digital competence for pedagogical purposes is still poorly integrated into teacher education programmes'*. In the same vein, Cuhadar (2018, p. 61) states that *'although there are many vital components of successful technology integration in education, perhaps the most important of them, as well as the least emphasised one, is the process of teacher education'*. Both studies, among others (Gabarda et al., 2020; Melash et al., 2020; Yehuda, 2020; Magdaléna & Ivanova, 2020), highlight the relevance of embedding technology naturally in daily activities, since the pre-service teachers will have to replicate this practice in the development of their future careers. Moreover, a high exposure to a wide range of activities in different areas would make students more competent digitally (Hřebačková, 2019). This paper provides an overview of the digital tools used in the ALFAPS Project to support the implementation of the project in all the stages. The sections below

summarise the integration of the tools in the project stages, the purpose of each tool and the area(s) of the digital competence developed with their use.

## 2. BACKGROUND

### 2.1. Service learning and R2L

The quest for finding the best way to make learning meaningful is a common practice in any educational context. Since the early 70s, research exploring how to reach this goal has valued the role of learning by doing, and of experiential learning – *'a process through which a learner constructs knowledge, skill, and value from direct experience'* (Luckmann, 1996, p. 7), which offers opportunities to develop skills that cannot be put into practice in a traditional classroom.

Even though the benefits of experiential learning have been highlighted by research in recent decades, its implementation in higher education is scarce (Rosenstein et al., 2012), and lectures – as opposed to active methods of learning – are still very widespread teaching methods at this level. University faculties indicate various reasons which prevent the implementation of activities involving active learning, for instance, lack of time and money, university bureaucracy, or departmental policies, among others, are frequently pointed out as difficulties or obstacles preventing progress towards more active approaches (Wurdinger & Allison, 2017).

Service learning – together with active learning, problem-based learning, project-based learning and place-based learning – is considered a teaching approach that leads to experiential learning (Wurdinger & Carlson, 2009), and has proven to be beneficial for students and communities alike. Service learning programmes are community-based and allow students to *'transfer knowledge and skills gained in the classroom into practical projects within their communities thus becoming more socially aware and active'* (Peric, 2012, p. 365). The mutual benefits, however, are highly dependent on the design of the project and on the integration of the service learning (SL) activities in the course curriculum.

At the higher education level, and despite its heterogeneous implementation in the different fields (Salem et al., 2019), research shows a positive impact of SL programmes on the learning outcomes, since students can better understand the contents of the curriculum while developing the practical skills required in the projects. The commitment to the project contributes to students' satisfaction and sense of achievement, as they come to understand their own contribution to the benefits obtained by the community.

In the case of the present study, ALFAPS participants put into practice their skills teaching literacy in Spanish and English in two bilingual state schools located in different neighbourhoods in Madrid. Participants (n=60), 2nd and 3rd year students in Primary Education, received training on the *Reading to Learn* (R2L) pedagogical model (Rose & Martin, 2012), which has proven to be successful in improving literacy levels with disadvantaged learners worldwide (Rose & Acevedo, 2017). The R2L pedagogy involves using a methodology which can help with the literacy learning needs of primary school pupils in both their first (usually Spanish) and additional languages (English). Through pedagogic intervention in reading and writing, focused on the genres of the different school curriculum areas, this systematic literacy instruction approach has been proven to be highly effective in developing pupils to become independent readers and writers (Rose & Martin, 2013). The approach was simplified in the training seminars addressed to the participant undergraduates, who learnt a range of scaffolding strategies required in the R2L model. In addition, they prepared specific materials to guide children at schools towards a comprehensive understanding of texts as well as to use the resources of a model text in their own writing within the same genre. In order to carry out this training and the implementation of lessons following the R2L model, different digital tools were used, mainly to communicate information to the different stakeholders, but also for other purposes, such as to collect feedback or create content for the training sessions and for the lessons at the target schools.

## 2.2. Framework for integration of ICT in initial teacher education and in the project

The articulation of the project integrated diverse digital tools in all the stages of the process with the following objective: use the best tools to convey content at all times and to facilitate the achievement of the goal involved in each stage of the project. Simultaneously, pre-service teachers developed their digital competences in the four key areas – information, communication, production and safety (Skov, 2016). The tasks required for the completion of the project integrated an array of digital tools which also covered the three dimensions which describe the teachers' professional competence: generic digital competence, didactic digital competence and professional oriented digital competence (Ottestad et al., 2014); i.e. they were enabled to go beyond the digital skills required to 'function' in the current society by learning the use and creation of tools they will have to use in their careers in the near future.

The articulation of the project includes the main features of the TPACK (Technology, Pedagogy and Content Knowledge) model (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). This model highlights that the integration of content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, in addition to the ways in which teachers assess the content in terms of its 'teachability', should be what guides them in the selection and application of technological resources. As stated by Mishra and Koehler (2006), '*At the heart of pedagogical content knowledge is the manner in which subject matter is transformed for teaching. This occurs when the teacher interprets the subject matter and finds different ways to represent it and make it accessible to learners*' (Mishra & Koehler, 2006, p. 1021). Teachers analyse, in relation to their learners' needs, how the content that must be learnt can be structured and represented in order to be effectively understood and interiorised. This analysis provides criteria upon which the selection of adequate resources should be based, so that the integration of technology should respond to the specific goals, and proposals on how to reach those goals, that teachers have established.

Another essential aspect of TPACK, as emphasised by Mishra and Koehler (2006), consists of the intersecting kinds of knowledge that teachers must access and apply in the effective integration of technologies into their pedagogical practices. The domains of knowledge of pedagogy, content (from across the curriculum and within the areas of knowledge that it establishes) and technology can be identified separately, but it is at the intersections of these domains that effective planning and implementation of teaching activities and the resources which they require takes place.

This approach not only pertains to the articulation of the SL project reported on herein, since the university professors involved applied it to the project design and development (see next section). It is also highly relevant to the university student participants, who were required to become involved in the professional communication by means of technological resources throughout the training and the implementation of the project.

#### **4. SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS**

##### **4.1. Timeline and overview of the stages and activities of project implementation**

Following previous good practices in Service learning projects, according to Copaci and Rusu (2016), a framework of four stages was adopted, including: planning/preparation, action, reflection, and finally, dissemination/demonstration. These stages took place on macro- and microlevels throughout the project, although the final step (dissemination) was developed in a distinct manner from the first three. On the macrolevel, the entire project implemented each stage; and on the microlevel, the participants put into practice the cycle of planning, action and reflection in a recurrent manner, as they engaged in the delivery of each one of the literacy learning sessions that the project involved.

The *planning/preparation* stage continued throughout the project over a number of months. It consisted, on the one hand, in the period during which the project was conceptualised and the university teachers decided to put together a proposal

in response to the call announced by the university authorities in March, 2019. Within this stage, a pilot initiative was set up, in which the main components of the project were identified and two groups of students put into practice a smaller-scale, initial implementation of the SL activities. At this point, one of the first professional communication challenges was faced: conveying to the schools, in a quick and effective manner, what it was that the university team proposed to them. The stage continued as the decision was made to respond to the call for proposals for university-funded SL projects in April of 2019. A team of professors from the language Pedagogy department, as well as colleagues from the Fine Arts Pedagogy and the Educational Psychology departments, developed a written proposal for the project proposed for the 2019-2020 academic year.

The proposal was approved and put into *action* starting September, 2019. Presentations were made to the groups of students in Primary Education to recruit volunteers. The students developed their participation within the courses on Spanish, Language Teaching; English, EFL teaching, and the elective Teaching Literacy in EFL, from the specialisation in English. They firstly took part in a training seminar over the months of October and November. From late October, the action stage of the project took place: intervention to provide literacy learning support at the participating schools.

The stage of *reflection* was interwoven with the action stage, as after each intervention session at the schools, student teachers produced a written record in response to a set of reflection questions provided by the university professors, written texts that were considered in assessing the student teachers' learning process as part of their course evaluation and grading. This *action/reflection* stage continued until, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, all schools in Spain were closed in February, 2020. The premature end of the project due to this circumstance also meant that the final stages of *dissemination/demonstration* could not be implemented according to the initial plan and the students' participation became severely limited due to having to adjust to the pandemic situation,



and to the sudden switch to fully online study and exams. In the next section these stages are revisited and the use of digital communication that was carried out is explained in relation to each.

#### 4.2. Digital communication practices in the initial project stages

Throughout these steps within stage one, the project participants used a range of digital resources to communicate. In order to face the first major challenge, an infographic was created (Figure 1), using the subscription-free version of *Easel.ly* (2021). This infographic was sent as an e-mail attachment to the headships of the two schools the project coordinator had identified as potential partners. The challenge mentioned consisted in

conveying a quite complex set of facts and information in the most concise and synthesised manner possible, considering the heavy agendas that the school staff members must deal with every day. Once it had been agreed with the school, the formal proposal had to be written up and sent to compete for selection among those submitted to the university authorities in charge of the project selection and funding. The proposal required careful consideration of the selection criteria published by the university and had to be composed following the CFP's prescribed structure. It was originally composed by the project coordinator, then shared using Google Docs for the core group of participating professors to collaborate with suggestions to complete or correct the first draft.

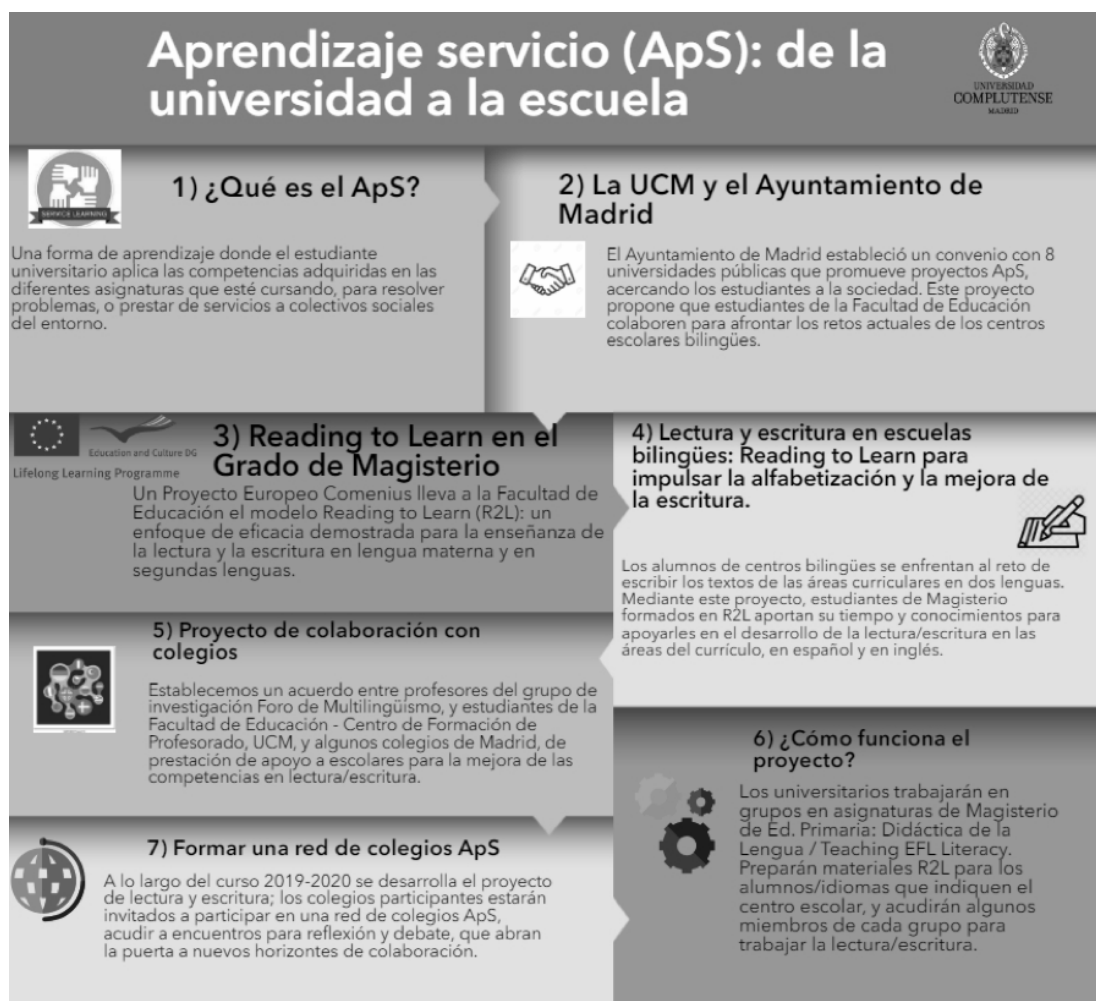


Figure 1. Infographic on ALFAPS Project

The project required providing the participating university students with enough knowledge and understanding of the R2L approach so as to put it into practice to support the participating school pupils' literacy learning. For this purpose, the *planning/preparation* stage also included a specialised training course for the student teachers. The training included an intensive introduction to the R2L approach in its application with pupils using the community language (Spanish, in our case), as well as with a foreign language, English. This bilingual implementation of both the specialised training and the literacy support lessons provided as the project's main action focus constituted an especially innovative aspect. It also required a series of decisions about how to most effectively deliver the training to the student teachers, including which digital communication tools were most appropriate. The complexity of the learning that was proposed for the short period of time in which the university students had to acquire the knowledge and skills required for use in providing literacy support at the schools required thoughtful design of the training. The professors needed all the technological resources within their reach so as to make it possible to have the students ready and ensure the intervention would be effective for the schoolchildren with whom it would be carried out.

Thus, the preparation of the training course involved designing a number of presentations. The professors chose PowerPoint (PPT) as the readily accessible, familiar software for creating the presentations. In the PPTs, the students were shown the essential information about the theoretical basis of the R2L approach, and practical tasks were represented. The training sessions comprised mainly whole-group lectures that combined short practical exercises completed by pairs or small groups of students.

#### **4.3. Integration of digital communication in training for literacy instruction**

In order to work with the two project languages during these sessions, at certain points a tandem structure was applied so that the analysis of a text in one language could be immediately contrasted

with another in the second language. Thus, it was observed how genres could have parallel structural features across the two languages, for which two screens in the classroom were implemented, each with a text from one of the languages, belonging to the same genre. In the training classroom, the hardware that was available included a desktop PC connected to an overhead projector, as well as a high-definition touchscreen monitor. In the dual language analysis exercise, both the projected screen and the touchscreen were used to display a text from the same genre (e.g. a Descriptive Report) in English on one screen and in Spanish on the other. To guide the students in checking their analyses, in turn, the two session instructors spoke and worked on the text in their own language, explaining the analysis developed with the projection of both texts on view. This enabled the participants to use the view of both texts and languages to deepen their understanding of the genres of the primary school curriculum and the texts that children use in those genres across the primary years, in their first and second languages.

The practical tasks assigned in the seminar consisted of the following.

1. Reading and analysing (identifying the genre and textual structure) a selection of text fragments, extracted by the teacher trainers from actual learning materials (mainly textbooks from Spanish affiliates of international publishers, such as Oxford University Press or Cambridge University Press, or Spanish publishers, including S.M. or Santillana), so that the student teachers would become as familiar as possible with the literacy demands the children face at school at the different levels of primary education.

2. Using an analysis of one of the aforementioned fragments, in which the genre and its stages had been identified, pinpointing some of its language features to establish as learning objectives for the primary pupils who would study the text.

