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**Current Challenges in Language Teaching and
Learning: Perspectives, Practices and Provisions**

Edited by Dr Ekaterina Protassova

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COMPUTER DESIGN

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FOUNDERS

Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University)
6 Miklukho-Maklay Str., 117198 Moscow, Russian Federation <http://eng.rudn.ru/>
International Certificate Conference – The International Language Association (ICC)
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PUBLISHER

Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University), Moscow, Russian Federation
6 Miklukho-Maklay Str., 117198 Moscow, Russian Federation

CORPORATE CONTRIBUTORS

Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University), Moscow, Russian Federation
International Certificate Conference – The International Language Association (ICC), Bochum, Germany

EDITORIAL BOARD ADDRESS

6 Miklukho-Maklay Str., 117198 Moscow, Russian Federation

EDITORIAL BOARD POSTAL ADDRESS

6 Miklukho-Maklay Str., Office 97, 117198 Moscow, Russian Federation

PHONE

+7 (925) 585-67-46

EMAIL

info@tlcjournal.org

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About our contributors

Ekaterina Protassova

Holds a PhD in Philology and is Dr. Hab. in Pedagogy. Adjunct Professor at the Department of Languages, University of Helsinki, Finland, with over 400 scholarly publications. Headed and participated in various international and national projects investigating language pedagogies, child and adult bilingualism, and the role of language and culture in immigrant integration, as well as linguistic minorities. Her service to the profession includes editorial work for various journals and publishers and organisation of seminars and conference panels.

Mojca Kompara Lukančič

Associate Professor/Assistant Professor at the University of Maribor Slovenia. Teaches English and Italian. Translator for the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Slovenia. Actively involved in project work and publishing. Since 2015 has been project leader of 3 national and 3 international projects. Author of 7 monographs. Research interests cover abbreviations, lexicography, language teaching, translation and bilingualism.

Nikolaos Katsaounis

Professor, DSc, Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics at the Department of German Language and Literature, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece). Research interests centre on text linguistics, semantics, language acquisition, cognition and language learning, German as a second/foreign language and languages for specific purposes.

Ulrich Steinmüller

Professor, DSc, temporary head of German as a Foreign Language at the Institute for Language and Communication, University of Technology, Berlin, and Honorary Professor of Tongji University in Shanghai (China). Has served as a member in several governmental and regional advisory bodies for

the improvement of teacher training, in-service training, curriculum development and intercultural and multilingual education. Research interests include language acquisition, German as a second/foreign language, teaching methodology, and the instruction and interdisciplinary research of languages for specific purposes.

Alex Krouglov

DSc in Translation, Interpreting and Sociolinguistics. Worked as a translator, interpreter, editor, lecturer, assessor, advisor, project coordinator and consultant in the UK, Ukraine, New Zealand, USA and many other countries. Joined London Metropolitan University in 2007 and University College London in 2017. Worked at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office looking after the training of British diplomatic staff, interpreters and translators for almost 10 years. Has led a number of international projects in the fields of Higher Education: Tempus, Erasmus+, European Commission, United Nations. Author of over 100 publications.

Alexandra G. Anisimova

DSc in Linguistics, Professor at the Department of English Linguistics, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Russia. In 1994 defended her thesis on the *Typology of English-language terms of art history*. In 2010 defended her doctoral dissertation on *Methodology for translating English terms in the humanities and socio-political sciences*. Member of LATEUM – Association of English Teachers. Took part in projects under the auspices of the Council of Europe as a simultaneous interpreter. Research interests include lexical semantics and pragmatics, terminology, theory and practice of translation, simultaneous translation.

Anastasiya E. Fedotova

PhD in Linguistics since 2020, teaching English at the Department of Foreign Languages, Law Faculty, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Russia. Translator at the State Tretyakov Gallery. Research interests include legal discourse and terminology, simultaneous interpreting, terminologies of social sciences.

Inna N. Fomina

PhD in Linguistics since 2006, teaching English at the Department of English Linguistics, Philological Faculty, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Russia. Research interests include terminologies of the humanities, political discourse, professional communication, simultaneous interpreting.

Alla G. Sokolova

PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Foreign Language and Professional Communication, National Research Moscow State University of Civil Engineering, Russia.

Tatiana A. Bystrova

PhD, Associate Professor, European Languages Department, Institute of Linguistics, Russian State University for the Humanities, Russia.

Sanja Vičević Ivanović

Primary Years Programme Coordinator at Greenfield International School in Dubai (UAE). Holds a PhD in Language Teaching and an MA in Italian and German as Foreign Languages. Before moving to Dubai, she owned a language school focused on promoting early foreign language learning. Research interests centre around early language learning, learner autonomy, learning strategies as well as peer and self-assessment.

Nataša Košuta

Assistant Professor at the Department of German Language and Literature, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Rijeka (Croatia). Holds a PhD in Language Teaching. Teaches language teaching methodology courses such as

Teaching Young Language Learners. Current research projects focus on the contrastive analysis of collocations and on early language learning.

Jakob Patekar

General Education Chair at RIT Croatia. Holds a PhD in Language Teaching. Teaches Introduction to English Language Teaching at the University of Rijeka (Croatia). From 2015 to 2019 was involved in developing the new curriculum of English for elementary and high schools. Research interests include early language learning, language assessment, language policy, collocations, and punctuation.

Michael Carrier

CEO of Highdale Consulting, and expert in language and digital communication. Consults for a number of educational organisations. Has worked in language education for 30 years as a teacher, trainer, author, and director. Lectures worldwide. Formerly Director, English Language Innovation at the British Council in London, CEO of International House world schools network and Executive Director of Eurocentres USA. Has run language training projects in Francophone Africa.

Peter McGee

Dr in Linguistics, applied linguist, teaching at the University of London, UK. Has been involved in language teaching and learning for over 40 years in Italy, Japan, Spain, France, Norway, Russia and the UK. Has conducted many teacher training workshops, especially in Spain and England and has taught for British Council overseas teaching centres.

Introduction to Issue 5(3)

by Guest Editor Dr Ekaterina Protassova

Welcome to Issue 5(3) of Training, Language and Culture.

Language training is a complex process that can be seen through the lens of both the teacher and the student. This includes practicality, comfort, perceived progress, and participant well-being. The most important aspect of it, however, is the content, its adaptation to the aims, and the desired outcomes. The current issue focuses on diverse conditions of language teaching and learning that reflect the leading edge of educational thought in order to promote multilingualism and introduce languages other than English. The pandemic-coloured instruction stimulated a blossom of innovations in teaching methods that would be adaptable to the new conditions of interactions between people, both online and offline. The need to reflect upon the accumulated encounters has spread all over the world and unites people as never before. As subjects of e-teaching and e-learning, living through mass migration, dealing with diverse auditoriums, and adapting to teaching students with special needs who are not always able to be 100 percent online, educators and the educated are experimenting with various approaches and techniques that will better than ever assure high-quality performance in all-sided second language competences.

The major goal of the article by Mojca Kompara Lukančič entitled *Language learning with physical activity: The case of learning Italian in tourism* is to demonstrate that movement increases understanding and memorisation, and she shows it through the experiment, language testing, and questionnaire. Fighting against sedentarism before the screen, especially during online training, the beginner learners of Italian at the faculty of tourism in Maribor, Slovenia, rehearsed 28 regular and irregular verbs while using squats. Bodily activities,

Total Physical response, gestures etc. have been part of language learning for a long time. The author examines the literature on Language for Special Purposes and selects touristic lexis that will be useful for future guides and managers in the field. Despite the fact that the tourism business was a developing economy before to the Covid-19 epepee and suffered the most in 2020-2021, there is hope that more languages will be needed in this area in the future.

Effective techniques take into account both the learner profile and the circumstances in which students acquire a language as a tool in their employment, training, or education. *Languages for specific purposes in medicine and healthcare in times of the Covid-19 pandemic: Reflections on usage-based teaching* is an important topic for Nikolaos Katsaounis and Ulrich Steinmüller. They consider opportunities to teach languages to skilled migrant professionals, which necessitates distinct analyses of language demands and the subsequent transformation of the findings into competence-based acquisition of relevant linguistic and communicative skills. Fortunately, the language used in German between physician and patient is well described. For the foreign language learners, the highly demanding and responsible understanding and producing texts in the medical and nursing fields is based on working with corpora (data-driven approach), peer learning (dual teaching model), and decision-making (using mediation).

Alex Krouglov in his article *Emergency remote teaching and learning in simultaneous interpreting: Capturing experiences of teachers and students* recuperates the moment of turning to massive online teaching that happened in the first half of 2020. He concentrates on the move to emergency remote conference simultaneous interpreting, both synchronous and asynchronous. This qualitative study involved seven universities in Australia, Belgium, Spain and the UK (some quantitative results are presented as well). Using grounded theory, the researcher gathered a valuable spectrum of thoughts and remarks that can be useful to anybody interested in online workshops and webinars, platforms for specialised tasks in remote

simultaneous interpretation classes and mock conferences, as well as self-study and self-control. In this study, the attitudes of the teachers round out the students' point of view. I think that overcoming technical issues and taking into consideration different time zones will continue to be a significant difficulty in this field. If trainers wish to comprehend the complexity of remote interpretation, they must conduct a more thorough analysis of its dynamics in many surroundings, including gestures, kinesthetics, and gaze, all of which play an important role in the co-construction of the communicative event.

The next article *Teaching simultaneous interpreting: The early stage* by Alexandra G. Anisimova, Anastasiya E. Fedotova and Inna N. Fomina proposes an approach for beginners to overcome some of the most typical issues encountered during the initial stage of a simultaneous interpreting course. Furthermore, this technique entails both the development of new skills and the activation of specific cognitive mechanisms that allow learners to do the allotted exercises and to hone their skills. A frequently asked question is if there is a special ability for simultaneous interpreting or whether anyone can be trained to do so. The authors respond to this question practically by allowing students to go through a hierarchy of concrete tasks that help them develop their short-term memory, their listening comprehension, to do semantic analysis of a sentence, which helps to develop a deeper understanding. They practice retelling, dealing with texts, and comprehending vocabulary, collocations, and cultural peculiarities of the supplied domains.

As previous research has showed, the strongest predictors of L2 gains are cultural sensitivity and social network, while other indicators include personality, intercultural sensitivity, amount of second language use, gender, and age. Alla G. Sokolova and Tatiana A. Bystrova in their paper *Mixed method in language teaching: Concepts and model's evaluation* contemplate direct and indirect cross-cultural contact, motivated behaviour and language attitude as the most significant factors of foreign students' wellbeing while studying in Rus-

sia. Students not only had a high motivation to learn a language, but they also exhibited self-efficacy beliefs, which means they were confident in their capacity to acquire proficiency level of language for their professional studies. Their field was engineering, and they hoped that studies completed abroad would assist them in finding a better job in their native country. The authors encourage contact opportunities that would reduce inter-group anxiety among them and help to avoid an overt clash of cultures. The study used both qualitative and quantitative methods, which is an appropriate way to handle such social situations. Negative experience could be eliminated if students were aware of some intercultural communication peculiarities before they enter Russia whereas the welcoming institutions could provide the respective support for them.

Sanja Vičević Ivanović, Nataša Košuta and Jakob Patekar turn to a wonderful subject of emerging awareness in the L2 acquisition with Croatian children aged 5 to 7 who were exposed to German, French, or Italian as their second languages. *A look into young learners' language learning strategies: A Croatian example* enables the reader to understand the process of dealing with foreign language content via the eyes of small learners presented through the impressions of a toy animal. The authors compare what theories suggest mainly about adult language learning processes and apply the results to young children. Memory, casual, formal, analysing, social, and metacognitive methods are all included in the list. It is incredible how many strategies the young students were actually able to recall, deliver and accompany with examples, e.g. many named listening to the interlocutor, model repetition, and autonomous repetition. Although they were building upon their own trajectory of L1 acquisition and transferred it to L2 acquisition, they also generalised some ways and methods of L2 teaching. This is a considerable tribute to the general theory of early second language instruction.

Both book reviews continue the theme of this issue: teaching and learning multiple languages occurs in a variety of contexts, with varying goals

and motivations; nonetheless, any instructor may learn a great deal from the others. With the first review, we immerse into the Sub-Saharan Africa and continue to make acquaintance with indigenous languages entering online communication and digital technologies, with translanguaging in the social media inside and outside the continent. With the second one, we come across problems encountered by intercultural trainers, language teachers for special purposes, and foreign managers who deal with cultural diversity. Those who have accumulated a more significant social capital and deploy better multicultural skills have also a greater empathy and a higher well-being.

Unsuccessful second language learners frequently claim that the teaching strategies were not customised to their individual requirements, moods, and capacities. Successful learners, on the other hand, frequently state that they were able to plan their language learning on their own. The question is if teachers are normally capable of being ideal in recommending strategies to progress and tools to make results visible and compelling to

all. Teachers' creativity and provisions play a crucial role in learners' satisfaction. Today, there are numerous adaptable techniques to learning a number of languages, and many of them allow you to automate processes, which makes live communication especially helpful, especially if we take into account intercultural communication framework. The restructuring of the educational material and its presentation at a higher level implies that the approach is being improved further. The new online reality breaks some old norms and creates other. The continued proliferation of perspectives, methods, and provisions in current language teaching and resolving learning problems is sometimes difficult to follow and to resume, and such special issues help to stay tuned.

As is customary, the issue also comes with recent news from ICC, EUROLTA and RUDN University.

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Original Research

Language learning with physical activity: The case of learning Italian in tourism

by Mojca Kompara Lukančič

Mojca Kompara Lukančič University of Maribor, Slovenia mojca.kompara@um.si

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The aim of the paper is to present how movement improves language learning in the case of rehearsing regular and irregular Italian verbs. In the paper we address the importance of language learning in the frame of Language for Special Purposes (LSP), providing an overview of it and continuing to the frame of Language for Tourism (Lft) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in relation to movement and physical activity where examples of good practice are presented. As seen from the examples of good practice, the introduction of movement into the school curricula in connection to language learning stops too soon in elementary school and does not continue onwards. The survey is composed of an experiment where students from the University of Maribor rehearse regular and irregular Italian verbs performing a physical activity and a control group of students rehearsing the verbs without the introduction of physical activity, language testing and a questionnaire. The main objective of the paper is to show through the experiment, the language testing and the questionnaire that movement improves understanding and memorising Italian verbs and, consequently, language learning. As it is seen from the results of the language testing, we can conclude that the experimental groups achieved better results in conjugating the verbs, both regular and irregular, and were also more successful in providing correct forms of the regular and irregular verbs compared to the control group. From the questionnaire it is visible that movement improves language learning and memorising verbs. The respondents answered that movement improved topic focus (97%) and should be introduced also in subjects other than languages (57%).