3. Searching for a new text that would be adequate for the participating pupils, identifying its genre based on the R2L proposal for genre classification, and structure (the stages and phases of the text).

4. Formulating specific language and content learning objectives for lower primary pupils (2nd year, ages 6-7) based, firstly, on a text analysed with the teacher trainers, and later on texts selected by the trainees.

In addition, students completed an online revision quiz, created with Google Forms, intended to help them consolidate the knowledge acquired in the training sessions. The quiz provided photographs of the seminar sessions, showing the actual development of the teaching practices that had been demonstrated, in addition to diagrams conveying the theoretical fundamentals of the R2L approach, as visual expressions of the notions that had to be interiorised.

#### **4.4. Digital communication in the action stage**

Upon completion of the training sessions, students were organised into groups and a schedule for their interventions was established. Since they were grouped in different classes, each having distinct timetables, while their school interventions had to take place within the children's language lesson times, this process required intense coordination efforts. Again, the use of digital tools, namely from the Google educational suite, was also very helpful for this process. Timetables were displayed in a collaboratively-edited document into which the students entered their availability and were thereby assigned to specific groups of primary school pupils.

In the first sessions, student teachers developed a task to identify the learners' needs and the suitability of the previously prepared lesson plans. When required, tasks were adapted to the learners' L1 or L2 level, under the guidance of the teacher trainers, based on exchange of documents through Google Classroom. After these first sessions at the schools, a final university training session was held, which included time for focus group interviews with the professors. These interviews were recorded, in agreement with the students, using the professors' and/or students' own smartphones; the audios were stored online and transcribed later by project assistants using *Audacity* (2021) audio software. The resulting data ensured learning pro-

cess and the possible need for face-to-face tutorials to provide further, more individualised guidance.

As the project moved forward, it formed part of the student' subjects within their course in Education, requiring integration into its academic calendar that ended in December, which led to an exam period after the Christmas break. At that point, project coordinators distributed a new PPT presentation to celebrate the project's interim results and to encourage student' interest to participate in the project as part of their second-semester courses (February to May). The interim achievements included a total of around 125 literacy support lesson hours provided across the two languages at the two participating schools. In the texts that they had produced during the lessons, the primary pupils had shown enthusiasm and joy at the involvement of the student teachers in supporting their learning, in classroom environments where they were able to receive individualised attention and help.

As part of the midway project data collection tasks, questionnaires were circulated among the participating university students and the schools' teaching staff involved, in January, 2019. These were created and distributed using Google Forms, allowing for immediate feedback and the creation of spreadsheet databases with the responses. Finally, the student teams who had agreed to continue with the SL began the second semester intervention, but after two classroom sessions, the project ended abruptly as Spain entered full lockdown in February of 2019 and all educational institutions were forced to suddenly transition to online distance learning formats.

#### **5. DEVELOPING TRAINEE TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE**

Thus far, it has been seen how the design and implementation of the SL project described herein integrated a range of digital technologies to support communication that made this project possible. As teacher educators, the university professors attempted to engage their students in practices which they may eventually design and implement

themselves, as professionals. In the project, this engagement can be seen as multi-layered. The students learned in an explicit way about how to teach literacy following a specific, systematic R2L approach (Rose & Martin, 2012); in the process of this learning, they were required to implement a range of digital technologies, as shown in the previous section. They also applied the knowledge of literacy instruction in the real-world context of primary school classrooms with at-risk pupils; in order to do so, they were required to communicate with the different collectives that participated, including the professors and the primary school staff members. Thus, the students faced challenges of various kinds, including learning the contents of the training seminar, applying it to developing teaching plans and implementing those plans, as

well as presenting themselves and projecting an appropriate image as capable literacy support instructors in the professional context of providing a relevant service to the school communities.

In keeping with the concepts and framework of the TPACK theoretical model, the teacher education activities put into practice throughout the project were considered in terms of the knowledge that had to be developed for the purposes established, the ways to represent that knowledge, and the affordances of the technologies available to the participants. A range of purposes were established over time, while for each purpose or goal the most appropriate communication technologies were applied. Table 1 reflects the range of communication tools put to use in connection with each stage and the range of goals that were pursued.

Table 1

*Correspondence tool-stage-goal of the ALFAPS project*

TOOL	STAGE	GOAL
Infographic	Preparation: dissemination of proposal to potential participants	Provide an overview of the project so as to establish university-school collaboration
Video	Planning/preparation	Recruit university students/volunteers to participate (student testimonial)
PowerPoint presentation	Planning/preparation	Convey project terms and development to potential participants; present the project, develop awareness
Split view monitoring using parallel texts in Spanish and English	Action: face-to-face, specialised training sessions	Collaboratively guide student teachers in bi-literacy instruction
Google Classroom and e-mail for trainee-professor correspondence, Google Docs for concept revision quiz	Action: online training in bi-literacy instruction	Assign/submit training tasks, student planning and supervision by professors
Templates	Action: face-to-face and online training on teaching practices	Guide the students in the lessons
Audio recordings	Reflection: face-to-face sharing of information on the teaching process in focus groups	Gather information on teaching practices
Google Forms questionnaires	Reflection: evaluation	Gather information on students' pre-existing knowledge, motivation, feedback and engagement; teachers' views on the process



In the use of the technologies for digital communication, summed up in Table 1, it was mainly the teacher trainers/professors who designed and created the resources using these communicative tools. The role of the students, on the other hand, was to learn the content for the literacy instruction approach, and to put it into practice using the digital media provided: at the training sessions, following the professors' presentations, and checking their own work against the analyses explained and illustrated with the onscreen projected texts; and during their own study time, completing the questionnaires, lesson-planning templates, quizzes and reflection worksheets provided, uploading them to the Google Classroom, accessing the feedback provided through the Classroom app or by way of e-mail, searching for appropriate texts for teaching literacy to the intended age-groups, and working out the logistics of locating the schools and classrooms, attending the sessions at the correct times and dates and conveying any difficulties or needs to the teacher trainers by e-mail.

Pre-service teachers participating in the project have also covered the key areas of digital competence, namely the following (Skov, 2016).

*Information.* Ability to identify, locate, retrieve, store, organise and analyse digital information and evaluate relevance and purpose.

*Communication.* Ability to communicate, collaborate, interact with and participate in virtual teams and networks as well as make use of appropriate media, tone and behaviour.

*Production.* Ability to create, configure, and edit digital content, solve digital problems and explore new ways to take advantage of technology.

*Safety.* Ability to use digital technology safely and sustainably in relation to data, identity and work injuries and to pay attention to legal consequences, rights and duties.

ALFAPS involves a wide range of activities (training, development of teaching units, evaluation of materials, etc.) combined with management of different groups (students from three university classes, teachers from two schools, activities in small groups within eight primary school classes). This complex structure calls for appropriate tools able to facilitate connection between groups (Communication), and instruct students on the steps to be followed (Information). In addition, it also calls for instruments capable of creating didactic materials on bilingual literacy adapted to different educational levels (Production), always preserving the children's identity (Safety). The digital tools and the areas covered are represented in Figure 2, and the overlapping between areas is shown when appropriate.

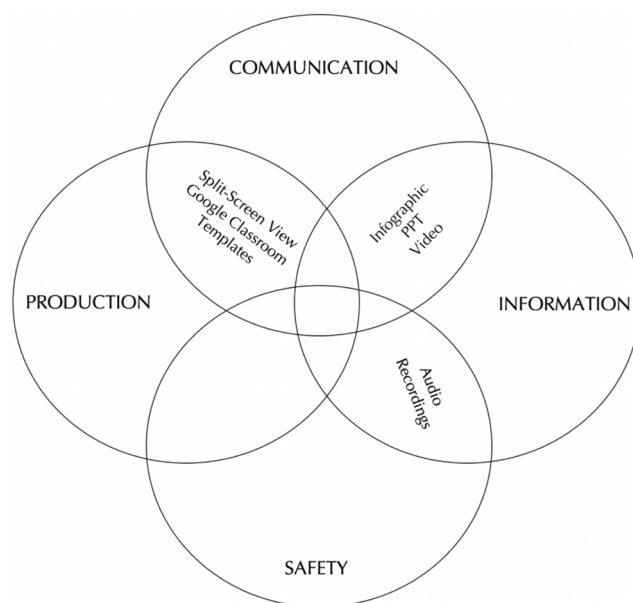


Figure 2. Digital tools and areas of digital competence in ALFAPS

## 6. DISCUSSION

Throughout the implementation of the project, the students met with difficulties, evidencing the learning process by which they came to eventual success in communicating the various messages to the diverse addressees with whom they were required to interact. A few of the difficulties the students encountered included the following.

1. Using templates for planning. In some cases, students misunderstood information provided on the literacy lesson planning template documents with which they needed to practise applying learning of the R2L approach.

2. Accessing Google Classroom, participating in collectively-edited forms or documents. This required signing out of all other e-mail accounts except the university one. Some students found it difficult, leading to delays in engaging in the different communication or learning activities.

3. Taking initiative to convey needs for guidance. Despite the trainers' reiterated invitations to do so, few of the participants who worked together in small groups requested tutorial sessions to review the lesson plans that they had drafted. Their perceptions of having lacked sufficient supervision in this respect were identified at the end of the first *action* cycle of the school intervention, by means of a survey exploring their experiences up to then and their satisfaction with the project. In the survey, numerous students mentioned having felt they needed more help from the teacher trainers, in contrast with the low numbers of students who had requested tutorials or guidance.

4. Communication breakdowns among the project stakeholders. At a couple of points, the participating schools failed to convey the cancellation of class sessions, which led to students attending the schools without being able to do the interventions. The effect on the students was problematic, as they

expressed later how frustrated they had felt wasting time in preparing and travelling to the schools only to discover the cancellations. This also affected their perceptions (as shown by the follow-up questionnaires) of the project organisation, as they felt the miscommunication showed the coordinators' neglectful attitudes or lack of preparation.

## 7. CONCLUSION

This study analyses the suitability of different digital tools to carry out a Service Learning project in the area of bilingual literacy. A description of the goals linked to each tool and the embedding into each stage of the process show the potential of combining different tools to facilitate the running of the activities. Upon completion of the project, the most substantial difficulties encountered by the students were unrelated to the use of technologies for professional communication; rather, they pertained to some of the obstacles they face in communication overall, whether in the context of their studies or in a professional one. Mainly, these difficulties can be summed up as omitting communication when needed, or lack of initiative in conveying important needs or information within the development of either learning, in the educational setting, or providing services in a more professional situation. In addition, the digital tools promote the development of all areas making up the digital competence. The overall result in relation to the integration of digital communication into the project shows a very positive balance in our view. The communication tools employed tended to serve their intended purpose successfully, quickly and effectively, and in addition, provided the student teachers with worthwhile examples and models of how to implement the wide range of technologies available depending on the immediate purposes and goals at hand.

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# Original Research

## Introducing German pre-service teachers to remote teaching: Policy, preparation and perceptions of competence development of future foreign language teachers

by Sandra Stadler-Heer

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*This article considers the policies, preparations and perceptions of competence development of pre-service foreign language teachers within the context of an innovative remote teacher training module. Responding to a recent call for triangulated research on teacher professional competences and to curricular changes resulting from the turn of German universities to online teaching in summer term 2020, a Developmental Model of Teacher Professional Competence (DevTPC) is proposed that can serve as basis for operationalising required context- and content-specific teacher competences. The article's aim is to establish the theoretical background of the DevTPC and report on first promising results of a pilot study (n=39) asking pre-service foreign language teachers about their perceived competence development in remote foreign language teaching between April and July 2020. By focussing on the perceived development of technological pedagogical content knowledge in the area of foreign language instruction, the results of the pilot study contextualise the potential of remote teaching contexts to transform foreign language teacher training and (foreign) language education in the years to come. The article ends with a series of questions and recommendations for further research to promote innovation in remote foreign language teacher training.*

**KEYWORDS:** remote training, foreign language teacher training, developmental model, professional competence, pre-service, technological pedagogical content knowledge, TPCK, Covid-19



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### 1. INTRODUCTION

A survey asking German humanities faculty members to draw first conclusions of the 'Corona-Semester' and its accompanying move to fully online teaching at universities and schools from April to June 2020 found that responses were 'not as

negative as expected at the beginning of the semester' calling the move 'a legitimate emergency solution [...] albeit with a relinquishment of essential quality features of the humanities teaching culture' (Sommer, 2020, p. 667). While 40% of facul-



ty members apparently noted a lower quality of online as opposed to face-to-face teaching and 24% even believed there to be a dramatic breakdown in quality, 24% were convinced that teaching within university contexts did not lose much of its quality and 11% stated 'the quality of the teaching has even improved under corona conditions' (Sommer, 2020, p. 666). While calls for a return to established face-to-face teaching methodologies are valid, the lockdown was a motor for innovation fuelled by previously unthinkable training formats in teacher and school student education.

This article considers changes in policy made in reaction to the Covid-19 pandemic in the area of didactic internships, resulting preparatory requirements in the area of university-based remote foreign language teacher training and consequences for teacher professionalisation and competence development. Self-reported measures of a pilot study asking pre-service foreign language teachers to reflect on their competence development in teaching primary and secondary school students during school lockdown from April to June 2020 and the return to hybrid teaching models in July 2020 are presented as a vantage point for further research on specific teaching topics in the area of foreign language education. The aim of the paper is to call for further research in remote (foreign language) teacher training along the lines of the Developmental Model of Teacher Professional Competence (DevTPC). The DevTPC responds to curricular changes in remote teacher training and a recent call for more complex models of teacher professionalisation which could serve as a basis for unbiased research due to triangulation (cf. Schmid et al., 2020). The DevTPC combines two empirically validated models, the COACTIV (Baumert & Kunter, 2011) and the TPACK-model (Koehler & Mishra, 2008; Schmid et al., 2020) of professional teacher competences and adds a temporal and situational dimension by integrating the notion of the competence continuum (Blömeke et al., 2015). A pilot study asking pre-service teachers to reflect on their content-specific competence development puts their learning and teaching experiences in a

time of crisis into context. The article provides new insight in pre-service teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning foreign languages online and debates implications for further research and professional development.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1. Policy

With three different institutions involved in organising didactic internships, practical teacher training modules in German university-based teacher training are particularly complex to organise. Each institution, the Ministry of Education, the university and connected schools, are operating in their unique context: a) the Ministry of Education's legally binding regulations organise teacher education on a federal, the policy level; b) universities in the federal states organise and operate on the teacher training level; c) schools are the locations where university students get their first guided teaching experience on a practical level.

Teacher training in the federal state of Bavaria, as in the other 16 German federal states, is organised by federal regulations of teacher examination issued by the respective federal ministries of education. On April 21st, 2020, the Bavarian Ministry of Education released revised instructions regarding the didactic internship which students complete in their fourth to seventh semesters. In this undergraduate module, university-based teacher training is directly linked with teaching practice, as a small number of pre-service teachers are allocated to a specific school and in-service teacher respectively who guides the group in their initial steps of planning and conducting lessons. The internship is offered in combination with mandatory university-based seminars in the respective teaching subjects, in our case English. Prior to the pandemic, the lecturer of the seminar would visit each school in person and observe each pre-service teacher conducting an English lesson twice over the course of the semester in order to monitor competence development live and in action.

The revised regulations issued by the federal Ministry of Education, i.e. a reduction to one live or online visit and the integration of team teach-

ing, effectively reducing the teaching time of a pre-service teacher in one lesson to ten to twenty minutes, lead to a substantial revision of previously established assessment practices of future teachers of foreign languages during their practicum. Instead of up to three live lessons, the coordinators of the subject of English proposed that pre-service teachers now had to plan, conduct and evaluate one twenty-minute asynchronous self-study unit for their allocated secondary or primary school classes and one twenty-minute remote live teaching session via a videoconferencing tool. The preparation of self-study materials was included to cater to those school children's needs who were in lockdown or quarantine and thus could not participate in online lessons. Responding to the proposition of team teaching, self-study materials and face-to-face online lessons were planned, prepared, conducted and evaluated by pre-service teachers in teams instead of by themselves. Both formats, self-study units and digital live distance teaching are considered particularly fruitful formats for foreign language teacher training as these develop pre-service teachers' digital competences (Redecker & Punie, 2017) and train their competence to innovate (Kultusministerkonferenz, 2004).

While the directives of the Bavarian Ministry of Education lead to new assessment practices, the high quality of teacher training was to be maintained. However, as the German Standards of Teacher Training of Foreign Language Teachers (Kultusministerkonferenz, 2008, p. 44) contain only general guidelines on digital competence development, the established course curriculum had to be updated to train technological pedagogical content knowledge (Koehler & Mishra, 2008) and guide students to develop innovative online learning designs for teaching and learning foreign languages remotely.

## 2.2. Preparations

Although the following preparatory measures were undertaken in a specific context under specific circumstances, i.e. in the federal state of Bavaria at the Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt with 14 in-service teachers and 39 pre-ser-

*'With three different institutions involved in organising didactic internships, practical teacher training modules in German university-based teacher training are particularly complex to organise'*

vice teachers of English as a Second/Foreign Language during the first lockdown period of the Covid-19 pandemic, they are, to the best judgement of the author, transferrable to other educational contexts and locations who have to or want to implement remote teacher training and language learning. In order to implement local directives issued by the Bavarian Ministry of Education and provide pre-service teachers with the necessary technical, methodological and pedagogical content knowledge for planning, conducting and evaluating the newly introduced teaching formats, remote live distance teaching and preparation of self-study materials, the following preparatory steps were undertaken.

### 2.2.1. Revaluating professional competences for online (foreign language) teaching

In fully online learning contexts, a revaluation of professional competences (future) teachers need for online language training becomes necessary. While the following conceptualisations were undertaken with the intention of training foreign language teachers online within the context of a Bavarian university, the background of the following models, all originating in neighbouring disciplines (cf. Blömeke et al., 2015; Koehler & Mishra, 2008; Baumert & Kunter, 2011), makes the proposed model for developing teachers' professional competences in remote foreign language teaching applicable to further teacher training contexts as well.

Following the example of Krauss et al. (2017) and the modelling of competence as a continuum, a thinking of knowledge processes alongside not apart from performance processes (Blömeke et al., 2015, p. 7) was taken as vantage point for conceptualising remote teacher training (Figure 1).

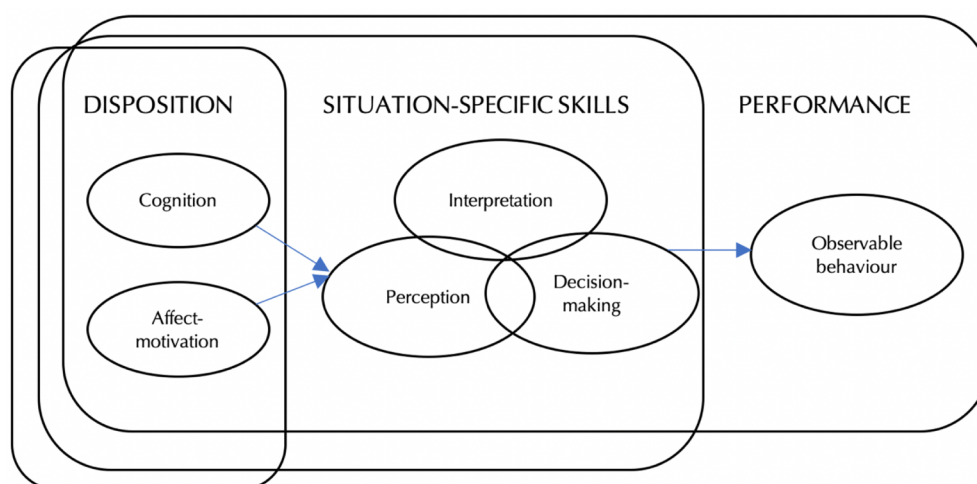


Figure 1. Modelling competence as a continuum (Blömeke et al., 2015, p. 7)

*'In an unprecedented fully online learning context, Baumert and Kunter's (2011) model however does not fully represent the remote teaching context that obviously requires technological knowledge'*

Blömeke's (2015) model is particularly interesting in a context and time in which competence and knowledge domains, such as the digital competences of educators (Redecker & Punie, 2017) or, more specifically, technological pedagogical content knowledge (Koehler & Mishra, 2008) that have previously mostly been perceived of as add-ons or extracurricular are unexpectedly at the centre of interest despite a lack of research into the content-specific competence facets of individual subjects and teaching topics. In unforeseen and 'emergency' circumstances, dispositional aspects such as cognition, affect and motivation play a major role in how a situation is perceived and interpreted, which decisions are made, and which actions are subsequently performed for others to observe.

As only 23% of German teachers had used digital technologies in their teaching on a daily basis up until 2018 (Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung, 2020, p. 285), it is not unjustified to assume that the teaching of technological pedagogical

knowledge is both still under-researched and not yet fully integrated into German teacher training and professional development. So far, professional knowledge required by teachers was mostly conceptualised alongside, for example, Baumert and Kunter's (2011) acclaimed and empirically validated COACTIV model of teacher professional competence which established teachers' professional knowledge by focusing on facets of content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, pedagogical/psychological knowledge, organisational knowledge and counselling knowledge (Figure 2). Such a model recognises the possible interaction between individual prerequisites and knowledge acquisition as well as a more extensive connection and hierarchical organisation of knowledge domains with growing expertise (Baumert et al., 2011, p. 15).

In an unprecedented fully online learning context, Baumert and Kunter's (2011) model however does not fully represent the remote teaching context that obviously requires technological knowledge. Such aspects of teaching with technology are at the centre of Koehler and Mishra's (2008) TPACK model which describes technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPCK) as evolving from knowledge of technologies (TK), pedagogy (PK) and content (CK) and related pedagogical content (PCK), technological pedagogical (TPK) and technological content (TCK) knowledge (Figure 3).

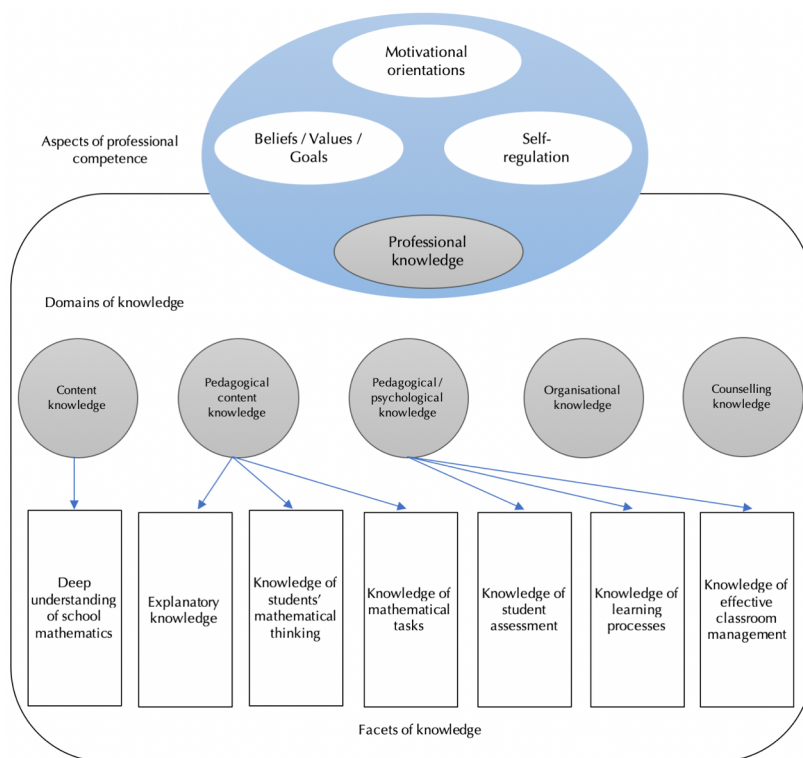
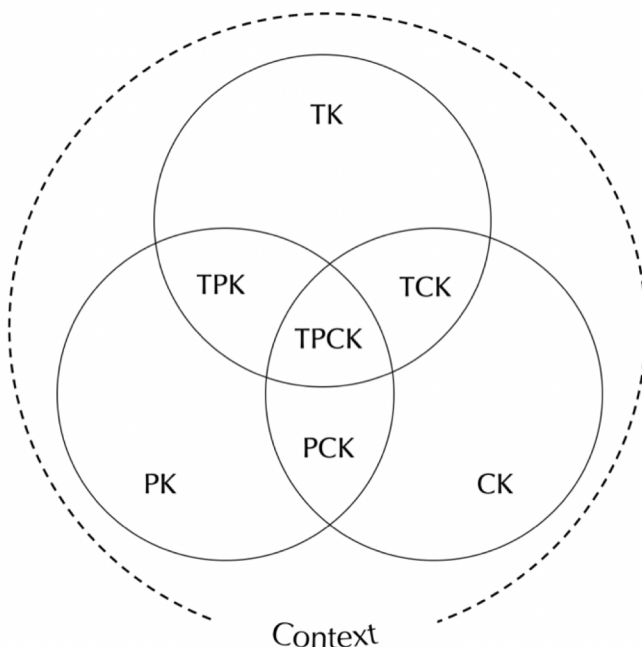


Figure 2. The COACTIV model of professional competence, with the aspect of professional knowledge specified for the context of teaching (Baumert & Kunter, 2011, p. 29)



- Pedagogical Knowledge (PK)**  
Knowledge about the process and practices or methods of teaching and learning and how it encompasses educational purposes, values and aims (e.g. student learning, classroom management, lesson plan development and implementation).
- Content Knowledge**  
Knowledge about the actual subject matter that is to be taught (e.g. central facts, concepts, theories, procedures).
- Technological Knowledge (TK)**  
Knowledge about standard technologies and how to operate them (e.g. from books and chalkboards to the Internet and digital video).
- Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK)**  
Knowledge of pedagogy that is applicable to the specific teaching content (e.g. knowing what teaching approaches fit the content, knowing how elements of content can be arranged for better teaching).
- Technological Pedagogical Knowledge (TPK)**  
Knowledge of how teaching may be changed as the result of using particular technologies (e.g. knowing the range of tools that exists, ability to select them based on their fitness and knowledge of affordances of these tools for pedagogical practice).
- Technological Content Knowledge (TCK)**  
Knowledge about how technology and content are reciprocally related (e.g. knowing how subject matter can be changed by the application of technology).
- Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPCK)**  
Knowledge about good teaching with technology which requires understanding how technologies can support teaching subject matter (e.g. knowing how technologies can help overcome problems in the process of teaching and learning and how they can be used for constructive content and pedagogy).

Figure 3. TPACK conceptual model and definitions according to Koehler and Mishra (2008) as displayed in Schmid et al. (2020)



Mishra and Koehler (2006) provide the following general facets for TPCK, the central knowledge domain for remote (language) teachers: (1) understanding the representation of concepts using technologies; (2) knowing pedagogical techniques that use technologies in constructive ways to teach content; (3) knowledge of what makes concepts difficult or easy to learn and how technology can help redress some of the problems that students face; (4) knowledge of students' prior knowledge and theories of epistemology; (5) knowledge of how technologies can be used to build on existing knowledge and to develop new epistemologies or strengthen old ones (Mishra & Koehler, 2006, p. 1029). These general facets are to be understood as a vantage point for the development of further subject-specific instruments to assess TPCK. The need for more subject-specific research on TPCK also 'in relation to specific teaching topics' was most recently called for by Schmid et al. (2020, p. 10). Their TPACK.xs short assessment instrument can help 'asses TPACK in various contexts as well as in combination with other relevant constructs

(e.g. beliefs, self-efficacy)' (Schmid et al., 2020, p. 2). However, relevant related constructs such as beliefs is a limitation of Koehler and Mishra's (2008) TPACK model, which does not integrate 'motivational orientations', 'beliefs/values/goals' and 'self-regulation' as for instance Baumert and Kunter's (2011) model does. In the area of assessment literacy of pre-service teachers, Campbell and Evans (2000) came to the conclusion that finding a lack of knowledge of assessment practices is not the answer to inconsistent pre-service teachers' assessment decisions and recommended looking at 'attitudes concerning the perceived legitimacy or usefulness of adhering to measurement principles' (Campbell & Evans, 2000, p. 354). Similarly, the impact of teachers' perceptions as opposed to their knowledge of the value of technologies in the classroom should not be underestimated. Hence, for the purpose of introducing pre-service teachers to online live distance teaching during their internship the following combined model of teacher professional competence is proposed (Figure 4).

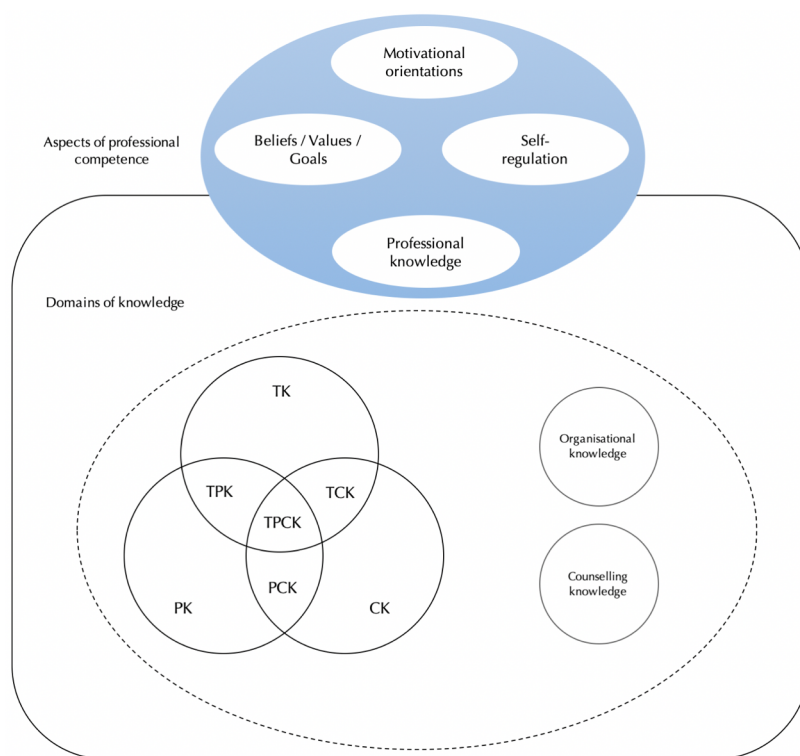


Figure 4. Combined Model of Teacher Professional Competence (CombTPC) integrating Baumert and Kunter's (2011) and Koehler and Mishra's (2008) TPACK model

While Baumert and Kunter's (2011) aspects of professional competence are maintained in full in the new model, the knowledge domains of professional knowledge are adapted to the remote teaching context by integrating technological knowledge and its combinatory effects on pedagogical and content knowledge as visualised in Koehler and Mishra's (2008) model. Baumert and Kunter's (2011) organisational knowledge, which means e.g. knowing about students, parents and teachers' rights, qualitative and efficient school leadership as well as governance and transparency and counselling knowledge, which encompasses teachers counselling students and parents regarding learning difficulties, behavioural and psychological issues, were also maintained and included within the striped line circle representing the context as these turned out highly relevant also in online learning contexts.