KEYWORDS: LSP, CLIL, tourism, Italian, movement, language learning



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1. INTRODUCTION

In view of the goal of the EU language policy in promoting language acquisition and multilingualism (Farr & Song, 2011; Romaine, 2013; Standley, 2015; Schenk & Schmidt, 2018; Kompara Lukančič

& Fabijanić, 2020) the knowledge of two or more languages in addition to one's mother tongue is seen as an asset for language learners (Dmitrenko, 2017; Jaekel et al., 2017; Festman, 2020). In the paper we focus on the importance of language

learning in the frame of Language for Special Purposes (LSP) and Language for Tourism (LFT) and present language learning in relation to movement and physical activity. We present examples of good practice in introducing movement in language learning and how movement is incorporated in the school curriculum. In the survey students from the Faculty of Tourism and Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor, took part in the experiment where they rehearsed regular and irregular Italian verbs, performing a physical activity for four weeks and completing a language test and questionnaire on how movement improves learning Italian verbs. In the analysis the teacher's observations are also presented.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

2.1. The survey

The present research idea was developed in 2020, during the Covid-19 lockdown, when university classes were transferred from a live situation to online, and teachers as well as students were exposed even more to sedentarism, which according to the latest research has a negative impact on health (Chandrasekaran & Ganesan, 2020; Narici et al., 2021). For the purpose of the present paper, we conducted a survey on learning the Italian language in tourism with the aid of physical movement at the Faculty of Tourism, University of Maribor. Within the survey we wanted to expand the concept of language acquisition with physical education to young adults and show the benefits of such an approach in terms of language learning with movement as observed by the teacher's analysis. As the research is oriented towards the promotion of language knowledge as core research point, the physical, psychical and motivational research concepts of the introduction of physical education in language learning are not measured. With the survey we wanted to show that the introduction of physical education into language learning brings better results in the language acquisition process, compared to language acquisition in a sedentary position as observed by the teacher's analysis. The survey is composed of an experiment where students rehearsed regular and irregular

'With the survey we wanted to show that the introduction of physical education into language learning brings better results in the language acquisition process, compared to language acquisition in a sedentary position as observed by the teacher's analysis'

verbs whilst performing a physical activity, where a type of exercise students have been familiar with since their first school years, namely squats, was used. Squats are beneficial for a variety of purposes (Contreras et al., 2017; Park et al., 2015) and are a form of physical activity familiar to students since childhood. In the survey the central point of research was not on the benefits of physical activity, but on the benefits that physical activity brings to language acquisition.

The undergraduate and postgraduate students of the Faculty of Tourism, University of Maribor, who participated in the survey, were complete beginners and started learning Italian as a foreign language in year two of postgraduate studies and year three of undergraduate studies, both for one semester, in total 60 hours in one semester per study programme.

For the survey, a group of students from the Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor, also participated, namely undergraduate students, predominantly studying languages, but also history, sociology, etc., who had the Italian language as an elective course for 30 hours.

The experiment was followed by a language test which the students completed after learning verbs with movement and the teacher's analysis of the students' results. At the end of the survey the students were asked to complete a questionnaire which gives an insight into their attitude towards language acquisition with movement.

2.2. Participants

In the survey, the following groups participated: 3 groups of students as part of the experiment and 1 group as control group.

As part of the experiment:

- one group of third year students (VS) from the Faculty of Tourism, University of Maribor (approximately 23 students);

- one group of second year masters students (MAG) from the Faculty of Tourism, University of Maribor (approximately 16 students);

- one group of second/third year students (LEKT) from the Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor (approximately 21 students).

As part of the control group:

- one group of third year students (UN) from the Faculty of Tourism, University of Maribor (approximately 17 students).

Approximately 60 students participated in the experiment and learned the regular and irregular verbs in the Present Simple for the duration of 4 consecutive weeks with the introduction of movement, where the students were performing squats for every single verb form, and 17 students representing the control group that learned the regular and irregular verbs in Present Simple in an ordinary sedentary way, without the introduction of movement. All four groups learned in total 28 regular and irregular verbs with six different verb endings. In total, 168 verbs were studied with movements or in a sedentary position. Within the experiment the students practised for 4 weeks, both during classes with the aid of the language teacher and as a homework activity. At the end of the experiment the students were asked to complete the testing exercises, aiming at verifying the acquired language knowledge and a questionnaire aiming at obtaining the students' feedback. The results are presented in the following sections.

2.3. The experiment

Italian is a language with an extremely rich variety of verbal morphology (Murakami, 2013). The Italian verbal stem is bimorphemic, as it consists of a verbal root followed by a vowel that is distinctive for each of the three main conjugations (Pizzuto & Caselli, 1994). All conjugations comprise regular and irregular verbs. There are three regular conjugations (Murakami, 2013), namely the 1st conjugation in *-are*, i.e. *parlare* (to talk), the 2nd conju-

gation in *-ere*, i.e. *credere* (to believe), and the 3rd conjugation in *-ire*, i.e. *dormire* (to sleep). The 3rd conjugation type has also the possibility of an infixed *-isc*, i.e. *finire* – *finisco* (to finish). In Italian there are basically six different verb endings for so many person/number agreement combinations, both for regular and irregular verbs. Within the course syllabus the students who participated in the experiment learn basic tourism vocabulary and grammar. Two course books (Kompara Lukančič, 2019, 2020) were prepared and implemented in the course curricula, for the purpose of language learning of LSP for tourism. Both books cover from CEFR A1 up until B1 level of language knowledge and are focused on the specific LSP field of tourism. Within one semester (60 hours) the students learn the basic grammatical points and the three basic Italian verb tenses, namely Present Simple, Past Simple, and Future Simple. Within the course syllabus the main focus is on the usage of Present Simple and Future Simple, while Past Simple is observed in a more marginal way. Within the acquired knowledge of Present Simple, the students learn the regular verbs terminating in *-are*, *-ere*, *-ire* and the irregular verbs, i.e. *bere*. Once the structure of the regular verbs is acquired, the students are able to conjugate any regular verbs following the respective endings for *-are*, *-ere* and *-ire*. The irregular verbs, which also include the modal verbs, have to be memorised. The students had to learn 21 irregular verbs, including the modal verbs. The verbs learnt were oriented towards the tourism sector, i.e. *bere* (to drink), *mangiare* (to eat), etc.

The experiment, where the three groups of students were involved in language acquisition with the aid of movement, started at the end of November 2020 and lasted for four consecutive weeks, up until mid-December 2020. Within the experiment the three groups rehearsed regular and irregular Italian verbs in Present Simple with the introduction of movement. Within the experiment the students were learning with movement which has beneficial functions proven by authors in the field of kinesthetics (Werner & Burton, 1979; Lengel & Kuczala, 2010; Streat, 2011; Nafisi,

2013). The central focus of the research is on language acquisition. For that purpose, we decided to incorporate simple exercises that students have been familiar with since their childhood. In this perspective we decided to incorporate squats in the rehearsal process. Within the experiment the students of the three groups rehearsed in class with movement (squats) 3 regular verbs (*amare, vedere, dormire*), 1 verb of their choice from the *-ire* category (*capire, finire, pulire, unire*), 4 modal verbs (*volere, potere, dovere, sapere*), and 17 irregular verbs (*essere, avere, andare, dare, dire, fare, venire, baciare, mangiare, pagare, cercare, bere, stare, rimanere, tenere, scegliere, uscire*). In total they rehearsed 25 verbs, with six different verb endings, that is 150 verb forms and the same number of squats in the presence of the teacher. At home they rehearsed 3 more verbs from the *-ire* category. In total they rehearsed 28 verbs and consecutively 168 verb forms with the aid of movement but without the presence of the teacher. The three groups rehearsed with the teacher, who did the squats with them and motivated them during the rehearsal. At the same time the control group rehearsed all the above-mentioned verbs without the introduction of movement.

3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

3.1. Language learning in the frame of LSP

As argued by Gunnarsson (1997), the history of Language for Special Purposes (LSP) proves early theoretical interests in specific sublanguages, existing within the general language system, for the purpose of professional needs. Gunnarsson (1997) argues that the LSP tradition developed predominantly within foreign languages departments and was focused on the analysis of the language system, i.e. problems related to translation and standardisation of terminology, etc. At present this connection between the study of foreign languages and professional communication still exists, as the earlier interest in language differences developed an interest in language-in-context issues (Vasileva & Ivanova, 2021). Gunnarsson (1997) adds that the use of LSP is of ancient origin, manifesting from the need to shape the language in order to

suit different types of activities. When presenting LSP in an academic field, the field has a much shorter history and the oldest branch is oriented towards the study of terminology. The very first beginnings of LSP date back to the 1930s when German engineers elaborated lists of terms used within different fields. Thanks to the theoretical work of Wüster (1970) in the 1930s, the foundation for international collaboration to standardise terminology was developed. An increase in LSP studies dates back to the 1960s with some prominent publications, including Mellinkoff's (1963) *The Language of the Law* and Barber's (1962) *Some Measurable Characteristics of Modern Scientific Prose*.

The LSP field appeared in a more organised form in the 1970s, when various activities were in progress, i.e. the first European symposium on LSP in 1977, the LSP journal *Fachsprache* launched in 1979 and the journal *English for Specific Purposes* in 1981. According to Gunnarsson (1997), the traditional LSP research could be described as language-based and product-oriented. Classifying and describing different types of languages for specific purposes is divided into 2 parallel schools, namely the Germanic European LSP tradition, and the Anglo-American tradition. The core field of LSP could be divided into language-oriented subfields, i.e. ESP (English for Specific Purposes). The field of ESP developed in the US and in Britain in English language departments and focused strongly on literature and the text-based analysis of different genres (Gunnarsson, 1997).

With the beginning of the development of LSP in the 1960s, its main communicative approach focused on the communicative function of language and discourse features (Udina, 2014). English for Specific Purposes (ESP) plays a leading role in the international movement of LSP, and is subdivided into two main subcategories, namely English for Occupational Purposes and English for Academic Purposes, and further into Vocational ESL, Professional English, English for Science and Technology and English for Academic Purposes (Johns & Dudley-Evans, 1991; Udina, 2014). At the current stage of its development, ESP is considered interdisciplinary, but it went through several stages

of development from the level of sentence to the use of psycholinguistics and cognitive sciences. ESP is oriented towards traditional terminology and genres, but also sociolinguistics, sociology, psychology, cognitive sciences and the cultural aspects of communication (Udina, 2014; Yelenevskaya & Protassova, 2021). Within LSP and ESP the changing role of the teacher and the student in the learning process is reflected. ESP focuses on the learning process and emphasises a variety of different types of methods shifting the role of the teacher from information transfer to facilitating student learning (Blumberg, 2017; Udina, 2014). In LSP teaching different approaches are required, from general language teaching to the process of learning and understanding the cultural concept and conventions of specialised discourse communities (Gandin, 2016). In the present paper we are focused on the language of tourism as a specific type of LSP which is made up of varied stylistic, pragmatic and lexical features and influenced by different registers and specialised languages (Gandin, 2016).

3.2. Language of tourism in the frame of LSP

Prominent linguists (Bowker & Pearson, 2002; Gandin, 2016) argue that LSP is a language used to discuss any type of specialist field having specific lexical, syntactic, morphological, stylistic and pragmatic characteristics used in a specialised communicative context. The language of tourism in the frame of LSP is defined by specialised stylistic, pragmatic and lexical characteristics linked and influenced by different registers and specialised languages (Dann, 1996; Dann & Liebman Parrinello, 2009; Francesconi, 2007; Nigro, 2006; Gandin, 2016). Nigro (2006) argues that the language of tourism has been widely studied from the perspective of fields such as sociology or economics but only recently from a linguistic perspective. On the one hand, the language of tourism appears as a general, common and very broad language addressing a wide audience that does not require specific knowledge. On the other hand, the language of tourism represents a special type of communication, different from other types of

discourse and addressing one of the largest industries, namely the tourism industry (Dann, 1996). Nigro (2006) argues that tourism does not have a single linguistic domain, but represents a combination of different fields, i.e. arts, history, geography, archaeology, economy, gastronomy, etc. Within LSP a new branch was developed recently (Ruiz-Garrido & Saorín-Iborra, 2012), namely Language for Tourism (LfT) which recognises English as the global lingua franca of tourism, but highlights multilingualism and interculturality, as the tourism business occurs in a globalised marketplace where there is a growing demand for languages other than English, i.e. Chinese or Spanish (Ruiz-Garrido & Saorín-Iborra, 2012; Bosch & Schlak, 2013). In view of promoting multilingualism and introducing languages other than English in the present paper we will focus on the acquisition of the Italian language in tourism with the aid of movement. In the experiment the focus will be on learning and rehearsing verbs related to tourism, namely *dormire*, *mangiare*, *pagare*, *bere*, *stare*, *rimanere*, *scegliere*, *uscire* etc., and the attitude of students towards language acquisition with movement.

3.3. An overview of the contemporary approach to language learning with the aid of physical activity

In their extensive overview Toumpaniari et al. (2015) argue that since ancient times, physical activity has been linked with a healthy mind, and as such has been a vital part of education. Even in Roman times, the importance of a healthy body was linked to a healthy mind (*Mens sana in corpore sano*). In today's scientific frame it has been proved that a little exercise before a course or a job enhances memory and helps us to perform better (Strong et al., 2005). Numerous studies have shown the positive impact of exercise on cognitive functioning in children, adults and the older population too (Sibley & Etnier, 2003; Tomporowski et al., 2008; Fedewa & Ahn, 2011). According to recent research findings, learning is a cognitive process linked to the interactions of the body with the world (Wilson, 2002; Pouw et al., 2014a;

Pouw et al., 2014b). The positive effects of embodied learning, the interaction of the human body with the physical environment (Wilson, 2002) is found in many research areas, from cognitive psychology, social psychology, linguistics, gesture, to mathematics (Lindgren & Johnson-Glenberg, 2013). Hostetter and Alibali (2008) argue that body movements, i.e. gestures, facilitate the retrieval of mental lexical items and gesturing has a crucial impact on a range of educationally relevant cognitive functions (Goldin Meadow et al., 2001; Hostetter, 2011). Sibley and Etnier (2003) argue that there is a positive relationship between physical activity and cognitive function in school-aged children. Hillman et al. (2005) in their studies discovered that aerobic fitness is positively related to the neuroelectric function of attention, working memory, and response speed in preadolescent children who were engaged in a stimulus discrimination task. Content and language integrated learning (CLIL), namely the usage of L2 in teaching non-language subjects, has recently been a topical issue in European education (Dalton-Puffer, 2008), also in connection with physical education (PE) (Coral, 2013; Fazio et al., 2015; Salvador-García & Chiva-Bartoll, 2017; Salvador-García et al., 2019).

3.4. Examples of good practice in introducing movement in language learning

Despite the fact that Salvador-García et al. (2019) see physical education (PE) as a subject chosen for applying multilingual initiatives based on Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), at the same time they argue that PE as a subject tends to lose its essence if language learning is too emphasised and could lead to a reduced Moderate-Vigorous Physical Activity (MVPA), which is directly related to healthy lifestyles (Lynott, 2008; Merino, 2016).

In their study Salvador-García et al. (2019) analysed how and why CLIL affects the levels of MVPA. A mixed methodological approach based on a sequential explanatory design was used and data were collected and analysed in two consecutive phases, namely a quantitative one ($n = 49$)

‘The positive effects of embodied learning, the interaction of the human body with the physical environment (Wilson, 2002) is found in many research areas, from cognitive psychology, social psychology, linguistics, gesture, to mathematics’

based on a quasi-experimental design in which mixed and factorial ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) was applied; and a qualitative one based on a subsequent analysis of interviews with 13 participants. According to the results, the levels of MVPA were higher in the experimental group (CLIL) due to greater attention paid and the usage of certain communicative teaching strategies.