Lastly, when conceiving the development of professional competences as a continuum (Blömeke et al., 2015), the acquired level of professional competence of pre- and in-service teachers within a specific context, most likely affects their situation-specific skills of perceiving, interpreting and deciding on lesson content and teaching methodologies and thus how they actually perform a lesson. Regarding the teaching of foreign languages, a pre-service teacher's repertoire for fostering speaking in the classroom might not be as elaborate as that of an experienced teacher, for example. Still, a pre-service teacher's enthusiasm in teaching writing skills with extensive teaching materials might lead to similar student learning results than an experienced teacher's explanations backed with minimal resources. Drawing on Baumert and Kunter's (2011) model, Krauss et al. (2017) were able to show more generally, how content-pedagogical knowledge, beliefs and enthusiasm affected students learning with content-pedagogical knowledge being the strongest and most influential predictor (Krauss et al., 2017, p. 22-23). Such conceptualisations can serve as a basis for longitudinal studies in the emerging field of remote online teacher training, investigating competence development in situation-specific skills over time by, for

example, *'triangulating self-declarations with other measures of TPACK such as lesson observations or performance assessments'* (Schmid et al., 2020, p. 10). Responding to these recent calls, the following Developmental Model of Teacher Professional Competence (DevTPC) (Figure 5) is proposed with the intention to make situational responses and performance apparent, which are a central aspect of university-based teacher training and a special focus of didactic internships and the related development of different competence domains.

The proposed developmental model of professional teacher competence can be used as a framework to empirically validate triangulated approaches looking at self-declarations, lesson observations or performance assessments and technological pedagogical content knowledge in relation to specific teaching topics, as suggested by Schmid et al. (2020).

In the area of foreign language teacher education, 'specific teaching topics' become relevant in specific teaching situations. These topics are closely linked to the German standards of foreign language education, i.e. the training of communicative competences, text and media competences, methodological competences and intercultural competences (Kultusministerkonferenz, 2004). Foreign language teachers need to know how to work with authentic texts, build up vocabulary knowledge, listening and audio-visual competences, promote transactional and interactional language production, support reading and writing processes and strategies of comprehension, teach linguistic structures, orthography, intonation and pronunciation, train intercultural competence, mediation, text and media skills as well as methodological competences (Maley, 2018).

Moreover, foreign language teachers need to be competent in (explaining the) structuring (of) foreign language learning processes, have narrative and explanatory skills, and know how to initiate social interaction in the classroom through adequate classroom phrases. Tests assessing domain-specific knowledge of foreign language teachers teaching in offline settings already exist (e.g. Kirchoff, 2017).

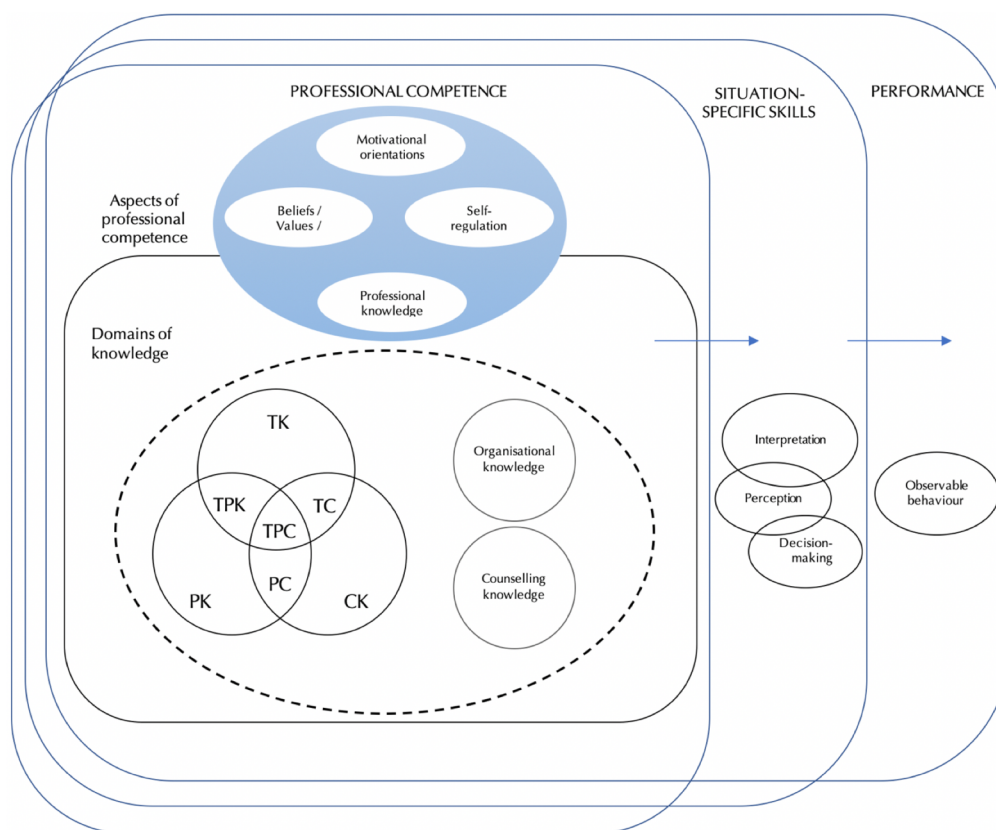


Figure 5. Development Model of Teacher Professional Competence (DevTPC) combining Blömeke et al. (2015), Koehler and Mishra (2008), and Baumert and Kunter (2011)

In digital teaching environments, the ‘specific teaching topics’ of foreign language teaching remain the same. What differs – and is currently the greatest challenge – is how these specific teaching topics can be taught online. The answer appears to lie with the professional competence of foreign language teachers and most prominently so in the area of technological pedagogical content knowledge, more specifically knowledge about subject-specific webtools that can help foster intercultural communicative competence. These differ according to competence facet, i.e. different webtools are used to encourage speaking skills (e.g. use of recorded audio messages and messenger services or live, face-to-face videoconferencing tools) than for encouraging writing skills (e.g. use of collaborative writing tools) or training reading comprehension (e.g. use of game-based tools that help with creating quizzes). Significantly, technological pedagogical content knowledge about specific

teaching topics can only be generated and discussed after technological knowledge is established.

In the context of didactic internships and connected mandatory university-based seminars, the Development Model of Teacher Professional Competence (DevTPC) was introduced as a framework of reference in the opening and closing sessions of seminars for pre-service teachers and in professional development sessions for in-service teachers. The model facilitated the conceptualisation of required digital teaching competences pre- and in-service teachers had to develop in order to teach the foreign language asynchronously, synchronously and in blended learning settings. In addition, competence levels helped pre-service teachers to conceptualise their individual levels of competence development in relation to each teaching topic. The levels range from newcomers (A1), explorer (A2), integrator (B1), experts (B2), leaders

(C1) to pioneers (C2) (Redecker & Punie, 2017). When developing a measure for self-reported competence development, these competence levels were taken up in the end-of-term questionnaire on self-ascribed competence gains of pre-service teachers in the area of online English language teaching.

### 2.2.2. Checking technical requirements and resources for teaching foreign languages online

Once a model for developing professional competences in the remote internship context was conceptualised, the following questions served as guidelines for establishing the technological prerequisites for online foreign language teaching. Again, these are transferable to other online teaching contexts as they are adapted from competence Area 2 (Digital Recourses), Area 5 (Empowering Learners), and specifically 5.1 (Accessibility and Inclusion) of the Digital Competence Framework for Educators (DigCompEdu), which provides general but not subject-specific guidelines for teaching and learning with digital resources (Redecker & Punie, 2017). All participating parties, primary/secondary school students, in-service teachers, pre-service teachers and university lecturers, should ideally be asked the following questions.

1. Do you have/Can you be provided with a device that is able to access the Internet (e.g. smartphone, tablet, desktop PC, etc.)?

2. Do you have/Can you be provided with access to an Internet connection?

3. Do you have/Can you be provided with a(n) integrated) microphone and/or camera? Note: Ideally, all are available, yet remote training is also possible without either.

For teachers/lecturers:

1. Which videoconferencing tool and/or learning management system (LMS) does your school/university provide and support? Note: In our case these differed, i.e. teachers/lecturers had to organise user accounts for the respective systems at the beginning of term as well as make sure of conforming to local data regulations. Schools used WebEx and BigBlueButton for videoconferencing and Mebis, a Moodle-based LMS organised by the

federal state of Bavaria. The university used Zoom and Ilias, a Moodle-based LMS organised by the university itself.

2. Do you have to pay attention to particular licencing and data protection requirements when using third party tools in your teaching?

### 2.2.3. Professional development of in-service teachers involved in the didactic internship

As already indicated, given the sudden transfer to fully online teaching, 14 in-service teachers supervising pre-service teachers at schools were introduced to different videoconferencing tools and accompanying opportunities for teaching foreign languages with digitally informed methodologies in several virtual meetings at the beginning of term. In accordance with Area 1 (Professional Engagement) of the DigCompEdu (Redecker & Punie, 2017), all professional communication was organised remotely via e-mail and videoconferencing tools. Opportunities for reflective practice were later included through digital live distance teaching units conducted by interns which were observed by in-service teachers and university lecturers alike. Only in one instance was an in-service teacher willing to be observed while teaching online at the beginning of term by pre-service teachers and a university lecturer before pre-service teachers conducted their first lessons. This anecdotally depicts the level of hesitation and insecurity of some in-service teachers to teach with the help of or exclusively through digital resources. Over the course of the semester, the initial efforts in bringing together in-service teachers and university trainers in virtual rooms via Zoom or BigBlueButton paid off. Individual struggles of teachers to put the teaching innovations into practice resulted from a lack of technological resources, infrastructure or knowledge on their or their school students' part or from school leadership-issued restrictions regarding the use of certain digital tools. These issues could be sorted out one by one over the course of the semester. In order to respond to local data protection laws, a district media centre had for example provided server space where account information and data collected during digi-



tal live distance teaching could be stored. At the end of term all 39 students had been able to meet the requirement and complete their internship.

#### **2.2.4. Deciding for teaching formats in remote teacher training seminars**

As the core of teacher training is mediating the two poles of theory and practice, digital learning scenarios were previously not the mainstream focus of training modules. From a teaching perspective, university-based teacher training modules, including the obligatory practice phases, faced a threefold challenge in the area of foreign language teaching at the Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt:

- a) continuing pre-service teacher training in exclusively virtual environments;
- b) preparing pre-service teachers to teach primary/secondary school students live online and through predesigned self-study materials;
- c) putting teaching and learning experiences into context through online peer reflection and self-assessment.

Three university-based seminars accompanied the didactic internship from different angles, one for planning, conducting and evaluating English lessons at primary and middle school level, one with the same content for teaching at secondary school level, i.e. Realschule or Gymnasium, and one tackling current issues and topics in English language teaching in practical terms which had to be transformed into fully online courses. These courses would normally have been taught for 90-minutes per week at a fixed time and location.

In the remote training scenario, asynchronous and synchronous training scenarios were combined. Weekly synchronous meetings lasted for only 45 minutes instead of 90 minutes and were always conducted on the same day and at the same time. During these 45-minute live sessions pre-service teachers discussed results and questions arising during their allotted 45-minute self-study time with prepared materials. Self-study tasks took the form of interactive introductions to a new digitally informed teaching method, such as digital storytelling or gamification, or conducting a crite-

tion-referenced peer-reflection of a prepared self-study unit or lesson plan of a digital live distance teaching unit. Thus, the asynchronous learning scenarios, i.e. self-study units, which the pre-service teachers designed for their internship school students, were reviewed by and for pre-service teachers in the accompanying university-based seminars. Adaptive learning from ongoing experiences with the new technical media of teaching (e.g. videoconferencing software and tools) over the course of the semester and constantly integrating upcoming individual, conceptual and context-specific requirements characterised the weekly meetings with pre-service teachers in the seminar context. The mix of synchronous and asynchronous learning and teaching designs corresponds to competence Area 3 (Teaching and Learning) and Area 5 (Facilitating Learner's Digital Competences) of the DigCompEdu (Redecker & Punie, 2017) in a twofold way for pre-service and in-service teachers as well as university lecturers simultaneously.

#### **2.2.5. Preparing evaluative measures of remote teacher training**

In order to document students' perceptions of their first remote teacher training seminar, two instruments were used to evaluate the teaching innovation. Firstly, the new format was assessed in the context of the university-wide course evaluation. Secondly, an end-of-term survey was constructed asking pre-service teachers to self-assess their competence development in the areas of teaching foreign languages online.

### **3. RESULTS OF COURSE EVALUATION AND STUDY ON PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS**

#### **3.1. General observations**

Based on Baumert and Kunter's (2011) COACTIV-model of professional competences, novice teacher cognition, German standards of foreign language teaching (Kultusministerkonferenz, 2008) and the DigCompEdu (Redecker & Punie, 2017), a survey tracing the development of digital and content-specific competences in foreign language teaching was constructed. In July 2020, the first

cohort completing the fully online didactic internship was asked to reflect on their beliefs and perceived gains in knowledge about how to teach foreign languages online.

A total of 39 pre-service teachers (84% female) with 87% aged between 18 to 23 and 13% aged between 24 to 29 participated in the survey. 82% studied in their 1st to 4th semester, 18% between their 5th and 8th semester. 17 pre-service teachers (43.59%) had held up to three English lessons prior to the course, 20 participants (51.28%) had 4 to 10 hours of teaching experience and 2 (5.13%) had more than 10 hours of teaching experience. 14 (35.90%) pre-service teachers studied to become primary school teachers, 3 (7.69%) studied to become middle school teachers, 5 (12.82%) studied to become teachers at Realschule, and 17 (43.59%) aim to become teachers at a German Gymnasium.

### 3.2. Instruments

In order to assess pre-service teachers' perceptions of teaching English through digital means a questionnaire consisting of 36 questions was con-

structed, drawing on established sources for item development in three areas, namely content pedagogical knowledge (Kultusministerkonferenz, 2004; 2008), digital competences (Redecker & Punie, 2017) and team teaching. Three items were adapted from the DigCompEdu self-evaluation test available freely online (DigCompEdu, 2021). The survey was conducted as an online survey using the Qualtrics tool. For the purpose of this article, only selected items from the first two parts of the survey on content pedagogical knowledge and digital competences are reported in full. The items on team teaching are not analysed in this article. More detailed analyses in future papers will be needed to provide further insights in the development of digital competences.

### 3.3. Statistical analysis

Overall, the 39 participants in the pilot study indicate that their competence in developing digital activities and learning scenarios improved by 2.43 levels between the beginning and end of the summer term, 2020, i.e. between March and July 2020 (Table 1).