Vázquez et al. (2018) argue that embodied theories of language propose that verbal communication is grounded in our body. Conventionally, a second language is taught without the inclusion of kinesthetics, but Vázquez et al. (2018) present a new concept called Words in Motion which is a virtual reality language learning system. Words in Motion reinforces associations between word-action pairs by recognising a student’s movements and presenting the corresponding name of the performed action in the target language. According to the study that involved 57 participants, the kinaesthetic approach in virtual reality has less immediate learning gain in comparison to a text-only approach. There is also no immediate difference with participants in a non-kinaesthetic virtual reality approach. The results showed that virtual kinaesthetic learners have significantly higher retention rates after a week of exposure than all other approach and higher performance than non-kinaesthetic virtual reality learners. Vázquez et al. (2018) argue that a positive correlation between the times a word-action pair was executed and the times a word was remembered by the subjects, proves that virtual reality can impact language learning by using kinaesthetic elements.

In their study Coral and Lleixà (2014) identified physical education in CLIL teaching strategies aiming at improving oral communication in primary

education pupils. Coral and Lleixà (2014) argue that there were significant improvements in using the PE-in-CLIL approach, as specific teaching strategies improved oral communication. The study demonstrated how a PE-in-CLIL programme can be used to improve teaching.

Macedonia and Klimesch (2014) argue that language and gesture are a highly interdependent system. Gestures support communication and also positively impact memory for verbal information in native and foreign language learning. In their study Macedonia and Klimesch (2014) tested the use of gestures in the classroom. The participants involved in the study learned 36 words in two training situations, an audio-visual situation where they read, heard, and spoke the words and in the gestural situation where they accompanied the words with symbolic gestures. According to the findings, gestures enhance vocabulary learning in quantity and over time. The results show that a code, a word, is better integrated into long-term memory if it is comprised of many interconnected components.

In their study Graham et al. (2012) explored the issue of language learning and physical education among 78 learners (aged 12-13) from two schools in England. In the questionnaire learners presented their feelings about the prospect of being identified as gifted/talented in these subjects. The learners expressed a fairly stereotypical view of their ability in language learning and physical education. The authors discuss the relevance of the findings for motivation and offer a curriculum design joining both subjects.

Toumpaniari et al. (2015) argue that physical activity involving gross motor activities leads to better cognitive functioning and higher academic achievement. In addition, embodying knowledge through the usage of subtle motor activities, i.e. task-relevant gestures, positively affects the learning process. In their study Toumpaniari et al. (2015) investigated whether combining physical activities and gestures could improve the learning process in a 4-week intervention programme on foreign language vocabulary learning in preschool children. The results showed that learning by em-

bodying words through task-relevant enactment gestures and physical activities is perceived as the preferred teaching method and leads to higher learning outcomes compared to learning by embodying words through task-relevant enactment gestures only and learning without physical activities or gestures. According to the results presented, there is a great potential for instructional methods combining physical activities and gestures in enhancing the learning process of individuals.

In their study Fernández Barrionuevo and Baena Extremera (2018) observe the differences between girls and boys in the perception of Foreign Language Learning (FLL), and physical education in the context of CLIL where significant differences in motivation by gender were found. Numerous studies proved the positive effects of CLIL on motivation in different contexts (Coyle, 2006; Seikkula-Leino, 2007; Coyle et al., 2010; Hunt, 2011; Lasagabaster, 2011; Mearns, 2012). In their paper Fernández Barrionuevo and Baena Extremera (2018) argue that regarding gender differences, the way students are motivated through PE and FLL shows an opposite pattern of behaviour. Boys and girls perceive PE and FLL differently.

The aspect of motivation was also researched by Baena-Extremera et al. (2018) who analysed a model of prediction of satisfaction with bilingual physical education from basic psychological needs and motivation. The experiment was composed of 758 students in secondary education in Spain, aged between 13 years and 18 years old. Their model proves that autonomy is the best predictor of intrinsic motivation, and that this is the best predictor of satisfaction in bilingual physical education.

In their study Mavilidi et al. (2015) argue that integrating physical activity into learning is effective and demonstrate it with a foreign language vocabulary task in preschool children who learned Italian words in a 4-week teaching programme. As part of the experiment, their memory for words was tested during, directly after, and six weeks after the programme. According to the results, children in the integrated physical exercise condition achieved the highest learning outcomes.

3.5. Examples of incorporating physical activity into the school curricula

As stated by Mahar et al. (2006), physical activity can be incorporated into the school schedule in many ways, and a classroom-based physical activity programme effectively increases daily in-school physical activity and enhances on-task behaviour during instruction time. Mahar et al. (2006) developed the *Energizers*, a programme that contains short (10 min) classroom-based physical activities that involve no equipment, incorporates grade-appropriate learning materials, and requires little-to-no teacher preparation. In the study the classroom based physical activity programme was used in order to assess its effects on elementary children's in-school physical activity levels during the school day. According to the results, the students taking part in the *Energizers* activities were more active and energetic during the school day and showed better on-task behaviour than those who did not take part in the activities.

Tompsonowski et al. (2008) argue that exercise has a positive effect on children's mental functioning and that is why exercise programmes are important.

Pontifex et al. (2009) argue that aerobic exercises of moderate intensity improve cognitive performance, with large improvements in working memory capacity.

Kim and Lee (2009) argue that academic performance improves with physical activity, but physical activity tends to decline across childhood, with the greatest decline occurring in elementary school.

In this perspective Bartholomew and Jowers (2011) developed physically active academic courses, called *Texas I-CAN!* The aim of the courses is to increase physical activity and at the same time address educational goals.

Donnelly and Lambourne (2011) examined the concepts of Physical Activity Across the Curriculum (PAAC) where moderate to vigorous physically active academic lessons are promoted. The PAAC approach can be applied to various academic areas, also to languages. Within PAAC Donnelly and Lambourne (2011) promote the occurrence of

'Physical activity leads to better academic achievement and represents a healthy habit, which, in the present situation where sedentarism is promoted, is seen as a positive routine, as proved by the surveys of children, but it should also be expanded to young adults and students'

physical activity at any place and time. Donnelly and Lambourne (2011) argue that physical activity positively affects academic performance.

In their research Kibbe et al. (2011) investigate the effect of the *TAKE 10!* classroom-based physical activity programme. The aim of the programme is to integrate movement and learning. Within the programme the students are involved in physical activity, but at the same time they improve their ability to meet learning objectives in the subjects they are studying. The results of the implementation of the programme in the classroom showed that students benefit by experiencing higher physical activity levels as well as higher scores in the specific subjects, i.e. language.

Physical activity leads to better academic achievement and represents a healthy habit, which, in the present situation where sedentarism is promoted, is seen as a positive routine, as proved by the surveys of children, but it should also be expanded to young adults and students.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Results of the language test

After rehearsing the verbs for 4 weeks the teacher orally tested all four groups of students. Due to the large number of students to be tested and lack of time available during classes the teacher decided to test 15 students from the experimental groups, and 5 from the control group. In order to provide the confidentiality of personal data, the students are named with letters (Tables 1 and 2). The students were asked mainly about one regular and one irregular verb. Just in one case the student was asked about two regular verbs and, in three cases, two irregular verbs.

Table 1
Experimental groups results

STUDENTS	REGULAR VERB	IRREGULAR VERB	ADDITIONAL VERB
A	<i>parlare</i> (did not reply)	<i>avere</i> (did not reply)	
B	<i>parlare</i> (all forms correct)	<i>avere</i> (all forms correct)	
C	<i>amare</i> (did not reply)	<i>essere</i> (mistake in <i>tu è</i> ; did not reply for <i>voi</i> and <i>loro</i>)	
D	<i>finire</i> (mistakes in <i>io finite</i> , <i>tu finischi</i> , <i>noi finischi</i>)		<i>dormire</i> (all forms correct; mistake in <i>lui dorma</i>)
E	<i>studiare</i> (all forms correct)	<i>dare</i> (all forms correct; mistakes in <i>noi andiamo</i> , <i>voi andate</i> , <i>loro andano</i> ; mixed verbs <i>andare</i> and <i>dare</i>)	
F	<i>vedere</i> (all forms correct)	<i>andare</i> (all forms correct)	
G	<i>parlare</i> (all forms correct)	<i>fare</i> (did not reply)	
H	<i>finire</i> (all forms correct; mistakes in <i>io fino</i> , <i>tu finischi</i> , <i>loro finite</i>)	any irregular of your choice (did not reply)	
I	<i>studiare</i> (did not reply)	<i>avere</i> (all forms correct; mistake in <i>io jo</i>)	
J	<i>studiare</i> (all forms correct)	<i>fare</i> (did not reply; mistakes in <i>io faro</i> , <i>tu facci</i>)	
K	<i>amare</i> (all forms correct; mistake in <i>loro hanno</i>)	<i>fare</i> (all forms correct)	
L	<i>vedere</i> (all forms correct; mistakes in <i>lui vedere</i> , <i>voi vediate</i>)	<i>essere</i> (all forms correct)	
M		<i>andare</i> (all forms correct; mistakes in <i>tu vadi</i> , <i>loro andiano</i>)	<i>volere</i> (all forms correct)
N		<i>dire</i> (all forms correct)	<i>uscire</i> (all forms correct)
O		<i>stare</i> (all forms correct)	<i>bere</i> (all forms correct)

In total the students were asked to conjugate 13 regular verbs, in 3 cases, namely for the verbs *studiare* (to study), *amare* (to love) and *parlare* (to speak) 3 students (A, I, C) did not provide any conjugation forms. Out of 13 verbs in 5 cases, namely for 5 verbs, i.e. *parlare*, *studiare* and *vedere* (to

see), the students (B, E, F, G, J) provided correct conjugation forms. For 4 regular verbs the following mistakes were observed. For the verb *finire* (to finish) two students made the following mistakes: student D for the conjugation forms *io finite* instead of *io finisco*, *tu finischi*, instead of *tu finisci*

and *noi finischiamo*, instead of *noi finiamo*. Student H made the following mistake: *io fino*, instead of *io finisco*, *tu finischi*, instead of *tu finisci* and *loro finito* instead of *loro finiscono*. For the verb *amare* (to love) student K made the wrong conjugation for just the last verb form, namely *loro hanno* instead of *loro amano*. For the verb *vedere* (to see) student L made the following mistakes: *lui vedere*, where the student did not provide any conjugation form, the correct form is *lui vede*, and *voi vediate*, the correct form is *voi vedete*. Student D knew all the conjugation forms except for the third person singular, *lui dorma*. The correct form is *lui dorme*.

Among the irregular verbs just in 2 cases out of 18 verbs, namely with students A and G for the verbs *avere* (to have) and *fare* (to do) the students did not provide any answer. In addition, student H did not provide any irregular verb conjugation forms. Out of 18 verbs in 9 cases all the conjugation forms were entirely correct, i.e. for the verbs *stare* (to be), *bere* (to drink), *dire* (to say), *uscire* (to exit), *volere* (to want), *essere* (to be), *fare* (to do),

andare (to go), and *avere* (to have). Mistakes were present in 6 verbs. Student C did not know the conjugation forms for *essere*, *voi* or *loro* and used a wrong form for *tu*, namely *è*. Student E mixed two verbs, *andare* and *dare*, for the three plural forms providing the verb *andare* instead of *dare*, namely *noi andiamo*, *voi andate* and *loro andono*, the conjugation form for *loro* should be *loro vanno* if the verb *andare* is conjugated. Student I provided all the conjugation forms correctly for the verb *avere*, but failed in the first person, *io jo*, instead of *io ho*. Student J did not correctly provide the two forms for the verb *fare*, namely for *io* the student provided *faro* instead of *faccio* and for *tu* *facci* instead of *fai*. Student M provided 2 wrong verb forms for the verb *andare*, namely *tu vadi* instead of *tu vai* and *loro andiano* instead of *vanno*. Generally speaking, the students were more successful in providing the conjugation forms for the irregular compared to the regular verbs.

Group 4 represents the control group and is composed of third year students (UN) from the Faculty of Tourism, University of Maribor.

Table 2
Control groups results

STUDENTS	REGULAR VERB	IRREGULAR VERB	ADDITIONAL VERB
P	<i>studiare</i> (did not reply)	<i>dare</i> (did not reply)	
R	<i>amare</i> (did not reply)	<i>fare</i> (did not reply)	
S	<i>amare</i> (all forms correct)	<i>avere</i> (all forms correct)	
T	<i>dormire</i> (mistakes in <i>lui dorma</i> , <i>voi dormiete</i>)		<i>finire</i> (mistakes in <i>tu finischi</i> , <i>voi finischiete</i>)
U	<i>studiare</i> (mistake in <i>voi studete</i>)	<i>volere</i> (mistake in <i>tu vogli</i>)	

As seen in Table 2, two students (P and R) failed to provide any correct verb form for the regular or irregular verb, also two more students provided the same answer but were not included in the representation of the results. Just one student (S) provided all correct conjugation forms for the regular

verb *amare* and the irregular verb *avere*. Student T encountered issues in providing the conjugation form for *dormire*: *lui dorma* instead of *dorme*, and *voi dormiete* instead of *dormite*. For the verb form *finire* the same student made the following mistakes: *tu finischi* instead of *finisci* and *voi finischi-*

ete instead of *finite*. Student U encountered issues in the regular verb *studiare* for the form *voi studete*, the correct form is *studiate* and for the irregular verb *volere* in *tu vogli*, instead of *vuoi*.

From the presentation of the results we can notice that the students from the three experimental groups achieved better results in conjugating the verbs, both regular and irregular. Students from the experimental groups were more successful in providing correct forms of the regular and irregular verbs. Only five students failed to provide the correct forms of one regular or irregular verb. Only in one case did a student (A) fail to provide one regular or irregular verb. Only one student (S) correctly provided both verbs and two (P, R) failed to provide any correct answer. We are concerned by the fact that of 5 students just the results of 3 are represented, 2 did not provide any reply. We can conclude that the experimental groups were more successful compared to the control group.

4.2. Results of the questionnaire

Three groups of students taking part in the experiment, namely one group of third year students (VS) from the Faculty of Tourism, University of Maribor; one group of second year master students (MAG) from the Faculty of Tourism, University of Maribor; and one group of second/third year students (LEKT) from the Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor, answered the questionnaire.

In total 60 students were asked, after practising in a 4-week long experimental period with squats, to answer 13 questions from the online questionnaire. In total, there were 30 valid answers, among them 20 females and 10 males.

The highest number of respondents (27) is in the age group from 21 to 25 (Table 3), the most common level of education is secondary school (Table 4), the majority of the respondents are studying in an undergraduate study programme (Table 5).