Table 1

*Item 1: How would you rate your ability to design digital, competence-oriented tasks for English lessons using digital tools? Assign yourself a competence level from A1 to C2*

	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	VARIANCE	COUNT (N)
Beginning of summer term	A1	C1	2.21	1.14	1.29	39
End of summer term	A2	C2	4.64	0.92	0.85	39

An increase by more than two competence levels displays a high confidence in the self-ascribed ability to develop digital, competence-oriented tasks for English lessons using tools. This high score did not come as a surprise to the author and conductor of the study who observed and guided the competence development throughout the semester. Pre-service teachers in the fully online course format were highly motivated to put together self-study materials and enthusing online face-to-face teaching lessons thereby contributing to

the ongoing emergency situation during lockdown period of local schools and their return to on-site teaching from mid-June onwards. A follow-up study is currently under way and will evaluate whether these self-reported measures can be maintained over a longer period of time and in regular teaching and training situations.

The following items support the high gains in digital competences. Pre-service teachers reported they had used a multitude of digital activities for foreign language teaching. They prepared interac-

tive presentations (25.55%), comprehension questions (24.82%), quizzes (16.79%), collaborative writing opportunities (16.06%) and, to a lesser extent, more elaborate learning scenarios like digital storytelling (7.3%), interactive videos (5.11%) or podcasts (4.38%). No student team worked with

serious games. The latter is a task format that essentially is more complex and requires a considerably more extensive preparation in the teaching and working methodology, thus being a format that was not quite suitable for emergency online teaching.

Table 2

*Item 2: Which digital task formats have you already created yourself?*

ACTIVITY	%	CHOICE COUNT
Comprehension questions (e.g. true/false, multiple choice, drag and drop)	24.82	34
Collaborative writing tools	16.06	22
Digital storytelling	7.3	10
Quizzes	16.79	23
Serious games	0	0
Interactive presentations	25.55	35
Interactive videos	5.11	7
Podcasts	4.38	6
TOTAL		137

Two questions asked about the use of different types of digital tools. Table 3 displays pre-service teachers' knowledge about which digital tools they could use to train in a foreign language specific competence area, such as reading, writing, speaking and listening. The table lists a number of specific tools (learning apps, Thinglink, Google tour Creator and Google Maps) alongside broader categories of tools (mindmapping, visualisation, survey and organisation) displaying the wide range of tools available and specifically referring to the tools used in the course context. The total number of references is the most important figure in this table as it shows that pre-service teachers see multiple ways to use digital tools for a great variety of skills. Depending on prior experience, more or fewer opportunities were perceived as realistic for training. Over the course of the summer term 2020, pre-service teachers got more experienced in designing foreign language activities with the help of web applications. However, research into

best practice examples is still evolving as is assessing the quality and effectiveness of remote foreign language learning.

The pilot study provides data on pre-service teachers' knowledge of when to use different types of digital tools for visualisation, organisation, entertainment, performance (e.g. learning apps and Thinglink) or surveys in an English lesson (cf. Table 4). The question implies knowledge of the tools mentioned here. Indeed, all these tools were introduced in the courses for pre-service teachers involved in the internship programme. Significantly, the total numbers of tools selected per competence area are the highest for visualisation tools and the lowest for the only recently available Google Tour Creator. Tool familiarity thus plays a major role in imagining its use in online language training. Teacher training institutions thus have a responsibility to introduce future teachers to such digital applications if they are to include such tools in their teaching.

Table 3

*Item 3: Indicate, which digital tools can be used to train a specific foreign language competence, such as reading, writing, speaking and listening*

FIELD	LISTENING	SPEAKING	READING	WRITING	I DON'T KNOW	TOTAL
Google Tour Creator	22.64	28.30% 15	20.75% 11	3.77% 2	24.53% 13	53
Google Maps	11.86	30.51% 18	28.81% 17	11.86% 7	16.95% 10	59
Microphone	34.85	53.03% 35	6.06% 4	1.52% 1	4.55% 3	66
Thinglink	25.00	13.24% 9	32.35% 22	10.29% 7	19.12% 13	68
Surveys (e.g. Kahoot, Quizlet)	13.04	7.25% 5	52.17% 36	26.09% 18	1.45% 1	69
Camera	28.17	35.21% 25	15.49% 11	8.45% 6	12.68% 9	71
Mindmapping (Mindmeister, Miro)	9.46% 7	20.27% 15	28.38% 21	36.49% 27	5.41% 4	74
Learning apps	28.09	6.74% 6	39.33% 35	23.60% 21	2.25% 2	89
Organisation (Padlet)	12.22	11.11% 10	36.67% 33	37.78% 34	2.22% 2	90
Visualisation (PowerPoint, Prezi)	25.96	17.31% 18	34.62% 36	22.12% 23	0.00% 0	104

Table 4

*Item 4: Indicate in which phase the digital tools can be used in foreign language competence*

FIELD	PRESENTATION / PRE-PHASE	PRACTICE / WHILE-PHASE	PRODUCTION / POST-PHASE	I DON'T KNOW	TOTAL
Learning apps	8.06% 5	37.10% 23	53.23% 33	1.61% 1	62
Microphone	28.89% 26	35.56% 32	31.11% 28	4.44% 4	90
Organisation (e.g. Padlet)	24.71% 21	35.29% 30	38.82% 33	1.18% 1	85
Mindmapping (Mindmeister, Miro)	33.33% 24	34.72% 25	26.39% 19	5.56% 4	72
Visualisation (PowerPoint, Prezi)	33.01% 34	33.98% 35	32.04% 33	0.97% 1	103
Thinglink	32.88% 24	31.51% 23	21.92% 16	13.70% 10	73
Camera	31.87% 29	30.77% 28	31.87% 29	5.49% 5	91
Google Tour Creator	43.40% 23	26.42% 14	9.43% 5	20.75% 11	53
Google Maps	56.14% 32	24.56% 14	14.04% 8	5.26% 3	57
Surveys (Kahoot, Quizlet)	38.89% 28	9.72% 7	51.39% 37	0.00% 0	72

Interestingly, when asked if they would work with digital tools in English as a foreign language lessons again after the internship had ended, no pre-service teacher indicated ‘no’ in the questionnaire (Figure 6). When asked to explain why they would use these tools again, the participants in the pilot study indicated that they bring more ‘clarity,

variety and possibly more motivation’ into the virtual classrooms. One of the participants who opted for ‘rather yes’ explained: *‘I believe that traditional learning methods should still be used to some extent. In moderation and as a means of differentiation, however, digital tools are definitely a reasonable choice’.*

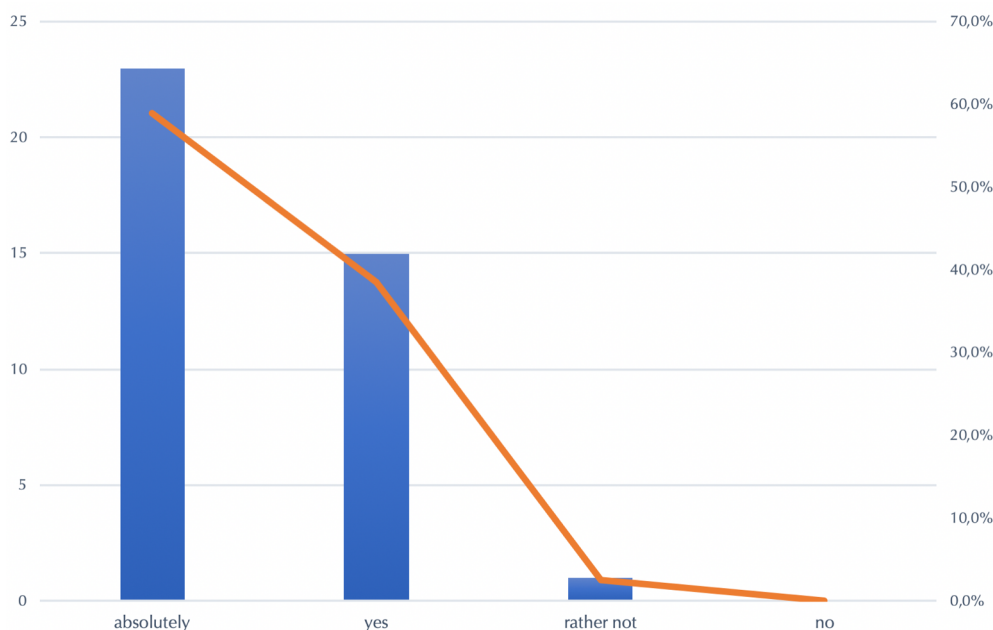


Figure 6. Item 5: Would you use digital tools again?

Drawing on an item from the teachers’ commitment scale of the DigCompEdu, pre-service teachers were also asked about their own working processes and use of digital media. 8.11% (n=3) pre-service teachers used the conventionally available digital communication tools like email and WhatsApp. The majority combined various communication tools without having systematic digital solutions for communicating effectively in mind (54.05%, n=20). 35.14% (n=13) are however already looking for systematic solutions and 1 person (2.7%) even indicated that he/she reflects, discusses and proactively develops new communication strategies. Two participants did not respond to this question asking for the choices for online communication indicating that teacher training institutions need to make links between professional commitment and professional communication a stronger priority.

Although the results of the pilot study are mostly positive regarding the sudden transformation in teaching foreign languages and conducting the accompanying teacher training online, the survey supports theoretical notions (Blömeke & Kaiser, 2017) and previous findings in neighbouring disciplines (Wagner et al., 2016; Friedrichs-Liesenkötter, 2016; Kutscher et al., 2020) that developing sustained openness toward new teaching methodologies and learning materials depends largely on context-specific and technological prerequisites. The success of the remote teaching internship was not only due to all project participants’ high motivation to enable young learners to continue their education while in lockdown. If the university’s computing centre and the county’s media centre had not provided technical support and infrastructure, remote teaching would not have been possible on that scale. In addition, local teachers’



and headmasters' openness and support for online teaching opportunities for pre-service teachers was a prerequisite. Finally, unless own learning and teaching experiences in online contexts during teacher training are diverse and of high quality, technological pedagogical content knowledge cannot be obtained (Foulger et al., 2017; Pamuk, 2011; Wang et al., 2018). A pedagogy of distance education and more specifically of foreign language distance teaching can help to address this research gap.

### 3.4. Limitations

The previous results present first selected results from a pilot study on introducing remote teaching to pre-service teachers of foreign language teaching. Given the extensive introduction of a new theoretical model that proposes to take a closer look at teachers' competence development, a full report of the results of the pilot study was not possible within the scope of this paper but will be published continuously as follow-up data is presently collected. Discussing course evaluations and reports of self-ascribed competences come with several well-known limitations yet have been used extensively in monitoring ongoing competence development (Schmid et al., 2020). Moreover, the teaching innovation presented and analysed here was conducted by the author of the pilot study herself, which may lead to limitations in terms of replicability. Presently, a concise description of what technological pedagogical content knowledge of English language teachers (TPCK-ELT) entails is still outstanding yet evolving simultaneously to first practical experiences in the new, virtual teaching environment. A concept for teaching foreign language learning remotely is necessarily developed along the lines of the German standards of foreign language education according to which teachers require knowledge in how to train intercultural competence, text and media competence, methodological competence and communicative competence. In addition, teachers need to be competent in designing activities and tasks with the help of suitable digital tools. These competences have been developed in team teaching in

the internship programme described above. An evaluation of preparing, conducting and evaluating foreign language instruction in pre-service teacher teams is also currently under way. Last but not least, the present study only hints at how digital tools can be used by integrating first results of pre-service teachers' knowledge of when and which web applications can be used for the training of foreign language skills. More detailed studies need to follow on lesson planning and observations of digitally-based lessons in order to provide guidelines on required content-specific knowledge of specific teaching topics.

### 4. CONCLUSION

In many ways, the turn toward online teaching was accompanied with fears of a 'lost semester' for students and subsequent prolongation of studies and training. Teacher training programmes with their mandatory practical phases during which students observe, plan, try out and reflect on their first teaching experiences in the subject were particularly affected by the nationwide instructions to stay home and maintain a distance of at least 1.5 metres to other people. Naturally, any regional approach raises issues about whether its measures are scalable and thus transferrable to other contexts.

Digital live distance teaching was successfully implemented in the practical training modules of the English as a foreign or second language teacher training programme of the Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt in a time of crisis and in response to a necessary turn toward online teaching due to the Covid-19 pandemic (Tulchinskii, 2020). The presented course format guaranteed the continuation of qualitative teacher training by integrating the training and teaching of digital competences with content-specific knowledge of teaching English as a foreign or second language. Following Alkharusi et al.'s (2011, p. 121) suggestion, the practical outline of the course allowed pre-service teachers to put into operation their skill-specific training and knowledge acquired in the university-based course into actual online classroom settings. Connecting the content material of the

*‘Digital (live) distance teaching was found to be a valuable addition to the curriculum of foreign language teacher education and a motor for pre-service teachers’ digital competence development’*

course with ongoing live distance teaching opportunities, pre-service teachers were provided ‘with real-life opportunities for the application of educational [...] concepts and principles’ (Alkharusi et al., 2011, p. 121) of teaching English as a foreign or second language.

This article proposed a developmental model for professional teacher competence as a framework for optimising knowledge domains for teaching foreign languages online and provided the first empirical results in the area of pre-service teachers’ perceptions. A next necessary step is to develop an instrument assessing TPCK of English language teaching in remote learning settings, thus reading the general DevTPC against a subject-specific Developmental Model of Language Teacher Professional Competence (DevLTPC). Digital (live) distance teaching was found to be a valuable addition to the curriculum of foreign language teacher education and a motor for pre-service teachers’ digital competence development. Ideally this development is monitored longitudinally and with various cohorts. Given the success of the teaching innovation, digital (live) distance teaching experiences have by now become an obligatory element of the training curriculum of foreign language teachers at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt and will be taught also after the return to face-to-face teaching.

Having analysed German and Bavarian policies, necessary preparatory measures and innovative best practices of digital live distance teaching, the study highlighted the transformative potential of this teacher training concept developed and conducted under severe time constraints in times of crisis. Although pre-service teachers were initially hesitant about conducting live teaching sessions with primary and secondary school students,

the end of term course evaluation and accompanying survey on perceived learnings in teaching English online display mostly positive results.

The following questions for reflection arise from these initial positive results.

1. Which changes to policies of foreign language teacher training should be made or maintained after the end of the pandemic?

2. How do infrastructural and technological specificities continue to affect access of primary/secondary school students/pre-/in-service teachers/teacher trainers to digital teaching/learning opportunities?

3. How far do infrastructural and technological issues affect the quality of foreign language teaching in offline/online teaching environments?

4. Should digital (live) distance teaching experiences become mandatory in teacher training programmes after the return to face-to-face teaching?

5. Which digital competences should foreign language teachers have?

All these questions underline the urgent need for further empirical research in the area of (remote) foreign language teacher education. Experts should be brought together to consult on policy development using the Delphi technique. Tests on CPK in online foreign language learning contexts should be developed as recent influential studies have shown that general knowledge of technological pedagogical content knowledge is not enough (Schmid et al., 2020). While digital media are particularly effective in supporting foreign language learning, a collection of evidence-based best practice examples of digital teaching innovations is still missing and thus another area of particular interest for professionalising practical digital competence education alongside the development of content knowledge and content pedagogical knowledge is lacking. Finally, in order to empirically validate the proposed developmental model of professional teacher competence, future studies should opt for triangulated approaches in order to overcome potential biases in competence development (cf. Schmid et al., 2020, p. 10). Evidently, this is an exciting time for professionalising remote foreign language teacher training and research.

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# Original Research

## The implementation of authentic language input in second language (L2) teaching: Pedagogical arguments

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*This paper was written at the same time that the annual language and culture seminar of Hellenic Culture School Switzerland was being held in Greece. That was a felicitous coincidence, since it allowed the observation and interpretation of the students' learning behaviour and their target language interactions within its native environment. This short immersion into authentic language and culture input was welcomed by students of all proficiency levels as a challenge and call for participating in a new, enriched learning activity performed within a natural, real-life situation and hence, a more purposeful and meaningful communication context. Students were led to a self-directed reception and assimilation of language input, applying their own strategies, experiences or intuition. This attitude of students, normally deprived of a native language environment, reflects the need to incorporate authentic materials in L2 classes based on their ability to function as substitutes for the native environment, which is missing, and on their potential to become vehicles for language progress, pragmatic and cultural awareness. The importance of authentic texts in language learning has been discussed by theorists in applied linguistics and language learning throughout the 20th century but with the development of the communicative approach and task-based learning it has become a leading feature of language teaching materials. This paper explores the development of task authenticity in the selection of language teaching materials in class and examines the arguments for their use, based on the analysis of culture, currency and challenge.*

**KEYWORDS:** *task authenticity, schema, authentic materials, communicative approach, task-based learning, culture, currency, challenge*



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### 1. INTRODUCTION

In 1899, Henry Sweet, an English philologist specialising in Germanic languages, was the first to recognise the value of implementing authentic texts in second language teaching, based on their potential to 'do justice in every feature of the lan-

guage' (Sweet, 1964, p. 177). Several years later, Mishan (2005) confirmed this initial hint by claiming that on the eve of the 20th century the appeal of authenticity has been reinforced becoming 'the predominant paradigm for the language teaching classroom' (Mishan, 2005, p. 10). This issue of



pedagogically incorporating authentic input in language teaching has evoked the research interests of many linguists and language teachers and has provided the basis for expressing various views, which are often opposing, regarding the necessity and validity of this practice from both a theoretical and pedagogical perspective.

Indeed, contemporary L2 teaching methods have reintroduced, in a compelling way, the demand for an authenticity-centred language teaching, especially with regard to the latest permutations of the communicative approach and mainly, within the task-based approach, where the nature and notion of task itself are calling for authenticity in learning materials design (Skiada-Sciaranetti & Georgiadou, 2019). This revival can be further explained in sociological and pedagogical terms. On the one hand, the revolution in information and communication technologies has granted greater access to authentic texts of all types. On the other hand, a gradual pedagogical shift towards learner autonomy and thence self-direction in learning, has passed the responsibility for learning and the access to information and knowledge, from the teacher to the learner. In the light of this movement in language pedagogy today's learner has higher expectations of authenticity – of target language and culture input and of interactions applied to obtaining and processing it (Mishan, 2005, p. 10-11).

Within this context, the academic debate focusing on the nature of authenticity, its theoretical framework and the conditions preserving its value has intensified. First and foremost, authenticity as an absolute textual quality (*text authenticity*) is validated by evidence reduced to the primary conditions of production and reception of the text. At the same time, authenticity, as an element which transcends the textual basis per se, is transformed into a characteristic of the relationship between the text and the reader and it has to do with appropriate response (Widdowson, 1978, p. 80). This means that it relies more on the interaction between the learner and the input text, rather than on the input text itself and, therefore it depends on the learner's response to it. This kind of authentici-

ty is ensured through designing authentic tasks (*task authenticity*), in other words, activities which maintain the primary communicative purpose of the text (Buendgens-Kosten, 2014; Gilmore, 2007; Guariento & Morley, 2001). Within this framework, the definition of authentic text has a dual meaning. On the one hand, authentic is considered any text, whether oral or written, which has not been compiled strictly on pedagogical terms (Wallace, 1992) so as to ensure the linguistic progress of students, but in order to respond to a need for communication, information or real language expression. In short, a text which is not produced to teach but to communicate (Tomlinson, 2013) and '*to fulfil some social purpose in the language community in which it was produced*' (Little et al., 1989, p. 27). On the other hand, an authentic text entering the language classroom remains authentic or is being *authenticated* when processed on the basis of its primary communicative function, in order to achieve a reception on behalf of the students similar to that of native speakers.

The aim of this article is to take part in this wide academic debate on authenticity by presenting and analysing the pedagogical arguments advocating the use of authentic texts for language learning.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1. Culture

These arguments are encapsulated in three general categories of features, intrinsically incorporated in authentic texts, underlining their pedagogical role. Mishan (2004) proposes this distinction summing up the pedagogical value of authentic language input into three inherent features of authentic texts, namely the '*3 C's: culture, currency, challenge*' (Mishan, 2004, p. 220).

The first category pertains to *culture*, in other words, the cultural dimension of authentic texts and its beneficial impact on language acquisition. In 1948, T.S. Eliot wrote that '*even the humblest material artefact which is the product and the symbol of a particular civilisation, is an emissary of the culture out of which it comes*' (Eliot, 1948, p. 92). Since language and culture are an indivisible

*‘Particularly in classes of refugees or immigrants, who of necessity must participate and converse in an unfamiliar language often contrary to their own cultural environment, there is a dire need for greater empathy to be acquired’*

unity, an inseparable, symbiotic whole, the entire range of language production – from an advertising slogan to the verse of a poem – is representative of the culture within which it was developed. Sapir (1963) adds to this notion, emphasising that *‘it is an illusion to think that we can understand the significant outlines of a culture through sheer observation and without the guide of the linguistic symbolism which makes these outlines significant and intelligible to society’* (Sapir, 1963, p. 161).

This does not mean that language functions unilaterally as a symbol of an objective cultural reality. At the same time, it is an integral part of this reality in which it is ‘shaped’ and formed in constant interaction with other parts. This two-way dynamic between language and culture makes it impossible to study them in isolation. *‘Teaching culture without language is fundamentally flawed and to separate language and culture teaching is to imply that a foreign language can be treated in the early learning stages as if it were self-contained and independent of other sociocultural phenomena’* (Byram, 1991, p. 18).

Therefore, since the cultural whole is to such an extent interrelated to the target language, the main priority is to portray and highlight these cultural messages by making learners aware of them during language acquisition. Authentic texts constitute an appropriate language learning material corpus and are indicated for this purpose, provided that they represent aspects of the target culture and become therefore credible depictions of this culture within the classroom. At the teaching level, the process of students integrating new cultural elements is smoothly and seamlessly carried out when it entails an organic part of the lesson, harmoniously incorporated into language teaching and does not

have the form Kramersch (1993) has criticised, that of simply ‘tacking on’ separate cultural elements as an ‘expendable fifth skill’ (Kramersch, 1993, p. 1).

Besides, the cultural messages mediated through authentic texts are not always discernible and explicit. For this reason, as Tomalin and Stempleski (1993, p. 8) claim, *‘little benefit will result from merely displaying a cultural document or artefact in the class’*. What is necessary on the teacher’s part is to train students in applying strategies to identify language input and to retrieve appropriate information from there. In this way, a process is stimulated which gradually leads to the cultivation of a skill, that of cultural awareness, which involves developing sensitivity towards the impact of culturally-induced behaviour on language usage and communication (Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993, p. 5; Gladkova & Larina, 2018). This awareness will in turn create favourable conditions for the development of empathy, in other words, the capacity to identify with a non-familiar culture, which is an important emotional factor in successful language acquisition (Thaler, 2019). Particularly in classes of refugees or immigrants, who of necessity must participate and converse in an unfamiliar language often contrary to their own cultural environment, there is a dire need for greater empathy to be acquired.

Of course, a situation of absolute empathy is a rather utopian idea, since *‘the native cultural experience is bound to shape the perception of the new reality by relating and evaluating both fields of experience’* (Buttjes & Byram, 1991, p. 232-233). Despite this, the development of a familiar cultural framework as a reference point for language acquisition can ultimately be beneficial within an instructed language acquisition environment. Researching and identifying points of convergence and divergence between two cultures, as well as comparatively studying these cultures and deriving useful conclusions, may broaden horizons of understanding and ultimately improve learners’ ability to communicate with native speakers of their target language culture. It may also be a starting point for a process of deepening and re-adapting to native and foreign cultural environments.

Authentic texts are considered appropriate fields for such cultural investigation. Mishan (2005) describes them as 'treasure chests' embodying a cultural wealth handed over to students for them to explore and assimilate (Mishan, 2005, p. 46). Adequate exposure to the target culture through various channels and sources (television shows, literature, magazines, daily press, films, etc.) provides an excellent opportunity for students to recognise specific behaviours, habits, traditions, forms of interaction and other aspects of the target culture and therefore derive conclusions regarding underlying attitudes and values. Particularly in the case of refugees and immigrants who choose to learn the target language systematically, within an instructed learning environment, the use of authentic texts contributes to the understanding, verification and assimilation of every piece of linguistic and cultural information encountered outside of the class, under language immersion conditions. This information is otherwise dispersed and convoluted. Hence, authentic texts function as 'the keys for opening up the target language culture' (Maley, 1993, p. 3) and create a type of cultural framework for the language.

This assumption is closely linked to schema theory which ascribes a psycholinguistic interpretation to the way in which knowledge of the cultural framework affects the learning and understanding of the target language, especially instances that are perceived as 'linguistic misunderstandings' (Mishan, 2005, p. 47). The emphasis placed on the assimilation of the other culture as being conducive to language acquisition comprises a convincing pedagogical argument in favour of the use of authentic texts incorporating this culture.

To be specific, schemata are defined as '*cognitive networks that encapsulate our expectations regarding more or less standardised types of discourse*' (Edmonson, 1997, p. 51). Schemata are considered culturally 'coloured' and to a certain extent 'idiosyncratic' (Mishan, 2005, p. 47), since they constitute notions which are formed in the mind of an individual through native cultural experience acquired when integrating into their own

culture. Texts present several abstract concepts, such as codes of conduct or specific lexical items with references to administrative, political and social systems. Those that have lexical representations are obviously more accessible (Mishan, 2005, p. 47-48).

Within this scope, schemata are of vital significance for language progress. During the reception and processing of language input, students have already identified internal schemata, which are in line with the incoming information, or create new receptors to accommodate the new linguistic culture. In both cases, comprehension is achieved through an interactive and cyclical process carried out between the receptor and the language input. Subsequently, the lack of, silencing of, or any attempt to neutralise the cultural dimension of the language, has the potential to deter language process, as it does not create those conditions which are conducive to the development of schemata pertaining to the new linguistic culture. Many language misunderstandings which are hastily interpreted as 'deficiencies in language processing skills', are due to a failure in accessing the appropriate schemata (Carell & Eisterhold, 1983). Along these lines, comprehension continues to be a language skill, but is also perceived as a function pertaining to the knowledge of the specific cultural framework, that is the schemata in particular. Nunan's (1989) study is representative, according to which an appropriate cognitive framework has been proven to be a determining factor in a student's ability to understand school texts, even more than linguistic complexity.

This pedagogical argument which adduces the schemata theory in favour of authentic texts as reliable vectors of the target language cultural context, becomes even stronger in the case when L2 learning takes place outside its native geographic territory. In this case, authentic texts can function as substitutes for the cultural reality that is missing and enable students' access to the cultural core of the target language, in other words, the formulation of new schemata, which in fact, unleashes comprehension and is a first major step in language learning.

## 2.2. Currency

The next pedagogical argument is analysed within a different category of features which focuses on the notion of *currency*. This term has a broad meaning which encompasses the concepts of the current reality, synchrony, diachrony and topicality. This kind of currency with all its conceptual parameters, equally resides in both the linguistic and thematic content of authentic texts and endows them with a strong advantage over traditional learning resources. To begin with, authentic texts, when serving the teaching process, become the channels through which the language is conveyed; it is the real world of native speakers in the language class (Horwitz, 2008; Bell, 2005; Guariento & Morley, 2001). Authentic texts enter the lesson with the smell, taste and rough edges of life outside the walls of the school (Little et al., 1989) thus allowing students to perceive the target language as a vivid reality and to observe the various ways in which this language is realised and typically used (Tomlinson, 2003). Contrary to coursebook texts that ‘fossilise’ the language within the time frame of the book’s edition (Mishan, 2005, p. 56-57), authentic texts are constantly updated and topical (Case, 2012) and offer students direct access to conventional, colloquial language usage and brings them into contact with realistic and appropriate pragmatic models of discourse (Malyuga, 2020) which develop *pragmatolinguistic competence* (Gilmore, 2004, p. 367; Gilmore, 2007, p. 97). Authentic texts feature a ‘*comprehensive range of conversational and interpersonal speech*’, in other words, they ‘*place emphasis on language variation and choice, rather than conventions and formal rules*’ (Burns & Seidlhofer, 2002, p. 226). They can reflect the diachronic nature of language – particularly through literary texts – as well as represent target language on a synchronous axis, that is the spoken language *in flux*.

Learners’ interaction with this type of colloquial language input equips them linguistically in order to prepare them and make them competent for the real, social ‘interaction order’ (Goffman, 1983). This equipment is of crucial importance to students who live in the target language environment.

*‘Authentic texts enter the lesson with the smell, taste and rough edges of life outside the walls of the school thus allowing students to perceive the target language as a vivid reality and to observe the various ways in which this language is realised and typically used’*

Especially in the case of refugees and immigrants who have direct and vital needs for communication and social integration. They will be called to abandon the comfort zone of the school classroom and respond to real, socially situated communication needs where different skills are required (Berardo, 2006, p. 64). Language instruction is considered effective when it has prepared learners exactly for this moment. Pedagogic texts are not in a position to serve this goal because they have been compiled to accomplish specific learning objectives, and for the most part, ignore sociolinguistic references and pragmatic aspects, as well as violate the natural flow of speech. The nature of language and structures in non-authentic texts is rather ‘artificial and unvaried’, focusing merely on the language elements to be taught and not reflecting real language usages, so that it is unlikely to prepare students for what they will encounter in the real world within real communication circumstances (Berardo, 2006, p. 65-66). As a result, learners remain unaware of the criteria according to which specific word choice is accepted or rejected, based on the influence of current sociocultural and pragmatic factors. This deficiency ‘*can be a source of frustration and puzzlement as learners struggle with the subtleties of appropriacy of language registers*’ (Mishan, 2005, p. 58).

Added to that, non-authentic texts are unable to capture and relay all the transformations and changes in language, which is a living and constantly evolving entity. However, in order for a teacher to prepare students for experiences with the language, it is vital to keep them ‘*at the cutting edge of language change*’ (Mishan, 2005, p. 56) and only a multifarious and abundant authentic

*'The greater the relevance and the correspondence of the text to the interests and general profile of the learners, the stronger the motivation for learning, which is a crucial affective factor in language acquisition'*

text body can foster this objective. Authentic texts keep students aware of these changes, so that they are not surprised or disoriented later when encountering these changes, but rather recognise and attempt to reproduce them (Berardo, 2006).

Beyond the language, such currency is equally featured in the thematic content of authentic texts. According to recent research findings, the subjects of traditional coursebooks are restricted and display repetitive and monotonous normality. The emphasis lies on common thematic areas (weather, travel, food, work, environment, etc.) while more controversial issues seem to be side-lined or absent, as well as some taboo topics which may evoke more dynamic engagement and stimulation on behalf of the students (Thornbury, 1999, p. 15-16; Bell & Gower, 1998). On the other hand, by using authentic texts, the teacher has the opportunity to cover a wide range of topics with references to the current reality, current news, as well as topics that may stimulate debate among students. Furthermore, content currency is more compatible with authentic texts rather than with traditional coursebooks, in terms of being in line with the adulthood of students. This means that authentic texts present issues that have more adult content than those contained in textbooks in order to respond to the expectations and interests of adult learners.