Table 3

Distribution of respondents by age

AGE BRACKET	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Below 20	1	3%
From 21 to 25	27	90%
From 26 to 30	1	3%
31 or more	1	3%

Table 4

Distribution of respondents by level of education

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Finished secondary school	24	80%
Finished undergraduate programme (3 years)	5	17%
Finished master's programme (2 years)	1	3%

Table 5
Distribution of respondents by the study programme

STUDY PROGRAMME	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Undergraduate VS	13	43%
Undergraduate LEKT	13	43%
Master's	4	13%

With the survey we wanted to show that movement improves language learning and memorising verbs and, thus, could be introduced into subjects other than languages. This was supported by 57% of the respondents that found the introduction of movement in other subjects very useful and 37%

found it useful, whereas only 7% found it not useful. Comparing classroom and online lessons, during online lessons 53% of respondents spent more time sitting. During one online lesson 80% of students sat for the whole hour (45 minutes), only 3% affirmed sitting less than 30 minutes (Figure 1).

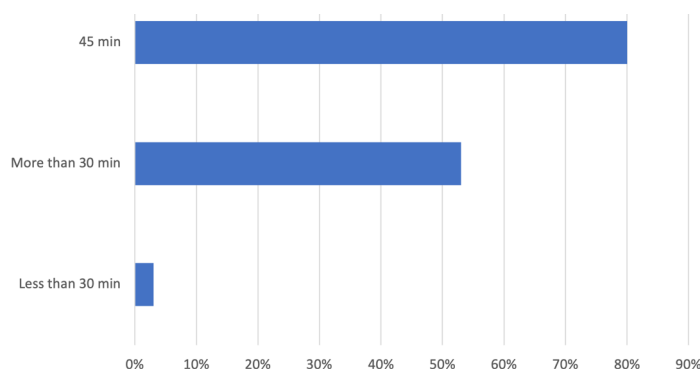


Figure 1. Time spent sitting during one online lesson

The first question of interest was whether movement improved respondents' focus on the topic discussed in class. The set of possible responses were 'It does not' (1), 'Fairly/medium' (2) and 'Very much' (3).

A large majority of them (97%) agreed that movement improved the topic focus. 47% of respondents answered that it had a fair/medium impact, and the same number believed it improved focus very much (Figure 2).

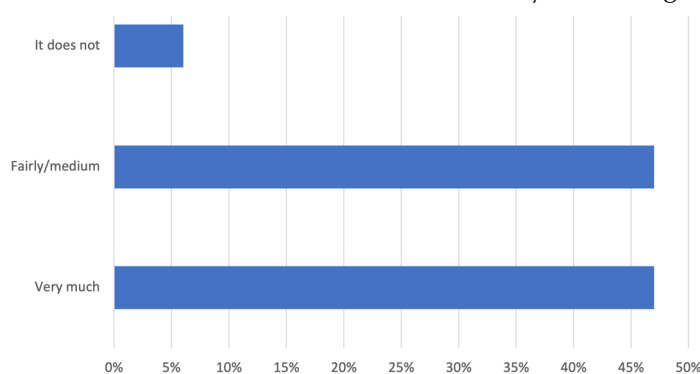


Figure 2. Movement improves your focus on the topic discussed in class

Tables 6 and 7 present data related to the same question whether movement improved focus on the topic discussed in class, but disaggregated by sex and study programme respectively. Two male respondents answered that it did not, 4 – fairly/medium, and 4 – very much. Among the female respondents 10 answered fairly/medium, and 10 – very much. Using a t-test to check the mean re-

sponses, we can observe that the difference in the mean responses between male and female respondents (2.2 and 2.5 respectively) is not statistically significant (P-value = 0.29), where we require a P-value of 0.95 or higher to assume a statistically significant value. Hence, we cannot conclude that either group found that movement improved their focus more than the other group on average.

Table 6

Movement improves your focus on the topic discussed in class, by sex

ANSWER	MALE	FEMALE
It does not		
Fairly/medium	4	10
Very much	4	10

Looking at respondents by study programme, two undergraduate VS students answered that movement didn't improve their focus, whereas 4 answered with fairly/medium, and 7 with very much, compared to undergraduate LEKT students where no one answered that it did not, 7 – fairly/medium, and 6 – very much. Among the master's students only 3 thought movement improved their

focus fairly/medium, and 1 – very much. Using ANOVA analysis, we cannot reject the null hypothesis that the mean value of responses is equal between the three groups (F=0.17, P-value = 0.84).

Hence, we cannot conclude that respondents' answers differ in terms of the study programme on average.

Table 7

Movement improves your focus on the topic discussed in class, by study programme

STUDY PROGRAMME	ASSESS IF MOVEMENT IMPROVES YOUR FOCUS ON THE TOPICS DISCUSSED			Total	AVERAGE	STANDARD DEVIATION
	Does not (1)	Fairly/medium (2)	Very much (3)			
Undergraduate VS	2 (15%)	4 (31%)	7 (54%)	13	2.38	0.77
Undergraduate LEKT	0 (0%)	7 (54%)	6 (46%)	13	2.46	0.52
Master	0 (0%)	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	4	2.25	0.50
Total	2 (7%)	14 (47%)	14 (47%)	30	2.40	0.62
F test						0.17
P-value						0.84

According to the data, movement positively affects the comprehension of Italian verbs. To the question whether movement improved under-

standing and memorising of verbs 70% of respondents answered it did fairly/medium, 17% thought it did very much, and 13% that it didn't (Figure 3).

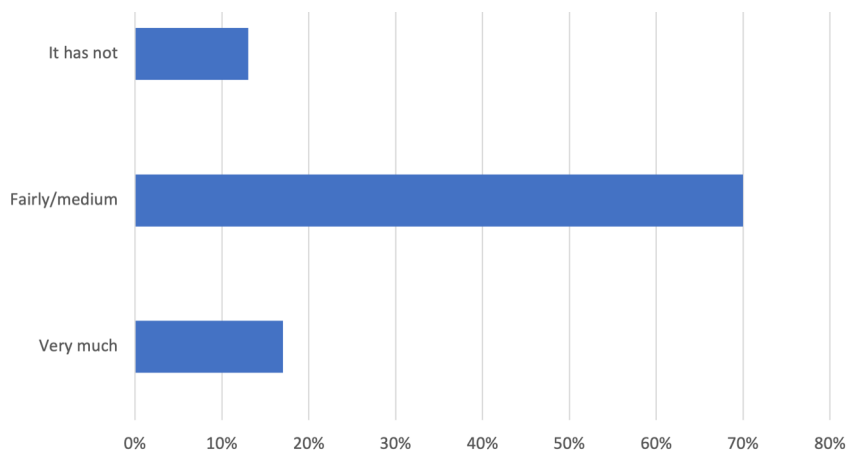


Figure 3. Improvement of understanding and memorising of verbs with movement

Tables 8 and 9 present the answers to the same question disaggregated by sex and study programme. One male respondent answered that movement did not improve understanding and

memorising verbs, 8 – fairly/medium, and 1 – very much. Among the female respondents 13 answered fairly/medium, 4 – very much, and 3 – it did not.

Table 8

Improvement of understanding and memorising, by sex

ANSWER	MALE	FEMALE
It does not	1	3
Fairly/medium	8	13
Very much	1	4

Using a t-test, we can observe that the difference in the mean responses between male and female respondents (2.0 and 2.1 respectively) is not statistically significant (P-value = 0.8). Hence, we cannot conclude that either group of respondents found that understanding and memorising of verbs would have improved with movement more than the other group on average.

Disaggregation by study programme shows that 3 undergraduate VS students answered it did not, 8 – fairly/medium, and 2 – very much, compared to

undergraduate LEKT students where 1 answered that it did not, 10 – fairly/medium, and 2 – very much. 3 master's students answered fairly/medium, and 1 – very much.

Based on the ANOVA analysis we cannot reject the null hypothesis ($F=0.58$, $P=0.57$) that the mean responses are equal between the three groups of respondents.

Hence, we cannot conclude that the answers among the groups of students in relation to the study programme are different on average.

Table 9

Improvement of understanding and memorising, by study programme

STUDY PROGRAMME	HAS THE UNDERSTANDING/MEMORISING OF VERBS WITH MOVEMENT IMPROVED?			AVERAGE	STANDARD DEVIATION	
	Does not (1)	Fairly/medium (2)	Very much (3)			Total
Undergraduate VS	3 (23%)	8 (62%)	2 (15%)	13	1.92	0.64
Undergraduate LEKT	1 (8%)	10 (77%)	2 (15%)	13	2.08	0.49
Master	0 (0%)	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	4	2.25	0.50
Total	4 (13%)	21 (70%)	5 (17%)	30	2.03	0.56
F test						0.58
P-value						0.57

5. CONCLUSION

The concept of physical activity has been linked to a healthy mind (Toumpaniari et al., 2015) and has a positive impact on the cognitive function of the learning population (Sibley & Etnier, 2003; Tomporowski et al., 2008; Fedewa & Ahn, 2011). Movement and physical activity have also been incorporated into language learning, but examples of good practice (Lynott, 2008; Merino, 2016; Vázquez et al., 2018; Salvador-García et al., 2019) show that such joint concepts unfortunately stop in primary school, around age 12-13. This lack of introduction of movement and language learning that takes into consideration only young children suggests to us the importance of extending our research to young adults, namely students, as presented in our survey. As addressed and proved by the three groups of students who took part in the experiment and practised regular and irregular Italian verbs with movement and in connection to the control group that practised the verbs without movement, from the results of the language testing we can see that better results were obtained by the students who rehearsed the verbs with the introduction of movement. As seen from the results of language testing the students from the three experimental groups achieved better results in conjugating the verbs, both regular and irregular and were also more successful in

providing correct forms of the regular and irregular verbs. From the results presented it is clear that only five students failed to provide the correct forms of one regular or irregular verb and one student (A) failed to provide one regular or irregular verb. From the observations of the language teacher it is also visible that only one student (S) correctly provided both verbs and two (P, R) failed to provide any correct answer. From the results of the language testing observed by the language teacher we can conclude that the experimental groups were more successful compared to the control group. From the results of the questionnaire it is clear that movement improves language learning and memorising verbs and, thus, could be introduced into subjects other than languages. 57% of the respondents found the introduction of movement also useful in other subjects. 97% of respondents agreed that movement improved the topic focus. As seen from the results of the t-test, the difference in the mean responses between male and female respondents (2.2 and 2.5 respectively) is not statistically significant (P-value = 0.29) and we cannot conclude that either group of respondents found that movement improved their focus more than the other group on average. Looking at respondents by study programme using ANOVA analysis, we cannot reject the null hypothesis that the mean value of responses is equal

between the three groups ($F=0.17$, $P\text{-value} = 0.84$). Observing respondents by gender, using a t -test, we can observe that the difference in the mean responses between male and female respondents (2.0 and 2.1 respectively) is not statistically

significant ($P\text{-value} = 0.8$). In view of these perspectives and in response to the current Covid-19 situation that promotes more sedentarism, we should act towards the introduction of movement in our everyday curricula.

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Original Research

Languages for specific purposes in medicine and healthcare in times of the Covid-19 pandemic: Reflections on usage-based teaching

by Nikolaos Katsaounis and Ulrich Steinmüller

Nikolaos Katsaounis Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece katsaounis@del.auth.gr

Ulrich Steinmüller Technical University of Berlin, Germany ulrich.steinmueller@tu-berlin.de

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This paper aims to identify the weaknesses of didactic praxis in the field of teaching foreign languages for specific purposes (LSP) and propose more effective approaches that take into consideration both the learner profile and the conditions in which learners acquire a language as a tool in their job, training or education. Based on the example of the teaching of German for medical purposes in the target country to highly qualified healthcare staff that have immigrated for professional reasons, we recapitulate the didactic/methodological principles of the Berlin Didactics, draw upon a critique of the CEFR and, on this basis, we theoretically demonstrate specific implementation strategies for a usage-based model of the teaching of languages for specific purposes that can realistically be incorporated in the curricula of LSP courses, independent of the target language. The first strategy concerns a data-driven approach to the teaching of languages for specific purposes by making use of (parallel) language corpora in the classroom. The second is the design of a dual teaching model, based on Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development and promotes peer learning, while combining traditional LSP lessons and practical technical language training. The third proposed strategy concerns the role of mediation in the teaching of LSP. The paper concludes with a discussion of the benefits and limitations of the three didactic strategies that serves as a starting point for the design of relevant LSP policies, curricula and resources.

KEYWORDS: languages for specific purposes, German for medical purposes, usage-based approaches, corpus, peer learning, mediation, Covid-19



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1. INTRODUCTION

Germany reports a blatant shortage of qualified specialists in many areas, such as industry, business, administration, and specifically in the field of medicine and nursing. The Federal Ministry of

Health is therefore recruiting healthcare staff from e.g. Bosnia and Kosovo and from the growing flows of refugees and immigrants that include numerous qualified doctors and nursing staff. In this context, the migratory flows of health workers

from Greece are particularly impressive. According to the German Medical Association, the number of Greek doctors working in Germany increased by 232.27% in the years between 1999 and 2017 (Katsaounis, 2021, p. 242). This fact alone is significant enough to draw the conclusion that the teaching of languages for specific purposes, as part of general foreign language teaching, is experiencing a new upswing.

In addition to the professional qualifications of migrating healthcare staff, they all have in common that they have to acquire the German language at the level that is required in order for them to put their professional qualifications in good use. To meet this need, numerous language courses are offered that by a very large majority aim at integration into German society. However, traditional language courses often seem unsuitable for achieving the objectives of imparting vocational and subject-specific language skills with the existing thematic, didactic and lesson planning conditions in the long term.

For example, a language-systematic or a grammar-based approach have proven to be not suitable for the target groups addressed here. However, grammatical understanding and knowledge of linguistic formalities still very often form the basis of language courses and teaching materials, so that there is often a gap between the courses offered and the needs, expectations and requirements of migrant highly qualified workers. For their primary goal is not to acquire the German language, but to acquire those language competences (sociolinguistic, conversational, etc.) that will equip them with the skills to apply their qualifications and their knowledge in their professional lives. The views and assessment of migrant qualified workers towards traditional language courses are shaped accordingly (Steinmüller, 2018). The results of a quantitative study, that was carried out in 2016 with the participation of 200 Syrian migrants in language schools, adult education centres, institutes, associations and refugee homes in five major German cities, have shown that the motivation to learn the language was extremely high (Amer, 2016, p. 42). Approximately 40% of the

'In addition to the professional qualifications of migrating healthcare staff, they all have in common that they have to acquire the German language at the level that is required in order for them to put their professional qualifications in good use. To meet this need, numerous language courses are offered that by a very large majority aim at integration into German society'

participants stated that their goal was to acquire German language skills for work reasons, while 18% wanted to do so for educational reasons (Amer, 2016).

However, for almost half of those questioned, the re-adaptation to the student role after many years of absence from the learning process and their engagement with professional activities posed major challenges. The designing of lessons with the help of modern media and alternative social forms in the classroom, such as language learning games, were also met with reservations by almost half of those surveyed, while the use of traditional textbooks was rated positively by just as many (Amer, 2016, p. 50). At the same time, they repeatedly criticised the fact that they did not learn to speak German, but rather grammar, counting rhymes and poems, as the study by Amer (2016) showed.