Within a teaching environment, the pedagogic value of this intrinsic language and subject matter, currency of authentic texts arises from the relevance and interest such language input has for students. These concepts and their functions are interspersed and interdependent, to a certain extent, creating favourable conditions for personal engagement and stimulating motivation in students.

The greater the relevance and the correspondence of the text to the interests and general profile of the learners, the stronger the motivation for learning, which is a crucial affective factor in language acquisition. Therefore, the aforementioned points embody a strong argument in favour of the use of authentic texts in L2 teaching (Bacon & Finneman, 1990; Little et al., 1989; Swaffar, 1985; Peacock, 1997). The significant impact of learning motives in language learning is a point where all L2 acquisition theorists coincide and concur (Arnold & Brown, 1999, p. 13). Ellis (1994) agrees, underlining the beneficial impact that the engagement of learners' interest in classroom activities has on learner motivation, adding that part of this motivation is derived from the actual desire for communication (Ellis, 1994, p. 517). In this sense, authentic texts, when selected on the basis of relevance to and immediacy with the target audience, facilitate *'the natural curiosity and interest which energises the students' learning'* (Arnold & Brown, 1999, p. 14). There is a higher probability that authentic texts meet the expectations of students and serve needs (functional or non-functional) that are dictated by their learning incentives. In particular, in the case of refugees and immigrants with strong integration incentives, authentic texts, due to their intrinsic cultural currency, allow these students to acquire a higher level of fluency and confidence while interacting with the target culture (Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993, p. 39).

### 2.3. Challenge

The third pedagogical argument in favour of the use of authentic language input in L2 teaching stems from the inherent difficulty of authentic texts which entails a *challenge* for students and is therefore, an advantage rather than an obstacle to language learning. Sweet (1964) implies with discretion the positive influence of this challenge in raising motivation for learning. He casts doubts on intended simplicity or 'unnecessary triviality', emphasising the satisfaction that students gain upon retrieving language elements that may exceed their language competency (Sweet, 1964, p. 186). Subsequently, this challenge can foster language ac-



quisition significantly and therefore, any teaching practice that deprives students of accessing interesting language input in based on language proficiency level criteria is not valid.

Along the same lines, Krashen (2003) assigns major importance to the function of challenge which is accurately depicted in his famous schema of  $i + 1$ . This formula proposes that appropriate and still comprehensible language input ( $i$ ) is that which exceeds by ( $+1$ ) the student's current proficiency level. Besides, the comprehension degree of the language input is inextricably tied to learning incentives, which are largely affecting the learning process and are activated when the teaching material and teaching tasks '*pose a reasonable challenge to the students – neither too difficult nor too easy*' (Ellis, 1994, p. 516).

A considered student's interaction with authentic texts is a weighty challenge, a process which in itself promotes learner's confidence, thus reinforcing the sense of achievement. The student succeeds in managing and accessing – in terms of language and content – a flow of oral and written speech produced by native speakers and intended for them. This sense of the student overcoming linguistic obstacles and understanding demanding authentic language input significantly strengthens their motivation and encourages them to continue (Berardo, 2006; Leloup & Ponterio, 1997). Consecutively, a student with developed self-esteem is accurately equipped for the next step which is the *risk-taking*. Self-esteem is not a negligible factor and doesn't concern only childhood but continues to play a major role in lifelong learning (Arnold & Brown, 1999).

This means that this student is prepared to risk making mistakes, forming assumptions, drawing conclusions and making generalisations on the basis of context or prior knowledge and experience. This readiness to take on 'risky' initiatives comprises an emotional factor that is vital to learning, provided that the risk taken is balanced, or 'moderate, but intelligent' (Oxford, 1999, p. 63).

Exposure to authentic language input can create favourable conditions for such risk-taking initiatives in the sense that it can trigger a student-

centred learning process whereby the learner's autonomy towards actively discovering and exploring a new language and cultural universe is put in place. In other words, knowledge is not delivered in a ready-made form, but arises from a series of assumptions, associations, actions, correlations, repetitions and trials and is therefore more strongly assimilated by the student. Furthermore, this dynamic approach towards language acquisition enables students to make generalisations regarding grammar and vocabulary, as well as observe the different ways in which existing knowledge of language can be accessed in order to process and explain new linguistic information. Generalisation entails an important and beneficial learning strategy, through which the subject, by observing certain examples, may form a rule, an axiom or derive a conclusion (Brown, 2001). Hence, the skill of consciously controlling structures of the target language is developed (Little et al., 1994). Students learn to access and use language sensitively and consciously, thus reinforcing *language awareness* and minimising dependence on language rules, which may actually be inadequate since these rules simplify language application (Paltridge, 2001; Van Lier, 1995). More specifically, interaction with various types of authentic texts gradually enables students to apply deductive methods through which they can independently discover language structures, usages and relationships between language elements, without formerly teaching explicit grammar rules.

However, despite the benefits, at the lower levels of language learning, the inherent difficulties of authentic texts are judged on the basis of the problems they pose for students and not on whether they pose a challenge for them. The positive effect of challenge on emotional factors that are crucial for learning – such as motivation, confidence and self-esteem – are not sufficiently assessed. Therefore, there is a tendency to avoid exposing elementary levels to authentic input, due to language difficulties which prohibit reception and comprehension. This attitude inevitably precludes lower level students from accessing subject matter which meets their interests or needs and hence are more

likely to enable them to cope with demanding texts well above their estimated language competence. Lazar (1994) criticises this exclusion by arguing that *'despite their very limited proficiency in the language, students need the challenge and stimulation of addressing themes and topics that have adult appeal and which encourage them to draw on their personal opinions and experiences'* (Lazar, 1994, p. 116).

Besides, challenge is not only attributed to the authentic text input, but mainly to the task that mediates between the text and the student. This assumption introduces new arguments to the academic discussion regarding the need for pedagogic modification of authentic language input and is linked to the overall concern regarding task authenticity. Within this scope, authentic texts are made accessible to students, not by simplification of content, but by tailoring the tasks to the learner's language proficiency level (Latifi et al., 2013). More specifically, *'the difficulty of a reading exercise depends on the activity which is required of the students, rather than on the text itself, providing it remains within their general competence. In other words, one should grade exercises rather than texts'* (Grellet, 1981, p. 7-9). This means to vary the task rather than the text (Prabhu, 1987; Nunan, 1989; Willis, 1996). However, this task simplification should be based on the demand for task authenticity, which means that tasks should be appropriate to the text and to coincide with the text's primary communicative purpose, thus constituting a rehearsal or approximation of tasks performed by native speakers in real life.

Even for students of elementary level, there is a plethora of tasks appropriate and consistent with their language proficiency which are authentic in the sense that they *'emulate native-speaker interactions'* (Mishan, 2005, p. 62). What the teacher should take into consideration is that partial comprehension of a text is no longer considered to be necessarily problematic, since even native speakers typically operate with less than total comprehension (Willis, 1996; Guariento & Morley, 2001; Widdowson, 1990). Hence, detailed word-for-word decoding of a text is neither necessary

*'What the teacher should take into consideration is that partial comprehension of a text is no longer considered to be necessarily problematic, since even native speakers typically operate with less than total comprehension'*

nor beneficial. Emphasis should be rather placed on encouraging students to make the most of their partial comprehension.

### 3. DISCUSSION

It is therefore at the discretion of the teacher to design tasks of graded difficulty so that students can practise applying different strategies in accessing and processing texts, similar to those of native speakers and in accordance with the language input at hand. For example, simple but authentic tasks that are appropriate for authentic texts, such as newspaper or magazine articles are: reading headings, subheadings or lines so as to get the gist of the text, identifying key words, assessing existing knowledge regarding a particular news item in order to explain a concept, etc. (Grundy, 1993, p. 7). Such strategies are scanning and skimming, as well as intentionally ignoring confusing or irrelevant language information at first glance. In this way, students realise that comprehension is not a process of searching for the meaning of each word, but a process of developing strategies, with applications in both oral and written communication (Swaffar, 1999).

Furthermore, students – beginners included – do not enter the language class as *tabula rasa* and are not devoid of language. On the contrary, they have already assimilated knowledge and language experiences forming their own cognitive framework which could be exploited to facilitate target language acquisition. Especially authentic texts, as real-life products, depict universal types of discourse, structures, lexical forms and subjects which appear more recognisable and familiar to the students. This universality in language or con-

tent allows a higher degree of contextualisation and fosters prior knowledge activation facilitating comprehension. Knowledge of a subject presupposes a partial, at least, knowledge of the corresponding discourse type, therefore students who have this equipment are able to manage texts that exceed their language competence (Crandall, 1995, p. 87). Besides, the sources of authentic materials that can be used in the classroom are infinite, including a plethora of naturally graded texts which can cover the entire range of proficiency levels. This means that some songs, advertisements, poems, articles are from a language perspective inherently easier than others. Therefore, as Tomlinson (2003) points out, students of lower levels can be motivated and assisted in developing advanced skills and not restricted to specially modified material that focuses on decoding language and mere language practice.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Summing up, this article outlined the main arguments which advocate – from a pedagogical perspective – the incorporation of authentic language input in L2 teaching. Overall, the ways in which certain inherent characteristics of authentic texts promote language acquisition at any proficiency level were analysed. Initially, the ineradicable cultural connotations of authentic texts were

highlighted, as well as their impact on learners' process of acquiring awareness of the language system which forms this culture and of the society in which this system is implemented and used. It was explained how authentic texts, as carriers of this symbiotic relationship between language and culture, are more likely to smooth the reception and assimilation process of new and unfamiliar linguistic and cultural information, removing obstacles on the way to language acquisition. Furthermore, the conceptual nature of currency which pervades authentic texts was discussed at both language and content level. The pedagogical benefits of language and content topicality of learning material were interpreted on the basis of the interest and relevancy that such material has for students and its consequent positive effect on learners' motivation. Finally, the pedagogical argument of challenge arising from the a priori demanding nature of authentic input was presented, particularly its ability to act as a positive and motivating driving force even at elementary levels. Within this framework, the teaching strategy of varying the tasks depending on students' proficiency level and general profile was emphasised. This task modification needs to comply with the guidelines for task authenticity, as well as to provide a properly weighted degree of challenge for students of any language competency.

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# Review

## Intercultural politeness: Managing relations across cultures (a review)

Original work by Helen Spencer-Oatey and Daniel Z. Kadar published by Cambridge University Press 2021

Reviewed by Maurice Cassidy

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It goes without saying that globalisation has brought many more people from different countries together than ever before and put more and more into contact virtually via ICT such as the Internet and social media platforms. Intercultural theorists have identified a range of features that enable people to work together and one of them is how to build relationships. Intercultural theory differentiates between task-oriented and relationship-oriented cultures, and research indicates that the majority of the countries of the world are primarily relationship-oriented. In relationship-oriented countries it's important you build a relationship first, whereas in task-oriented countries you build the relationship through working successfully together. But the task comes first. I use the expression as a generalisation as individuals in task-oriented cultures might be relationship-oriented and vice versa. However, since the majority of the world is relationship- rather than task-oriented it is important to pay due attention not just to how

people behave but how they express their feelings and build relationships. In that process of building international relationships, politeness is extremely important and that is why this book is so timely and so valuable. It explores what intercultural politeness means, how it is expressed and how it can be used to help build relationships and resolve conflicts.

Helen Spencer-Oatey, Professor of Applied Linguistics at the University of Warwick UK, and Daniel Z. Kadar, Professor at the Dalian University of Foreign Languages in China, have joined forces to write an evaluative approach to how relationships are formed and, in the case of conflict, re-established, in different cultures around the world. In doing so they have made an important addition to the literature on improving relations across cultures.

The book is divided into four parts. Part 1 *Conceptual Foundations* provides the theoretical basis of the book. Part 2 explores *Evaluation of Polite-*

*'The book is intended for researchers into intercultural theory, pragmatics and conflict research but is also relevant for intercultural trainers and language teachers. Each chapter ends with a summary and some with questions for reflection and discussion in class'*

ness Across Cultures, evaluating the politeness norms and establishing a framework for analysing and evaluating politeness formulae. Part 3 entitled *Managing Politeness Across Cultures* looks at how to build good relations through politeness, how to maintain them and how to restore them when things go wrong. Part 4 draws a conclusion on the importance of politeness theory and its application to intercultural theory and practice.

The book is intended for researchers into intercultural theory, pragmatics and conflict research but is also relevant for intercultural trainers and language teachers. Each chapter ends with a summary and some with questions for reflection and discussion in class.

The first two chapters explore the theories behind politeness as a lingua-cultural discipline but broadening their investigation. Politeness is a relationship building practice among culturally identified groups, sometimes described as national, but this is misleading. It helps distinguish ingroups from outgroups. The cultural patterning, as the authors describe it, reflects linguistic behaviour within their values and attitudes and behavioural norms. The treatment is firmly theoretical but peppered with explanatory diagrammes and very useful critical incidents as illustration of the points made, reflecting the authors' wide international experience.

A lot of perceived impoliteness comes from misunderstandings between people from different cultural backgrounds with different ways of expressing themselves. The authors offer a four-step politeness evaluation process. Step 1, *Behaviour in Context*, recognises that any interaction between

people takes place in a context. Step 2 is *Normalcy and Triggering the Evaluation Process*. In other words, we know what we would normally expect and anything different triggers the evaluation process. Step 3 is *Evaluation of Behaviour and the Agent*. We encounter an exchange we are not familiar with, and quite possible perceive as 'impolite' and that leads to our forming an opinion of the other person in the exchange, and quite probably them of us. That leads to Step 4, *Evaluation Warrant*, which is an examination of why the person behaved in the way they did both linguistically and culturally and on what grounds it might have caused offence. Although described here at some length, the four-step evaluation process may happen in just a few seconds but is also useful for reflection and examination after the event.

On what grounds do we base our assumptions of politeness and impoliteness in exchanges? The authors identify three key cultural factors. First is our evaluative judgement that there has been a breach of norms and expectations that we are accustomed to. Secondly, our concerns and goals have not been observed or appreciated with a consequent feeling of loss of face. Thirdly, the other person or persons have not observed what we consider to be social rights and obligations. As the authors point out, such issues do not always cause agitation. Misunderstandings may be perceived as amusing or quaint. Nevertheless, they are capable of diminishing the value of the interaction so it is worth trying to get it right.

The authors go on to examine the impact of perceived impoliteness on what they describe as the individual's perception of morality. There is a tendency to assume that because I perceive someone to have done something impolite – they are impolite as a person. In fact, as the authors point out, it is important to separate the problem from the person. A person may have said or done something that you perceive of as impolite but it is not that they are impolite as a person. Do not confuse the problem with the person.