2. DIDACTIC REALITIES

2.1. Didactics of technical languages

The above aspects must be considered when planning and implementing language courses for specific purposes. Hence, such courses place high demands on the didactic-methodological qualifications of foreign language teachers (Mackay & Palmer, 1981; Gollin-Kies et al., 2015).

For a target group-appropriate design of language courses of German for specific purposes another aspect comes into play, namely the question of the variants of the specific language (Lippert,

1978; Ylönen, 2010). In order to answer this, differentiated analyses of the language needs are required, which are based on the respective communicative situations and purposes for which German language skills are required. In the medical field, these are primarily conversations between doctors, between doctors and patients and their relatives, between doctors and nurses, between nurses and patients. In addition to these verbal communicative situations, there are a number of written language requirements such as the medical history report, the medical record, the so-called 'doctor's letter', i.e. written case documentation from the hospital or clinic to the family doctor, etc. For the nursing staff in the outpatients area, the written communicative requirements are nursing reports and handover protocols, to name just two. These examples show that a simple orientation of foreign language lessons towards the technical language of medicine and nursing cannot do justice to the requirements of the complex and diverse situations in which the language is truly used. The linguistics of technical languages, and in particular, the model by Hoffmann (1976), can provide decision-making aids for target-group-specific teaching.

Hoffmann (1976) distinguishes five levels of technical languages, which differ depending on their degree of technical abstraction, their theoretical-scientific foundation, their use of specific signs and symbols and their context of use. At the upper end of this hierarchy is linguistic usage, as it is defined in the scientific discourse in specialist publications on medicine or in the discourse between practising physicians. Via various intermediate levels with decreasing abstraction, decreasing subject specificity and increasing use of general language resources, the scholar arrives at a level of specialist language use that is characterised by a rather low level of abstraction. At this level, the technical reference is located at a generally understandable, rather popular scientific level, where the use of language is characterised by technical terminology and some syntactical peculiarities on an otherwise general language basis. An example here may be the conversation in a doctor's waiting room, where

the patients waiting chat about their ailments and therapies. The public as well as the private discourse in the times of the Covid-19 pandemic show once again how the boundaries between medical specialist foreign language and everyday language can be blurred due to the urgency of the conversations taking place and the affective factors that play a role in the negotiation of meaning (Tulchinskii, 2020).

Becoming aware of this differentiated view makes it more effective – both as a foreign language teacher and as a language policy maker – to deal with and convey technical and professional languages, including in the field of German as a foreign language for specific purposes. This makes the orientation towards the respective target group of learners, the objective of the language level to be achieved and thus the task of the lesson much clearer than with the very general reference to the development of a technical language competence, which, in its indeterminacy, arouses unattainable expectations rather than serving specific learning objectives.

Successful teaching, and this also applies to the teaching of German as a foreign language in the medical and nursing fields, is a structured and organised process, which results in the transfer of competencies and the achievement of learning goals. Lessons following modern psychological approaches to learning are based on constructivist, non-instructionist learning theories. Lessons understood in this way are both a social and communicative process at the same time that is jointly designed by the people involved. This means that the learners are actively involved in the planning, design and implementation of the lessons. This has consequences for both learners and teachers. The learners are no longer just recipients of the learning material conveyed by the teacher through instruction (instructionist), but are actively involved in the presentation, preparation and development of the learning material and the achievement of the learning objectives. They co-construct the lesson, its goals and results (constructivist). The constructivist view is taken into consideration also in our concrete didactic proposals.

2.2. The Berlin Didactics as a basis for further development of teaching methods

The following considerations are based on the *Berlin Didactics* (Heimann et al., 1965). It offers a model for describing the planning and design of lessons with the inclusion of various factors affecting it, their mutual dependencies and influences. This model was developed in the 1970s at the University of Education in Berlin and has since been adapted for teaching German as a foreign language in numerous publications and projects. The *Berlin Didactics* is not education-oriented but learning goal-oriented. The focus is on the student, the student as an individual who should achieve certain learning goals and develop certain skills.

Every lesson is a designed and structured process that is influenced and shaped by various influencing factors and that takes place within the framework of institutions. As a result, it is subject to certain requirements, purposes and restrictions. This also applies in particular to foreign language teaching in the medical and nursing fields under pandemic conditions. These factors include the conditions of the teaching situation (geographical, temporal, spatial; institutional location and specifications; size and composition of the learning group), while other sources of influence are e.g. the individual learner profile, the teaching material and teaching resources available, the learning methods and strategies applied, etc. These factors are to be considered by teachers of language for specific purposes when designing and implementing their lesson plans. In times of the Covid-19 pandemic the aforementioned factors become not only more urgent, but there are specific changes – regarding changes in the lesson format, thematic content and conversational style – that have an effect on the teaching of medical language and terminology during, and probably after, the pandemic. Firstly, educational formats have changed dramatically because of the pandemic. Lessons take place either online or in the form of blended-learning, which have influenced all levels of education, including the adult education and foreign language teaching that concern us in this paper. The abrupt transition to those teaching formats has

fundamentally influenced the way teachers approach education, which includes their considerations regarding the thematic and communicative content. Especially in the teaching of medical language, the content now includes not only newly introduced jargon but also new situational conversation topics. As far as the conversational style is concerned, it has changed for all healthcare staff during the pandemic, since the factors influencing conversation now include urgency, hospital overload, meeting relatives' information demands via a phone, showing more empathy in patient consultations, etc. By incorporating a usage-based approach to the teaching of foreign languages for medical purposes, teachers and policy makers can incorporate such dynamic factors, treat language as ever-changing and focus on interactional properties and social usage events.

Not all of the above factors can be influenced by those involved in the lesson, although they can have a lasting effect on teaching practice. The *Berlin Didactics* therefore divides these factors into two categories: (1) *Field of Conditions*, i.e. the areas that are given as framework conditions and prerequisites for teaching and must therefore be considered, even if they are beyond the influence of teachers and learners, and (2) *Field of Decisions*, i.e. the areas in which decisions have to be made considering the factors of the condition fields.

The fields of conditions, that are to be considered as influencing factors in lesson planning, include socio-cultural factors such as legal and ordinance requirements, e.g. school/institutional laws, curricula, working time and health requirements, requirements of the school/institutional authority, etc.; geographical and spatial conditions, e.g. the language school/institute is situated in city or in rural areas, classrooms and their equipment, time and space organisation of the lessons – it is, for example, not indifferent whether the classroom is bright and friendly, organised also by the learners, whether the lessons are around 8 a.m. or 2 p.m., before the start of work or in the evening after a working day, etc. On the personal level, for both teachers and learners, there are very different cultural and psycho-social factors (in the terminology

of Berlin didactics anthropogenic factors) to be taken into account. On the part of the learner, this includes e.g. social status and structure of the family, age and gender, position in the sibling line or marital status, religious, cultural and political influences, and also migration and/or refugee experiences, previous school experience, possible work experience, preferences and hobbies, etc. (Mukhortov & Strelets, 2021). Regarding the teachers, similar preconditions must be taken into consideration.

2.3. Lesson planning for LSP teaching

For foreign language teaching, these sociocultural and psycho-social factors represent a challenge when planning, designing and carrying out language lessons, also considering possible migration and refugee experiences, the situation in the country of origin and the situation of the learner in the host country, which could be the case in the group that we are concerned with. The described pre- and framework conditions are included in the process of lesson planning, for which all relevant decisions in accordance with the constructivist approach have to be made, with the involvement of learners and with regard to the lesson goals and content as well as the media and methods to be integrated. It is these factors in the decision-making field that are open to the influence of teachers, their creativity and didactic and methodical skills. Decisions in each of these decision-making fields

influence subsequent decisions, so that a structure of mutual dependencies arises. If, for example, a certain learning goal is to be achieved, the question must be clarified with which content this can be achieved, which media are suitable for conveying this content and which methods can be used for this. If instead a certain content is to be the focus, the question arises which goals can be achieved through it, which media and methods are suitable, etc. A certain teaching goal can be achieved better with certain content than with others, and the decision to use a particular medium results in the decision to use certain methods.

The necessary planning phases are: factual analysis, didactic analysis and methodical implementation that includes decisions regarding media implementation. Factual analysis is used by the teacher to closely examine subject-relative questions, like what the content is, how is it to be classified, e.g. historically, culturally, socially, aesthetically, theoretically, etc. Didactic analysis asks which of the findings and results obtained in the factual analysis are suitable as a learning objective for our learning group and which competencies can be achieved. The results of the field of conditions analysis must then also be taken into account here. On the third level of analysis, questions revolve around suitable methods and media. In doing so, mutual dependencies and influences, as shown in the didactic square, must be considered (Figure 1).

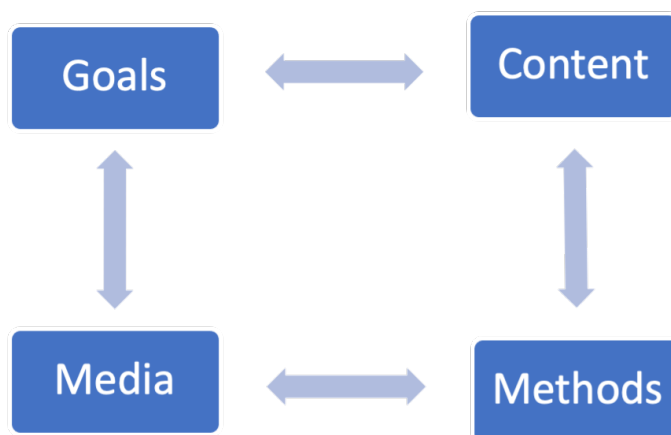


Figure 1. The didactic square

3. IN NEED OF A TECHNICAL LANGUAGE COMPETENCE?

These considerations and levels of analysis provide an adequate basis for the teaching of German for specific purposes in the medical and nursing sectors, because they enable target-group-specific communicative situational teaching, especially when factoring in the specialist language differentiation according to Hoffmann (1976). However, these lessons cannot be limited to imparting and acquiring language skills. In the professional field of activity of doctors and nurses that we are looking at here, additional skills are required.

With regard to the above, Yu (2004) developed an inclusive hierarchy of competencies, i.e. a hierarchy in which each subsequent level includes all preceding levels as a genuine component. At the base of this hierarchy lies foreign language competence as the highly advanced form of command of the target language. At a next, higher level lies communicative competence. At this level the scholar places the application of linguistic competence in communicative situations, where linguistic competence is expanded by all the strategies and norms that shape communicative processes. Finally, on the level of intercultural competence, which inevitably builds on the two previous com-

petence levels, this linguistic-communicative competence is realised in specific communicative situations, in which – in our case – doctors, nursing staff and patients of very different cultures meet and communicate with one another.

A controversial question often discussed in the field of language and linguistics for specific purposes is when and at what level of language proficiency the teaching of technical and professional language can or should sensibly begin. It is often found that the teaching and learning of languages for specific purposes can only be meaningful, when carried out at an advanced level, perhaps even only at C1 level (CEFR). In this paper, we maintain the position that for the specific group of learners discussed here, who usually are professionally experienced adults, who – also according to the results of Amer's (2016) surveys – have problems with the renewed assumption of the student role and who are interested mostly in short-term and intensive language lessons as a preparation for starting a career in Germany, foreign language lessons should also be possible at lower levels. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) provides information on this at various levels of competence (Europarat, 2001) (Table 1).

Table 1

Common Reference Levels: Global scale

LEVEL	CAN-DO STATEMENT
A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc.
B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation.
C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes.

‘From a didactic point of view, the orientation towards these can-do descriptions of the CEFR opens up a broad field of possible approaches for the teaching of specialist and professional languages, in which the course design as well as the learning objectives can be based on the learning prerequisites and the interests and needs of the learner’

Technical and professional languages can therefore be thematised and conveyed at various levels of language proficiency, adapted to the existing knowledge and the desired learning objectives and competencies, which are mentioned in the can-do descriptions. From a didactic point of view, the orientation towards these can-do descriptions of the CEFR opens up a broad field of possible approaches for the teaching of specialist and professional languages, in which the course design as well as the learning objectives can be based on the learning prerequisites and the interests and needs of the learner.

Below we propose specific methodological techniques that fall under the scope of a usage-based approach to the teaching of foreign languages for specific purposes and can be implemented in language teaching lessons, either with only small or with considerable modifications.

4. A SUSTAINABLE DIDACTIC APPROACH

4.1. Working with corpora and parallel corpora in LSP teaching

The massive spread of information technologies has, among other things, enabled the creation of large electronic language corpora that can be used in empirical research in many areas of linguistics. By implementing a *Data-Driven Learning* (DDL) approach to foreign language learning, language corpora can also be incorporated into the teaching of foreign languages for specific purposes. This means, that foreign language lessons as well as technical language lessons are faced with new

challenges. There are specific didactic aspects that need to be discussed, such as: (1) for what didactic and methodological purposes could/should corpora be used in the teaching of languages for specific purposes?; (2) which psychological aspects have to be taken into account when teaching/learning a technical language with corpora?; (3) does the DDL approach have any consequences regarding the role of teachers/learners in the teaching of languages for specific purposes and, if so, how are these to be assessed?

First of all, it should be considered to what extent the knowledge gained through the work with corpus data in the classroom can be transferred to the sociolinguistic domain that the corpus represents. In quantitative corpus-based research the following applies: the larger, more representative and balanced a corpus, the more reliable the results that can be expected. In language teaching, Corpora can be used in two versions (Gabrielatos, 2005; Leech, 1997): the soft version, where the teacher has access to the corpus and the relevant concordance software and learners work with examples from the corpus that the teacher has constructed into activity tasks, and the hard version, where learners have direct access to the corpus. Both versions have their limitations. If, for example, a linguistic phenomenon is documented in a corpus of oral language, then it also exists. But if this phenomenon cannot be morpho-syntactically proven, no statement can be made, especially if the teacher is not familiar with the use of corpora. One more problem that could arise is if the acceptability of a ‘word combination’ that is not documented in the corpus is to be assessed by the learners, the contribution or questioning of native speakers might be needed, and that is not always possible, because teachers are not always native speakers. Lastly, Perkuhn and Belica (2006) comment on the following problem with corpus work in the classroom: *‘Assuming a technically flawless and authentic illustration, corpora only contain facts about language usage. They reflect grammatically correct and incorrect handling of the language, as practiced by the language community depicted. In addition, the creative use of language*

that is often reflected in (oral) corpora, cannot be anticipated by grammar authors (teachers, textbook writers, etc.)' (Perkuhn & Belica, 2006, p. 5).

In McEnery and Wilson (1997) the role of corpora in language teaching can be summarised as follows: *'The corpus encourages the student to act as the producer of research, rather than its passive receptible. [...] In being presented with corpus materials, students learn by a confrontation with data. [...] a student is immediately forced into active participation in the process of learning. [...] The teacher still has a place in the corpus-based classroom, but the shift of emphasis away from the didactic pedagogue towards the fellow researcher [...] is emphasised by inclusion of the corpus in the teaching equation'* (McEnery & Wilson, 1997, p. 6). Other perspectives to the DDL approach regard the learner less as a researcher and more as a traveller on a voyage of discovery and emphasise the importance of learning through discovery. Bernardini (2002) writes that *'learners browse corpora much in the same way as they would explore an unknown land. The teacher accompanies them as a guide, not telling them what to do but advising them on how to pursue their own interests, suggesting alternative ways to proceed, other interpretation of the data or possible ways forward. Interestingly, the role of instructor or oracle does not shift from teacher to corpus: the corpus is not expected to provide the right answers, and often does not, but constantly presents new challenges and stimulates new questions, renewing the user's curiosity and offering ample opportunity for researching aspects of language and culture, which may easily become a subject of research projects, reports and discussion'* (Bernardini, 2002, p. 166).

The use of parallel corpora in the teaching of foreign languages and foreign languages for specific purposes can be beneficial. *'A bilingual corpus [...] provides real world contrastive evidence of how utterances or samples of text in one language can be rendered in another, according to a given context, and of how words are used appropriately in combination'* (Peters et al., 2000, p. 74), with which the parallel corpora remedy one of the weaknesses from which traditional translation dic-

tionaries suffer. While older methodological practices of foreign language teaching (mainly direct method, audiolingual and audiovisual methods) have banned translation as a method from foreign language teaching, translation is now a part of the framework, is very widely used in the teaching of terminology in technical language teaching, and hence deserves a place in foreign technical language teaching today.

There is one more point in working with corpora for the teaching of languages for specific purposes that has to do with the German language for medical purposes. Steinmüller (1991) lists sixteen linguistic features of German for specific purposes that concern morphology (e.g. substantiated infinitives, adjectives ending with *-bar*, *-los*, *-rich*, *-arm*, *-free*, *-fest*, multi-word complexes, etc.) and also syntax (e.g. functional verb structures, ellipses with infinitive, etc.). Such language features can effectively be practised with the help of written or oral corpora for the German language.

4.2. Peer learning as an essential part of technical language teaching

As discussed above, the construct of technical language competence is in most respects explained by the general linguistic competences, as described in the CEFR. At this point, we argue that describing specific can-do statements for technical language competence – especially for the lower levels of linguistic competence – would be extremely useful, for language teachers, curriculum designers and assessment experts alike. However, to define technical language competence separated from other linguistic competencies would be less effective. The next useful step would be to propose a more fruitful didactic stance that differs from the often unsuccessful didactic/methodological approach implemented so far (see Introduction). The usage-based didactic approach argued for in our paper is rooted in Vygotsky's (1978) *Zone of Proximal Development*. Although the notion was introduced by Vygotsky with reference to child education, its sociocultural basis serves the purposes of this paper. The scholar defines the notion of proximal development as *'the distance be-*

tween the actual development level as determined through independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers' (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Adult learners of languages for specific purposes, that are in the process of acquiring a language for professional reasons in the target land, can be considered as novice learners that can perform neither the needed linguistic competencies nor their already acquired professional competencies at their full capacity, since their successful implementation depends on their language skills. In this sense, they have to cover the distance between their actual and potential language-dependent professional expertise. They can perform their professional competencies unaided, but need guidance when tackling technical language-related tasks and situations. In our case of novice adult learners (migrant healthcare staff), the more knowledgeable other who aids them in acquiring the related technical language, is the foreign language teacher, who in turn cannot play the role of the knowledgeable other regarding the norms, jargon, etc. of the specific domain of language use.

According to our adaptation of the *Zone of Proximal Development*, a more sustainable usage-based didactic approach would be for novice adult learners to acquire technical language through the interaction with healthcare professionals in the target land, native and/or non-native speakers, who have reached a functional level of technical linguistic competence and already work in the field. The main reasons to propose this approach are: (1) regarding the teaching of technical and, in this case, medical language the foreign language classroom becomes a locus of simulation, since the situations in which linguistic content has to be taught go beyond the scope of sociolinguistic experience of the average language teacher; (2) drawing on Hall (2004), foreign language learning can be viewed as an interactional achievement. Especially with respect to the conversational competence of adult novice language learners in the healthcare profession that need to linguistically, socially and technically adapt to the communication style of

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different social actors (doctors to doctors, doctors to nurses, doctors to patients, nurses to patient, doctors to relatives, etc.), to incorporate the dynamic interplay of different interactional procedures to the teaching practice is vital. This goal can be reached by adopting a didactic approach based on the *Zone of Proximal Development*. Such an approach could be achieved by a dual teaching model. Practical technical language training should be a big part of traditional language for specific purposes lessons. Especially in healthcare professions, where practical training is a crucial part of subject curricula, practical technical language training could be easily integrated. In this way, the type of learners that concerns us in this paper will acquire the needed language skills while interacting in the target language with the other social actors in the field (professionals, patients, etc.), who in turn perform the role of the knowledgeable other. Technical language learning will then be embedded in sociocultural reality and target the simultaneous development of both technical and general language skills, of situated sociocultural experiences by the learners, of problem-solving language-dependent competence and of peer learning as a competences integration strategy. The question that arises next is whether peers can only assist in technical language learning through interacting with novices and exemplifying technical language in situ or whether they also serve a more communicative purpose.

4.3. The role of mediation in LSP teaching

Drawing upon the CEFR 2020 Companion volume (North & Piccardo, 2020), either native or non-native peers with a sufficient language level

can act both as social, cultural and cross-linguistic mediators. In the dual teaching model proposed here, peers that have the same L1 with doctors and nurses that migrate to Germany could act as cross-linguistic mediators during practical technical language training. This means that language learners will practise interactive, oral mediation in the specific situational context, for which they are preparing and in which they are generally interested. Mediation activities could then be designed for implementation both in and outside of the classroom. In this way, authenticity of mediation activities will be ensured.

In the context of practical technical language training, not only peers with the same L1 can act as mediators. Peers that are native speakers can assume the role of the social and cultural mediator. Mediation also involves mediating concepts and peer native speakers can *'facilitate access to knowledge and concepts for others, particularly if they may be unable to access this directly on their own'* (North & Piccardo, 2020, p. 91), thus assuming the role of the knowledgeable other that mediates this socially and culturally shaped knowledge to the novice (Schwartz, 2020).

Especially in higher language levels (B1-C2), where the language learner has acquired a working knowledge of the general language and builds on technical jargon, the contribution of native peers as social and cultural mediators is essential, since the learner will develop a more in-depth understanding and awareness of concepts (Hu, 2019). In turn, peers with the same L1 may prove more effective as cross-linguistic mediators for learners at lower competence levels (A1, A2), basically because at those levels they can aim at strengthening the learner's repertoire, acting as intermediaries between learners and native peers and spurring learner reflection.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the teaching of languages for specific purposes is as relevant as ever, especially since the post-2010 period where the brain drain peaked in countries stricken by the economic crisis (Greece, Spain, Italy, etc.). In our paper the fo-

cus of interest lies on didactic interventions which are regarded as necessary, since feedback from adult learners regarding traditional technical language courses has not been positive.

The first recommendation for further educational/didactic research and implementation concerns the proposed dual model of teaching languages for specific purposes. We see the need for a holistic framework that combines traditional technical language teaching practices and practical technical language training. The framework, which is under preparation, uses German as a language for medical purposes as an example, approaches the definition of technical language competence in connection with the described competences in the CEFR, proposes concrete level descriptors and illustrates specific didactic interventions based on the propositions made in this paper.

As far as mediation is concerned, it should be an important part of the teaching of languages for specific purposes. Few researchers have looked at mediation – due to its complex nature – in the teaching of technical languages (see Chovancová, 2016; 2018), so a number of parameters still remain to be addressed. Learners should engage in mediation activities, especially regarding oral mediation (Dendrinos, 2016), because the communicative skill of mediating information influences the discourse between doctor/nurse and patient/relative. The CEFR 2020 Companion provides mediation descriptors for levels A1 to C2, which can also be implemented in the dual teaching model proposed here, with modifications regarding the design of mediation activities for technical language lessons and practical technical language training respectively.

In linguistics in general as well as in technical foreign language teaching, it is currently primarily electronic corpora that open up new perspectives. Although it is evident that corpus work is applicable to foreign and technical language teaching, the idea does not seem to have established itself yet. More research dedicated to technical language teaching, and especially the corpus-driven teaching of jargon (Lippert, 1999; Beyer & Schulz, 2020), is needed.

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NIKOLAOS KATSAOUNIS

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki | University Campus, 54124 Thessaloniki, Greece
katsaounis@del.auth.gr

ULRICH STEINMÜLLER

Technical University of Berlin | 135 Straße des 17. Juni, 10623 Berlin, Germany
ulrich.steinmueller@tu-berlin.de

Original Research

Emergency remote teaching and learning in simultaneous interpreting: Capturing experiences of teachers and students

by Alex Krouglov

Alex Krouglov University College London, UK a.krouglov@ucl.ac.uk

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The article covers the transfer to emergency remote teaching and learning in Simultaneous Interpreting (SI) during the Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown in early 2020. The study aims to establish some approaches as to how the emergency move to online training was conducted, what we can learn from this experience and what were the main challenges. The article presents and analyses the findings of the survey of teaching staff and students in seven universities in Europe and Australia. Twelve interviews were conducted remotely with selected members of teaching staff and students. The study confirms that universities were able to complete their modules in Simultaneous Interpreting by making arrangements for a smooth transfer to remote training in synchronous and asynchronous modes. The transfer and emergency remote teaching and learning mostly depended on the prior experience of teaching teams in delivering online workshops and webinars and their close engagement with students. The role of course or module leader has been outlined as key to providing leadership during the transfer to emergency arrangements during lockdown. One of the conclusions of this study addresses the need for teaching remote interpreting within university Interpreting or Translation and Interpreting courses in view of the current situation with the Covid-19 pandemic and possible new requirements in the future.

KEYWORDS: emergency remote teaching and learning, simultaneous interpreting, online training, cognitive strain, social interaction



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1. INTRODUCTION

The unprecedented emergency situation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic led to lockdowns in numerous countries around the world. In response to this, many universities had to move teaching to

a remote mode in a very short period of time in order for the students to complete their year of studies and in some countries, to make necessary arrangements for an alternative online assessment at the end of the academic year. The speed and ur-

'The remote synchronous mode also requires the availability of at least dual channels of communication: one for the incoming presentation or speech in the source language (SL) and another one for the interpretation in the target language (TL) delivered by a student. The synchronous mode is achieved by continuous use of both channels when practising simultaneous interpreting'

gency of changes was extraordinary since universities and many programmes had to adapt to the new environment in order to ensure that students achieved their targets for the academic year. In view of this situation, many teaching teams had to improvise quickly without any appropriate guidance or infrastructural support (Rapanta et al., 2020). In this respect, the provision of training during the lockdown can be considered as emergency remote teaching and learning (ERTL) (Hodges et al., 2020).

The present research explores some aspects of the move to emergency remote synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning in conference simultaneous interpreting (SI). This particular subject of study was chosen for our research since even in face-to-face mode it requires the use of specialised equipment incorporating, apart from microphone and earphones in a soundproof booth, a video screen and a computer with Internet access. Our interest was focused on the ability of academic teams teaching SI to cope with the task of transferring training to online synchronous mode in a matter of days or weeks. The remote synchronous mode also requires the availability of at least dual channels of communication: one for the incoming presentation or speech in the source language (SL) and another one for the interpretation in the target language (TL) delivered by a student. The synchronous mode is achieved by continuous use of both channels when practising SI. At the same time, the existing IT systems for online

teaching used by universities have only one channel, which presented a significant challenge for trainers of SI. The present exploratory research aims to assess approaches used at seven universities around the world providing emergency online synchronous training in SI during the lockdown period in March – June 2020. The research also aims to explore how academic teams and students managed the transfer from face-to-face to online synchronous SI training and identify challenges in preserving the quality of output.

2. TEACHING REMOTE INTERPRETING BEFORE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The development of ICT influenced the interpreting profession and the introduction of video-mediated interpreting by some multinational organisations. One of the earliest experiments was carried out by UNESCO in 1976 linking the headquarters in Paris with a conference centre in Nairobi (Carl & Braun, 2017). This experiment pushed other organisations to trial online interpreting and a variety of ICT systems by other international organisations, such as the European Commission and the European Parliament as well as other bodies such as the United Nations. Covid-19 has dramatically changed how we work, and interpretation was not exempt since many organisations have explored further the use of remote simultaneous interpreting (RSI) systems since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020 (Chaoui, 2020).

Online synchronous teaching and learning has attracted more and more attention in the 21st century. Some authors thought that synchronous teaching relies heavily on the teacher, that it is good for answering questions and troubleshooting, while a student-centred approach can be developed in asynchronous online teaching which has to become central for learning (Murphy et al., 2011). The statement that synchronous teaching becomes secondary or supporting teaching and learning in asynchronous mode may sound somewhat misleading since in both synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning teachers have key positions, however their role may change.

Means et al. (2014) provide the most comprehensive study of different types of online learning and their effectiveness. They argue that student outcomes arise from implementation or how the teaching and learning are conducted, the context, and learner characteristics and learners' abilities to interact effectively with technology, and not from technology alone. The authors consider the implementation stage of online learning and various forms of online learning for specific kinds of students, subject areas, and contexts, and identify nine dimensions, such as modality, pacing, student-instructor ratio, pedagogy, instructor and student role online, online communication synchrony, role of online assessments, and source of feedback (Means et al., 2014).

Another area which drew the attention of scholars was around the transfer to online teaching and learning, how the move is managed and the requirement for the adaptation of approaches in teaching and how the modules are designed and structured (Boling et al., 2012; Koehler & Mishra, 2009). The authors saw the transformation of routines or the way teaching and learning was organised as the main goal in the transfer to online mode. A similar situation was witnessed in teaching interpreting where some early synchronous interaction was limited to text messaging, thus mostly considering some basic forms of asynchronous learning and limited forms of synchronous learning (Braun, 2013). Alternatively, some authors considered the use of digital materials in the physical classroom and the possibility of students using them during their self-study periods (Mayor et al., 2007).

Moser-Mercer (2005) considered the development of online interpreting using the first controlled experiment to evaluate human factors and technical arrangements in remote interpreting where such factors as *'a sense of presence, such as degree of control, immediacy of control, anticipation of events, mode of control and the modifiability of physical environments'* were *'often compromised in a remote setting'* (Moser-Mercer, 2005, p. 79). These findings have had a significant impact on the development of the profession and online

'The main objective of ERTL is to provide access to teaching and learning in a new environment where face-to-face teaching is not possible. The scale and timing of this transfer to the ERTL was perhaps unimaginable in the pre-Internet era'

teaching and learning where a blended approach has gained more popularity. D'Hayer (2012) argues that technology offers unique benefits, considering collective learning as a crucial part of public service interpreting. However, perhaps the most overarching analysis of online teaching and learning in interpreting is provided by Clifford (2018) where he analyses previous research in the field and examines the nature of online learning in interpreting through different types of interactions, such as learner-content, learner-instructor, and learner-learner. He also provides valuable examples of remote teaching and learning at Glendon Campus of the York University in Canada.