Up to now the authors have focused on the problem of inappropriate interaction which leads to feelings of impoliteness and creates moral

judgements of the character apparently guilty of impoliteness. The other person in the exchange may also consider us impolite. In Part 3 of the book the authors address these perceptions. First, they distinguish between pro-active politeness (initiated by you) and reactive politeness (your correct response to someone else's politeness), for example the exchanging of business cards in Japan, what you do and what you say. They identify three stages in the process, *perception* (of rudeness or inappropriacy), *response to that perception* and the *consequences of that response*, which might involve apologies, disagreement and conflict. Proactive politeness, the authors assert, has been extensively researched but reactive politeness much less so. How then can international agents, whoever they are and in whatever context, establish positive relationships with those they are dealing with?

First of all, it is important to recognise the importance of 'proactive management' to reinforce and improve international relationships. This means understanding the key principles of cultural interaction and politeness theory and applying

them proactively to achieve cooperation. The authors emphasise directness and indirectness as a key cultural feature in understanding the cultural perception of what might be perceived as appropriate and inappropriate in politeness rituals. They go on to stress the importance of rapport maintenance using mindfulness and emotional intelligence to recognise and compensate for those moments when politeness formulae might be perceived as inappropriate.

So, finally, how can people use etiquette and politeness as a way of cementing positive intercultural relations with those they deal with? First is adopting the cultural formulae of those they deal with. Second is being aware of the cultural assumptions of how they act and how others act or react. Third is using mindfulness and emotional intelligence to spot when an exchange may be inappropriate and taking immediate steps to rectify any misunderstanding. Ultimately, we are all capable of recognising and adapting to different cultural and linguistic expressions of politeness and adapting to them. This book theoretically and practically will aid progress in this direction.

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# Review

## The bilingual brain: And what it tells us about the science of language (a review)

Original work by Albert Costa published by Penguin Books 2021

Reviewed by Dominique Vouillemin

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Well over half the world is bilingual but little is known about it and how it works. In this short and highly readable study, Professor Albert Costa examines the impact of bilingualism on young people from infancy to old age and explains how bilingualism affects people's daily lives. Costa uses his experience in neuro-linguistic research in Barcelona, itself a bilingual city speaking Spanish and Catalan, as well as studies from all over the world to show the effects of bilingualism, including examples from Canada, France and South Korea. *The Bilingual Brain* has five chapters: *The Bilingual Cradle* about babies born and brought up in a bilingual environment; *Two Languages, One Brain*; *How Bilingualism Sculpts the Brain*; *Mental Gymnastics*, and, finally, *Making Decisions*. In doing so he cites research from all over the world, including his own laboratory in Barcelona, Spain. Costa explains various research experiments into bilingualism around the world and the *Further Reading* section at the end of the book directs the reader to further research sources.

The book is a valuable neuro-linguistic resource for linguists and researchers into bilingualism and also for language teachers. Written in a non-scientific and reader-friendly style, it offers insights into how our brains manage the challenges of picking up and using a second language and shows how bilinguals and users of a second language have considerable advantages over monolinguals, while not going as far as saying bilinguals are all-round smarter than monolinguals. Costa explores neurology and psychology to explain how two languages can exist in the same brain. He goes on to show how dual language ability gives the speaker certain behavioural advantages and can even delay the onset of dementia by up to four years. He also shows that bilinguals are often better at making considered decisions, less prone to instinctive reactions and better at managing conflict.

So, what do we learn? Some pretty astonishing things. In Chapter 1 Costa analyses experiments on babies and shows how they are able to differentiate change in speech sounds and what is said

within hours after birth. Research using dummies with electrical sensors show how babies recognise the rhythm of language and separate changes in sounds very quickly and even separate the sounds of different languages even though they cannot say them until much later.

One final comment in Chapter 1 took me by surprise. Costa's contention is that interaction between people using language (as in a classroom) is fundamental to successful language learning whereas learning from a disengaged source – self-study materials – is less successful. As someone who has spent much of his life developing materials for self-study, I found this conclusion somewhat disturbing. However, it does make the case for the importance of blended learning, where live interaction (for example via WhatsApp or Zoom in the absence of face-to-face contact) is combined with self-study materials delivered by radio, TV or online.

Chapter 2 begins by examining the impact of brain damage on bilinguals. Costa examines the impact of sports accidents resulting in brain injury and notes that in the recovery period those wounded might talk in their second language rather than their first but research suggests that brain damage or aphasia affects all brain organs equally, suggesting the areas of the brain involved in processing language are the same. However, research also suggests that the use of a second language uses more areas of the brain than using our mother tongue and that working in a second language involves a higher degree of second-language motor control. Readers may have noticed that children of bilingual parents (e.g. a French mother and an English father) who go on holiday in France experience a temporary slowing down in English when they return to their English school. Why? Because they have got used to using French and it takes a little longer to return fully to the use of English, although they speak both fluently. The ability to move between languages is known as 'code switching'. I've also noticed that if you have learned a language but have not used it for a long period of time the first thing to go is vocabulary. The words just don't seem to come to mind. How-

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ever, research indicates that you never completely forget a language you have learned and a comparative degree of fluency recurs after even a short stay in the country where they speak it. In terms of brain function the use of a language that has become unfamiliar is costlier in terms of time. So, the answer is regular practice in speaking, in interacting with speakers of the other language if you can and reading and following media (movies, documentaries and news broadcasts) in the second language. Costa's purpose is to describe rather than advise but he does stress the importance for linguistic brain development of reading in the first language, the second language or both with very young children.

Chapter 3 explores how bilingualism sculpts the brain. Interestingly, Costa states that a human being will have up to 35,000 mother tongue words stored in their brain, but use few and fewer as they advance in age. Research indicates that bilinguals have a 'brain library' of fewer words than monolinguals but more overall as they know both the words and the translated equivalent in their second language. However, as he goes on to say, bilingualism is only one small part of the develop-



ment of linguistic control in the brain. More significant is the difference between the neural process of learning new words (vocabulary) and learning how to combine them (syntax). Research done at University College London using neuro-imaging indicates that learning and use of a second language does not affect the brain representation of the first language but it does affect the effort required for processing, especially when speaking.

Chapter 4 deals with the ability of bilinguals and multilinguals to multitask and also whether brain deterioration in old age affects monolinguals or bilinguals first. Research done with children and also with young adults indicates that bilinguals are better at multi-tasking than monolinguals because bilingualism helps develop an attentional system which encourages flexibility and adaptation to new tasks. On brain deterioration, Costa describes two studies in Toronto and Hyderabad which indicated that bilinguals visiting doctors reported symptoms of old age cognitive reserve up to four years later than monolinguals in the same age group. So, is it possible that bilingualism not only makes you cleverer but can also prolong your life?

The final chapter starts with Nelson Mandela, Nobel peace prize winner and president of South Africa who spent 27 years in jail for opposing apartheid (South Africa's racial separatist policy). While in prison Mandela, a speaker of Xhosa and English, also learned Afrikaans, the language of the Boer colonists of South Africa. Why? As he said, 'If you talk to a man in a language he understands it goes to his head. If you talk to a man in his own language it goes to his heart'. The citation stresses the importance of the relationship between language and emotion.

Emotion is significant in learning a new language. I have known many people with bilingual parents who refused to learn their parent's mother tongue, partly, I suspect, because of some emotional disconnect. I think Costa would endorse parents encouraging children to learn the language they learned at home as well as the mother tongue of the country where the child is brought up if only because of its beneficial effects on brain development. Discussing bilinguals from an early age and also second language learners operating at a higher level, Costa concludes that second language speakers tend to approach issues from a less emotional bias and analyse issues more lucidly. They also find it easier to cultivate empathy.

In summary, Costa's findings emphasise the importance of learning and understanding a foreign language and the advantages it gives the learner in both their personal and working lives based on neurological linguistic research. He emphasises that further research is needed, particularly in the areas of emotion and empathy. It may also influence language policy in countries where languages are contested. He describes the research into bilingualism and monolingualism and how it influences and sculps the brain and presents research exercises that teachers can try in their classes. He also emphasises that much more research is needed in how language and bilingualism influences brain development and linguistic and attentional control. Above all, it makes the case for the importance of the teaching of languages in schools as a means of broadening the mind not just linguistically and culturally but also neurologically and intellectually. Highly recommended for all researchers and language teachers.

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# News & Events

## ICC News

by Barry Tomalin  
ICC Board Member

### Webinars for Language Teachers

ICC-Languages goes from strength to strength with a new series of webinars, publicity for its EU-ROLTA language teacher training programme and development in quality assurance, especially for new member organisations. ICC-Languages also celebrates and looks forward to another year of close cooperation with ECML (the European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe).

Following a series of successful webinars at the end of 2020 featuring Geoff Tranter's highly enjoyable *Smiles and More* examining the use of humour to help language teaching and learning, and Elizabeth Mickiewicz of the University of Coventry on COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) in language teaching, our first webinar of 2021 featured Kataryna Palcu of the VHS (Deutsche Volkshochschule) in Augsburg, Germany, on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) focusing on mediation.

Mediation is the latest buzzword in the teaching of languages but what exactly is it? Why should teachers teach it? How should they teach it? How can teachers promote mediation and plurilingual/pluricultural competence? The webinar focused on the changes to the 2001 published CEFR and explored the concept of mediation and its application in the language classroom. For more background information please visit <https://icc-languages.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/CEFR-Companion-Volume-with-new-descriptors-2018.docx.pdf>.

In March 2021, Geoff Tranter once again will inform and entertain us with *A Comedy of Errors* and Ian McMaster will talk about *Authenticity in Language and Leadership: What Is It and Do We Need It?* in our April webinar. For dates and abstracts of each talk please go to <https://icc-languages.eu/webinars>. ICC-Languages webinars are open to everyone, not just members, and to view our past webinars and future webinars as they are delivered simply go to <https://icc-languages.eu> and click on Webinars.

### ICC Quality Assurance

A key role of any educational organisation is to provide a guarantee of quality assurance for its member institutions. Again, partly as a result of the lockdown, ICC-Languages is updating its quality assurance criteria to ensure that its members can offer high level standards of education both for teacher training courses and language teaching. Expect more on this in our next ICC-Languages and EUROLTA news.

### ICC-Languages and ECML

Finally, a key feature of ICC-Languages is its close link with ECML based in Graz in Austria. Susanna Slivensky, Deputy Executive Director and Head of Programmes of ECML, was keynote speaker at our online international conference in 2019 and ICC-Languages promotes access to ECML research and publications. ECML publishes a quarterly newsletter entitled *The European Language Gazette*. The latest issue can be accessed at <https://www.ecml.at/news/newsletter/gazette54/tabid/4424/default.aspx>.

ICC-Languages looks forward to ever closer collaboration with ECML as the year progresses, particular in the area of studying and working in European language education.

# EUROLTA News

by *Myriam Fischer Callus*  
EUROLTA Coordinator

## EUROLTA Preparing for the Post-Pandemic Era

As well as running some of its courses online during the lockdown EUROLTA is embarking on a publicity campaign to raise its profile in Europe and beyond. As well as using social media platforms like Facebook and Google for marketing they are working through teacher associations and filming video interviews and sessions with EUROLTA trainees and language and cultural training experts to show how the programme works and how useful participants find it. As part of the campaign EUROLTA is redesigning its website. In doing so it expects to reach many more practising teachers who need to improve their skills and achieve EUROLTA language teaching certification. A brand new online EUROLTA course in English is now available. For more information, visit <https://icc-languages.eu/eurolta> or contact Ifigenia Georgiadou at [ifigenia.georgiadou@icc-languages.eu](mailto:ifigenia.georgiadou@icc-languages.eu).

# RUDN University News

by *Elena N. Malyuga*  
Editor-in-Chief TLC

## RUDN University Is One of the Top 200 Leading World Universities According to Times Higher Education Emerging Economies University Rankings 2021

RUDN University scores increased in 4 out of 5 groups of indicators. Headway is currently most prominent in the areas of Research and Internationalisation. Research indicators cover the number of publications per one academic staff member, income from research per one academician, and research reputation. Internationalisation

score is calculated based on the share of foreign faculty members and students, as well as publications authored in collaboration with foreign scholars. RUDN University has shown steady growth in these groups of indicators – over the span of one year, the results increased by 3.7 and 5.6 points, respectively.

## QS WUR by Subject 2021

QS WUR by Subject 2021 offers lists of the best universities in the world by subject. RUDN University showed rapid growth in the areas of Modern Languages (ranked 88), Linguistics (101-105), Mathematics (201-250), Economics and Econometrics (351-400) and Chemistry (501-550), and for the first time entered the list for Oil and Gas Business (101-150), Law (151-200), Business and Management (451-500), Computer Science (451-500). Industry Rankings: Arts & Humanities (ranked 245 compared to 345 in 2020); Social Sciences & Management (ranked 256 compared to 401-450 in 2020).

## Working Meeting with Representatives of the 'Resource Centres of Russian Education Abroad' Project in 2021

Meeting participants discussed the results of project implementation in 2020 and discussed the tasks for the upcoming year. Larisa Efremova, Vice-Rector for International Affairs at RUDN University, noted that in the current situation aggravated because of the Covid-19 pandemic, various adjustments needed to be put in place, including taking the studies online. Ekaterina Martina, Head of International Project Activities at RUDN University, presented the tasks for the resource centres to be addressed in the upcoming year. Because of the lockdown, the key task is to provide thoroughly managed online classes for students, as well as refresher courses for teachers. Other priorities include holding the Time to Study in Russia contest, consolidating the benefits for those entering Russian universities upon completing their courses at resource centres, promoting the centres abroad, developing a comprehensive brand identity, and improving social media presence.

### **Round Table Discussion on RUDN University's Contribution to the Training of International Specialists**

The event commemorating the 61st anniversary of RUDN University was held online in February and welcomed over 70 representatives of foreign embassies in Russia, the Federation Council, and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation.

Oleg Yastrebov, Rector of RUDN University: *'We have this good tradition to celebrate our anniversaries by looking at the outstanding achievements of RUDN University contributing to the ongoing development of its research potential and educational strength. The university passed the test of the pandemic with flying colours and managed to keep up the quality and pace of the educational services it set out to provide. In 2020, we didn't just retain, but actually managed to increase the rate of admission of foreign citizens with over 160 states sending their applicants to study at RUDN University.'*

Konstantin Kosachev, Chairman of the Federation Council Committee on International Affairs: *'Training of highly qualified staff for the world is of paramount importance today and is reaching a qualitatively new level. Russia is actively participating in the race for talented international applicants. The multidimensional strategy here includes a wide range of measures: from simplifying the visa regime to rebranding the country's universities. RUDN*

*University has managed to define its identity as a research-oriented global educational community. Highly qualified graduates of RUDN University are in great demand on the international labour market and are widely recognised in the academic community. Ongoing communication and joint teamwork involving students and alumni from other countries turned the university into a unique centre that unites the ever so valuable expertise of people of different cultural backgrounds.'*

Petr Kucherenko, Deputy Minister of Science and Higher Education of Russia: *'RUDN University is not just a leading university in Russia, but also a place of power. Its spirit remains unchanged – it rests in the diversity of languages, clothing styles and even ethnic national cuisines. Over the past years, the university has trained over 200 thousand specialists for more than 170 states, strengthening and developing the regions of Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe, Latin America and the CIS countries. Many outstanding alumni have become heads of ministries, governments and states.'*

Another focus of attention was RUDN University's volunteer movement. From the start of the epidemic, the university's volunteers have joined the all-Russian campaign #WeAreTogether. Over 500 medical students worked in Moscow hospitals. In total, well over 1000 students have helped treat Coronavirus patients. Volunteers represented African countries (40%), the CIS (30%), Latin America (20%), and European states (10%).

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