What is obvious from previous research (see Clifford, 2018; D'Hayer, 2012; Hino, 2021) is that online courses require significant time for preparation and development or adaptation. However, in contrast to programmes that are planned from the beginning and designed to be online, *'emergency remote teaching (ERT)* is a temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate delivery mode due to crisis circumstances' (Hodges et al., 2020). This definition clearly shows that the ERTL is an immediate response to external circumstances, and academic staff may not have time to adapt materials or approaches for the online mode. The main objective of ERTL is to provide access to teaching and learning in a new environment where face-to-face teaching is not possible. The scale and timing of this transfer to the ERTL was perhaps unimaginable in the pre-Internet era. Many universities had to move the delivery to online mode in a matter of days in March 2020, often relying on academic staff and their ability to improvise, what Bryson and Andres (2020) called *'responsive improvisation'*. These authors specifically

address the issue of extensive and intensive approaches to facilitating online student learning encounters, suggesting that the curation of resources to support asynchronous learning (extensive approach) is reinforced by intensive online synchronous learning encounters (intensive approach) (Bryson & Andres, 2020).

When analysing the issue of synchronous online teaching, some authors established that it may require more concentration from teaching staff and therefore be considered more tiring and time-consuming as teachers have to work harder to 'decipher' non-verbal and social clues using video links with students (Bryson & Andres, 2020; Desai et al., 2009). Bearing in mind that the development of an online module or course usually takes many months, while the switch to ERTL was conducted in a very short period of time, it could have a negative impact on teaching staff and the quality of modules and courses, accessibility to learning materials and the achievement of learning outcomes. Thus, the current research attempts to analyse what impact ERTL had on teaching and learning in Simultaneous Interpreting.

3. METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

The study was conducted in August/September 2020 since it was important to give more time to academic staff and postgraduate students in SI to assess fully the transfer to online training in an emergency situation in March/June 2020 and look back at the experience they had during the lockdown. It was also useful to analyse this experience at this particular stage since many teachers were preparing for the start of the new academic year, and in most cases, it meant that they had to develop the entire programme for online SI teaching and learning. Participants in the study were academics/professionals teaching SI in the 2019/20 academic year and postgraduate students in SI modules majoring in Conference Interpreting or Translation and Interpreting, at seven universities in Australia, Belgium, Spain and the UK. Academic staff and postgraduate students from the following universities participated in the current research: Comillas Pontifical University, Spain; Heriot-Watt

University, UK; Ghent University, Belgium; KU Leuven University, Belgium; London Metropolitan University, UK; Monash University, Australia and Westminster University, UK. 17 members of teaching staff participated in the research by providing answers to the questionnaire. There were two members of staff who did not specify the name of their universities in the questionnaires. Overall, 24 students took part in the research and provided answers to our questionnaire. It is worth mentioning that both teachers and students participating in the research showed significant interest in the topic and provided comprehensive answers to all open questions included in the survey.

At the initial stage of this research, two anonymous short exploratory questionnaires, one for postgraduate students and one for teachers of SI, were designed and first piloted with a group of four students and five teachers in August 2020. The main objective of the survey was to explore the topic and identify common themes since the transfer to emergency teaching and learning had not happened before on this scale when universities had to move all teaching to remote mode. The questionnaires had open questions in order to create some space so that respondents could express themselves freely on any aspects of ERTL in SI and identify issues relevant to them, their group or specific tasks. This was also important because the questionnaire was planned for a number of countries and universities where conference SI was taught during the 2019/20 academic year. The pilot survey enabled us to establish several minor issues and enhance the clarity of some questions used in the questionnaires. The questionnaire asked participants to comment on various aspects of online teaching and learning, e.g. about previous experience in online/remote training and learning, how the switch from face-to-face to online teaching and learning was conducted, what went particularly well and what challenges participants experienced during online teaching and learning and whether students would be interested in attending another online course in conference simultaneous interpreting. The questions for teachers were slightly modified and included additional

questions asking them about previous experience in teaching SI or any other subject remotely, whether they had interpreted remotely before, whether there were any variations in student performance in the online part of the course in comparison with the previous face-to-face parts of the course. Additionally, there was a question about online assessment and exams and whether respondents experienced any difficulties because of the move to online teaching and learning. However, the findings in this part of the research and some other issues were not included in this article.

The approach of introducing similar questions in both questionnaires enabled us to establish and compare the experience of students and teachers during online teaching and learning and identifying specific issues which they observed during ERTL. The questionnaires also had two closed questions. One of them specifically addressed the move to ERTL and another one dealt with the format of online SI training, whether it was similar to previous face-to-face training. In addition to this, students and teachers were given an opportunity to explain further their answers. This mix of open and closed questions enabled us to identify and code the main common themes and specify key tendencies and issues experienced by both teachers and students during the move to ERTL in spring 2020.

The present study adopts qualitative research methods guided by grounded theory (Patton, 2002) in the investigation of ERTL in SI. The qualitative method was chosen in order to identify the main approaches and tendencies in teaching SI during ERTL and to gain a better understanding of how the process of transfer to ERTL was conducted and whether the new remote mode of SI teaching and learning was effective from the point of view of teachers and learners. The qualitative method used in this research also allowed researchers to capture wider issues associated with ERTL in SI and identify some aspects of best practice in these emerging circumstances. The data received from exploratory questionnaires was triangulated with the data obtained during semi-structured interviews with individual students and teachers in participating universities. This approach enabled us to confirm and

expand various findings identified from the answers to open questions in questionnaires and strengthen their validity. Overall, twelve interviews were conducted online using Zoom, WhatsApp or Skype: 6 interviews with students and 6 with teachers in participating universities at the end of August/beginning September 2020. A number of students and teachers volunteered to be interviewed in our research. The selection of candidates for an interview was based on the university and country they represented as our aim was to have a wide representation of universities and countries in this research. A semi-structured interview format was used which allowed for interviews to be both situational and conversational, as topics were identified in advance and facilitated a flexible approach where the exact wording of questions was not important. The elicitation of more in-depth and useful responses from participants was key in these research interviews (Robson & McCartan, 2016). All interviews were initially recorded and when full transcription of their recordings was completed all recordings were deleted in line with research ethics requirements. All personal names, names of universities and other references were deleted from transcripts in order to keep all records confidential.

Comments of participants in 41 questionnaires (24 students and 17 teachers) and 12 interviews (6 students and 6 teachers) formed a major part of the data for this study, and the qualitative analysis of their feedback is presented in the next part of this article. The findings are split between feedback from students and teachers, however the comparative analysis of our findings is also provided in the discussion and concluding remarks. All references to quotes from questionnaires will be presented as SQ + ordinal number for students' replies and TQ + number for teachers' replies, while quotes from interviews as SIN + ordinal number for students and TIN + number for teaching staff.

Data analysis was conducted concurrently with data collection. Notes were taken during and after each interview, especially about emerging themes, and some adjustments were made for subsequent interviews. This included rephrasing questions or

adding new lines of inquiry. For example, a teacher and a couple of students mentioned the role of their course leader or course director during the move to ERTL, saying that the support was particularly helpful not only for the smooth transition to online mode but also enabled effective and flexible teaching and learning for the rest of the course. Both teachers and students were asked about the role of course leaders and how they saw it during the emergency online teaching and learning in their interviews. This approach enabled us to identify thematic connections and verify data received in exploratory questionnaires.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Previous experience in remote teaching, learning and interpreting

This research aimed at establishing previous experience in remote teaching, learning and interpreting of participating teachers and students, and whether it had any impact on the provision of emergency remote teaching and learning during the lockdown. This context could also explain how students and teachers coped with the emergency move to RTL in SI. The first set of questions in the questionnaire to teachers covered three fields: (1) whether they had attended any online/remote courses in Interpreting or other subjects before March 2020, what was their experience and whether it was a degree or professional or other course; (2) whether they had had any experience in remote interpreting; (3) whether they had had any experience in teaching SI before 2020. At the same time, students were asked only about their attendance in online/remote courses.

4.1.1. Previous experience of teaching staff

It was interesting to establish that over half of all teachers (11 out of 17) participating in this research had had some previous experience in remote teaching and learning or interpreting before March 2020. However, even among those who had had some experience there were some variations in the exposure: from attendance in an online course on approaches to teaching (TQ17) to arranging and teaching synchronous virtual classes

between universities as well as online sessions with international organisations (TQ9). The engagement of universities with interpreting departments of major international organisations, such as the United Nations, the European Commission, the European Parliament and others, as well as bilateral and multilateral relations between universities, enabled many academic teams to develop synchronous virtual joint workshops and training sessions. However, in most cases, they covered consecutive interpreting (TQ 9, 10, 14, 17). Such previous exposure to online training and various social platforms for communication (e.g. MeWe, WhatsApp) as well as online teaching resources (e.g. SCICTrain, speech repositories, YouTube) and webstreaming during face-to-face teaching made the transition to emergency online teaching smoother and more straightforward.

Some members of staff (9 out of 17) were also practising interpreters and had some experience in telephone interpreting for local government and in the health service. While several participants (TQ 11, 13) found the experience positive, a few others complained about poor sound in these interpreting situations (3 out of 17), e.g. *'When I interpreted where I was the only one working remotely and the client and service provider in the same room in person, it was hard as they had the phone on speaker and the sound was awful'* (TQ15).

However, there were no colleagues who had experience in teaching RSI (Remote Simultaneous Interpreting) as a full degree or professional course or previously engaged as an interpreter in an event which was interpreted simultaneously from a remote location.

4.1.2. Previous experience of students

Previous experience in attending online courses was somewhat limited. On the whole, several students (7 out of 24) reported that they attended online events and webinars organised by the university where they studied during the academic year 2019/20. For example, joint online classes with other universities or international organisations (SQ 7, 23, 24). Some other students mentioned regular use of online resources and speeches for

interpreting practice (SQ 3, 14, 22). One respondent mentioned the attendance of asynchronous online short courses Introduction in the Interpreting for the Judicial system and Telephone Interpreting Refresher which were only a few hours long and where participants had access to resources such as PPT (Powerpoint) and video presentations and where participants had to complete the course on their own (SQ17).

A few students (3 out of 24) wrote about their attendance at online conferences on interpreting or watching recordings of online courses (SQ7, 23, 24). Overall, students were positive about the attendance at online events and short courses, however it was obvious that the experience was sparse,

and the majority of students confirmed that they had no experience in online training and learning before March 2020.

4.2. Transition to ERTL

The majority of students (20 out of 24) thought that the transition to ERTL went smoothly and they were clear about the process (Figure 1). This is undoubtedly a significant achievement of the academic teams engaged in the process. However, the views of teaching staff split almost equally between agreeing that it went generally smoothly, and those who disagreed with this. In this part of our research, we aim to establish why there was a difference in views between students and staff.

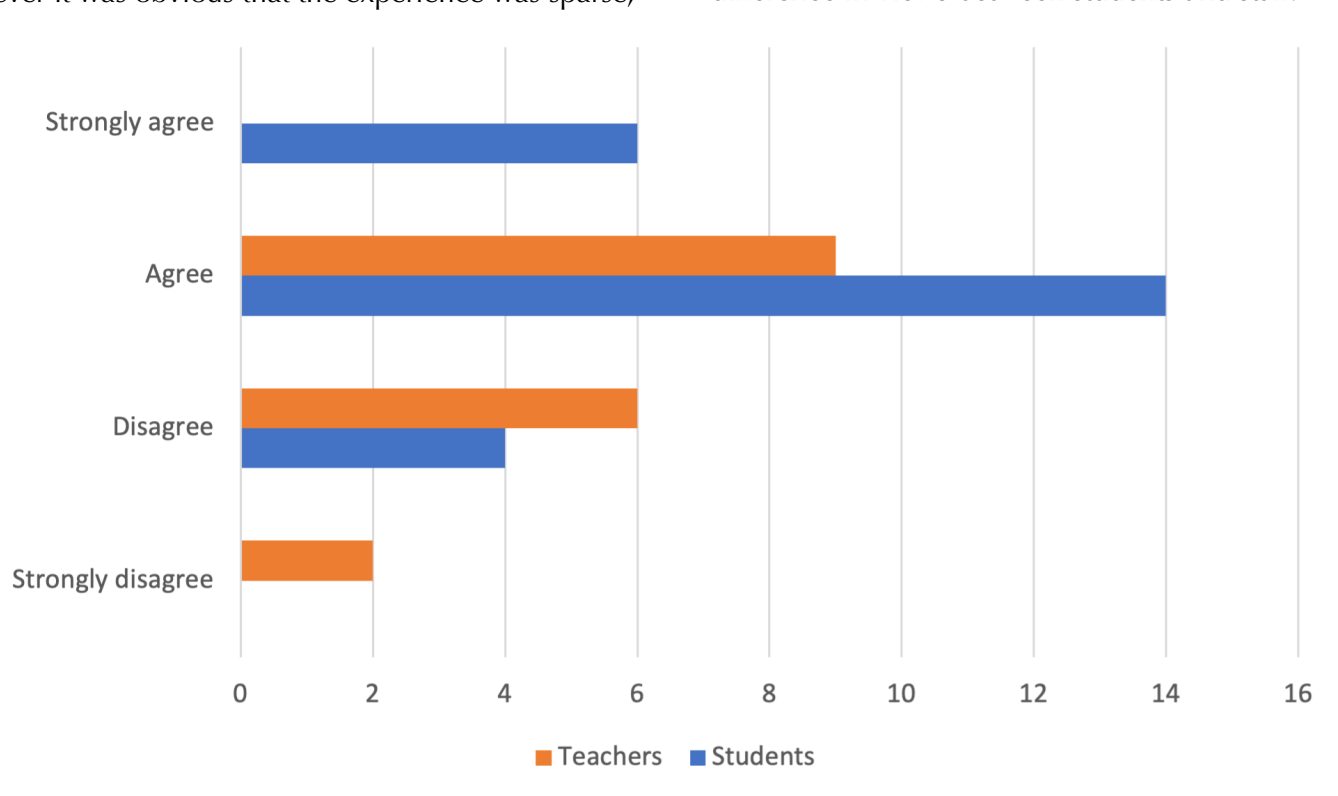


Figure 1. Answers to the question about the switch from face-to-face to ERTL, whether it was smooth, and respondents were clear about the process

There were several reasons for this discrepancy in attitudes between the two groups of respondents. Firstly, we need to analyse why there was significant discrepancy in the views of teachers about the move to ERTL in SI. In this respect, it will be good to analyse variations in approaches and explore possible links to previous experience. The

data collected enabled us to identify three broad groups of academic teams and the way they approached ERTL in SI at their universities.

1. Academic teams which had accumulated considerable experience in online teaching and learning prior to March 2020 and had no problem in switching to online mode for the rest of the

course by identifying the best available and affordable technical solution for the provision of ERTL. Some colleagues in this group (7 out of 17 teachers) confirmed that they were confident in technology and the use of various online resources. They already used many online resources during the face-to-face part of the course, such as speech repository, SCICTrain, and worked closely with the students in developing their interpreting skills and organised online videoconferences and virtual classes with other universities and international organisations from the very beginning of the academic year. They also developed trust and the students' confidence that the team of trainers *'knew what they were doing'* (TIN1, 5, 6). This approach paid off when the transfer took place during the emergency situation and enabled smooth transition to an online mode of module delivery.

One of the themes which came up when discussing the transition to online training was the role of the course or module leader or director in ensuring efficient transition in these emergency circumstances. The ability to work like *'a conductor of the orchestra'* and create a space for trainers and students to work effectively and achieve results is crucial in the success of any course, and what is even more challenging is *'to recreate that space online and to make sure that learning is going to happen'* (TIN1). Course leaders were instrumental in the provision of training for staff, exploring and suggesting solutions for online delivery of modules and courses in a very short period of time during the move to ERTL (TQ15, 17, TIN 5, 6).

2. The team had reasonable experience in developing materials for online teaching and learning but had to follow the university's strict rules about the use of online platforms. In this case, the teaching of SI was moved to asynchronous mode where the students provided recordings of their interpretation for the feedback of their teachers.

Some teams with less experience in delivering virtual and online training but with experience in developing materials for online teaching and learning, especially in asynchronous mode, faced the issue of strict university policies about the use of various tools for synchronous online teaching.

For example, one team reported that the use of Blackboard Collaborate Ultra was compulsory. This was the only platform they were *'officially allowed to use, which was really stupid because it did not work in some countries'* (TIN3). The team did not have enough experience in using Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, which worked *'in a satisfactory fashion to an extent'* as it was difficult to incorporate SI in this platform. *'Class design had to be adjusted: students were given preparatory work (simultaneous interpreting to do in their own time), and the sessions were more dedicated to feedback'* (TIN3).

A similar experience was reported by another team (TIN4). They had to improvise and transfer the SI practice into asynchronous mode when students received speeches for interpreting in their own time and later sent the recordings of their interpreting to teachers for their feedback.

3. The academic teams and students had a close collaboration on the course which resulted in students suggesting the best platform for ERTL. In the majority of cases, this led to a combination of synchronous and asynchronous modes during this emergency situation.

In some instances, students took the lead during the transfer to ERTL in SI since they thought that they had more exposure to the existing online platforms and could identify a better platform for remote training in SI. They proposed platforms to teaching staff and in one case, a student suggested Discord, which he had been using for some time. In his interview he said that, *'I noticed that language schools were using Zoom... So, we used it from 1st April until the end of the semester. We used it in combination with Zoom'* (SIN1). Lecturers quickly adapted their teaching to the new medium and worked closely with their students in organising courses through Discord. In some instances, students recorded themselves *'and then sent the audio files to the professor for feedback'* (SIN1). In a way, this was a move to a synchronous/asynchronous mixed mode in ERTL.

There were some issues in the transfer of SI mock conferences to a remote mode. Almost all colleagues and students who participated in this

research reported certain challenges and limitations they experienced when they delivered mock conferences online. On the whole, *'the transformation wasn't as smooth' for bi-weekly mock conferences organised by various professors of each language*. *'It turned out that it was impossible to gather all these people around a single virtual environment'* (SIN1). As a result, in some universities, mock conferences were substituted by self-study, where the engagement of students was variable.

The role of course leaders also transpired as key in this group of universities since they had to think about students and teachers/professionals engaged in ERTL. In some instances, there was more thinking about the centrality of students in the process which led to some frustrations and anxiety of teaching staff who felt they were neglected and found it difficult to provide reasonable teaching during ERTL (TQ3, 6, 16. TIN5). This could have an impact on the overall results in this part of the

research where the feedback from teachers was split between those who thought that the process was smooth and those who experienced more challenges, which will be covered further in 4.4.

4.3. The format of online classes

A similar split between teachers who thought about changes in the format of online classes in SI was observed in this research (Figure 2). To some extent, this was the result of some training in SI in a few universities being moved to asynchronous mode and although students were generally satisfied, it transpired that the move was viewed by some teachers as less effective and efficient due to the time gap between the actual production and recording of interpreting by students and the feedback provided by teachers. In view of this, there were teachers (4 out of 17) who expressed some concern about the practice and whether it might have an impact on learning (TQ8, 11, 12).

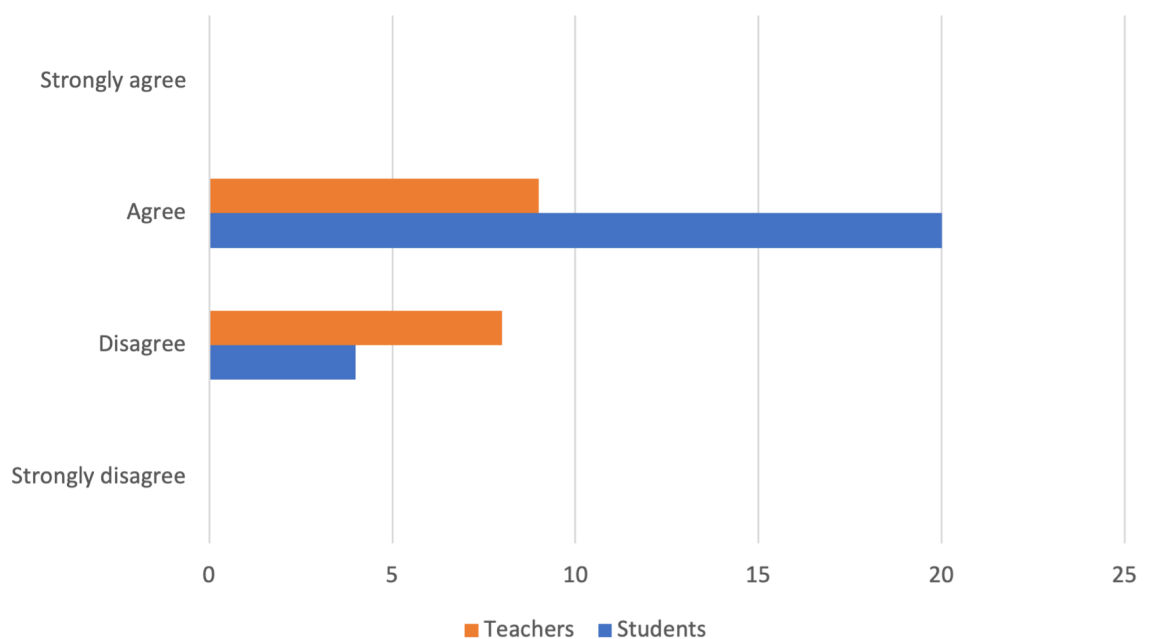


Figure 2. Answers to the question about the format of online classes and whether they were similar to face-to-face classes they had before the lockdown

Some teachers (5 out of 17 respondents) considered synchronous SI as the most challenging part of the moving of interpreting courses to ERTL since there was no adequate platform *'for large groups of students and numerous language combi-*

nations' (TQ11, 15, 17). Some other teachers (3 out of 17) thought that *'there was no time to develop new approaches in this emergency situation'*, however they *'had to adjust activities to the new environment'* (TQ8, 12) and therefore the format

‘Academic staff, especially with less previous exposure to online training, were worried about the effectiveness of their sessions and the impact on the learning process and outcomes. Another reason was that academic teams received less support from their course/module leaders or the universities. On the contrary, students found the format of classes more or less similar and did not notice many issues which concerned academic staff’

of SI training began to change but rather gradually. Teachers in a couple universities also reported that there were no booths in ERTL, *‘that is what had to be adapted’* (TQ3, 15) and they had to divide the practice element into several parts because they thought that *‘giving instant feedback was not possible, unless in a breakout room. The issue was the time it took to get from one breakout room to the next and gauging the length of activities’* (TQ16). Some difficulties in operating online platforms were due to insufficient experience in using those tools prior to ERTL.

In some instances, teachers were also concerned that it was strange for students to be in separate rooms and not to have the same interaction (TQ15). Overall, teachers thought that they managed their SI sessions in a slightly different format where some *‘activities had to be altered to suit the challenges’* and introduce more pre-recorded work (TQ16). Academic staff, especially with less previous exposure to online training, were worried about the effectiveness of their sessions and the impact on the learning process and outcomes. Another reason was that academic teams received less support from their course/module leaders or the universities.

On the contrary, students found the format of classes more or less similar and did not notice many issues which concerned academic staff. Yet, during interviews with students, it transpired that

some students (3 out of 24) put ‘agree’ to this question, however they felt uncertain about the best way of answering this question since in some instances they had mixed feelings about it. On the one hand, SI tutorials were similar according to the majority of students, but, on the other hand, they were different because, for example, they were connected with their lecturer remotely and there were no booths (SIN1, 4, 5).

Many students and teachers described certain difficulties in keeping the format of SI mock conferences. In some instances, it was technically possible to provide only one option of SI into ‘A’ languages, while in other cases, there were reports of limitations and temporal inactivity of some students due to the nature of online arrangements when, for example, they had to wait for other students to complete their interpreting of the speech or for teachers to provide feedback to other students (SQ13, 17; SIN5, 6; TQ17, TIN5). These delays or limitations contributed to a slower pace in mock conferences formats used by universities at the time.

4.4. What were the main challenges in the provision of ERTL in Simultaneous Interpreting?

4.4.1. Technical challenges

One of the main challenges mentioned by almost all students and teachers were issues related to technical parameters of platforms and stable Internet connection. In many instances, students and teachers had to use two devices in online SI training, and this arrangement presented certain challenges. A few students wrote about their frustration when facing technical issues, e.g. *‘when I got my first internet connection problems, I imagined that it isn’t the same as interpreting in the interpreting booths. Since simultaneous interpreting is already really hard, having these technical problems, we got more frustrated’* (SQ7). Many students (18 out of 24) reported stressful situations related to unstable Internet connection when they could not see the video (SIN1) or missed parts of the original speech (SQ15). Poor sound quality was another issue observed in this research, e.g. *‘Sometimes the sound wouldn’t be clear or loud enough. Or there*

would be chunks of speech that would be cut off altogether. This would make it very difficult to concentrate on the speech and provide a good interpretation' (SQ17).

Students and teachers tried to resolve these issues either by using various options of connecting to the Internet, e.g. using an ethernet cable, or sometimes by switching off videos and moving 'to audio only. This improved the quality of the connection. But of course, when you interpret for a lot of people you have a lot of problems' (SIN2). Students could also open links to recorded speeches locally on their other devices which could improve the streaming. At the time of lockdown, the network also seemed to be significantly overloaded with all universities and schools delivering training online, and businesses and other organisations moving to remote delivery of services and business. However, one recent research at the Politecnico di Torino shows that, on the whole, university IT facilities and the Internet proved to be robust and coped successfully with challenges during the lockdown and maintained university operations (Favale et al., 2020). Our current research did not register any incidents which led to major breakdowns in communication or disruptions of online teaching and learning during the lockdown period.

Some students and teachers were not familiar with the platforms and software used for online SI training, and it took them more time to learn how to use online platforms for their synchronous sessions. For example, one of the students reported that 'there were some problems with Discord, especially for someone who is not used to all of this' (SIN3). There were occasional comments from students that 'some professors were ready to adapt but some others were not fond of doing it...' (SIN3). One of the course leaders described the situation even in more detail. She thought that 50% of teaching staff were 'scared of technology. Getting them to use any technology during their class is like already a hurdle... I had to connect with them on the system and had practice sessions with them' (TIN3). This was a challenge in some teams, as discussed in 3.2 above. At the same

'Many students and some teachers described how tired they were after hours in front of the screen without any breaks, and even a lunch break was not enough to restore the energy. In this respect, some students compared remote and face-to-face SI training where they were usually able to move to booths or back to the conference room and make some other physical movements which allowed them to change their positions and create a more dynamic atmosphere'

time, according to the feedback received from all participants, most of the students did not have any major issues when using new technologies.

Individual home situations of students and teachers had some impact on the performance of participants in teaching and learning. During the lockdown, many people worked or studied from home. One student reported that there was a lack of understanding from her teachers because of the background noise she had as her partner was also working from home and had meetings and she 'had a feeling that teachers sometimes did not respect this' (SIN1). There were a couple of similar cases in our data, however, overall, these instances were not systemic.

4.4.2. Other challenges: from cognitive strain to lack of social interaction

Many students and teachers mentioned heavier cognitive strain in their replies in questionnaires and interviews. One student reported that when they moved to ERTL 'classes that normally lasted around four hours were forcibly shortened, since it makes no sense to practise if students and/or teachers are exhausted' (SQ11). Many students and some teachers described how tired they were after hours in front of the screen without any breaks, and even a lunch break was not enough to restore the energy. In this respect, some students

compared remote and face-to-face SI training where they were usually able to move to booths or back to the conference room and make some other physical movements which allowed them to change their positions and create a more dynamic atmosphere. While in the remote mode, the situation was extremely static, and there was hardly any movement for at least two hours in a row, which was extremely tiring for students and some teachers. A couple of teachers called it *'computer fatigue'* as this is what they could see every day from morning till evening without going anywhere (TQ15-17). This finding confirms earlier findings made by Moser-Mercer (2003) who observed a more rapid decline in the performance of interpreters in remote interpreting in comparison with on-site performance.

In order to deal with tiredness and the static nature of online teaching and learning, some universities or rather course leaders began introducing longer and more regular breaks. One student mentioned that they had more breaks during online training (SIN2), while another student wrote in her questionnaire that *'this time we've got a 15min break after each hour of studying which is just great. It takes the pressure away from your body and gives your eyes and brain some resting time'* (SQ17). At the same time, the experience was also really exhausting for teachers as well who complained even about two-hour sessions: *'You need to do a proper break. It also depends on the students. Because some students are so eager, they do not mind but some of them are getting tired'* (TIN3).

In his interview, one student spoke about four-hour SI classes, where they interpreted speeches and did some other exercises in between which allowed them to relax. He also thought that the dynamics in the class had changed, and everything moved faster because *'in normal classes we listened to each other, compared and discussed and online it was impossible. The progression of texts accelerated and after two hours we were tired because actually it was non-stop interpreting'* (SIN4). However, many universities were more preoccupied with other issues and were more focused on

the technological tools (Rapanta et al., 2020) and did not consider changing the time allocated for online classes and introducing more substantial breaks across the board.

The cognitive load and tiredness of students also increased because they had to pay constant attention to various devices, their internet connection, recording facilities, their glossaries and other resources and follow all activities during their online class (TQ9, 10, 17). The combination of tiredness, screen fatigue and the working from home situation as well as limited opportunities for outside physical exercise had a negative impact on the level of concentration during interpreting classes. Staying focused due to being in a totally different environment was an issue reported by eight students (SQ1-4, 17, 18, 23, 24). One student wrote that *'it was not easy to concentrate while being in my very own living room or study room, and to remain focused throughout the lessons and activities we did'* (SQ3).

On the other hand, in the new environment of working from home, students reported that they generally felt less stress in comparison with being in a booth and being observed by everyone, e.g. *'I didn't experience the stress of interpreting in front of my teachers. Instead, I felt 'safe' behind my desk'* (SQ5). Another issue related to this challenge was the difficulty of recreating a conference situation for practising such key skills for interpreters as coping with stress and developing self-control when dealing with stressful situations and showing emotional resilience. However, some teachers and students were pointing to the fact that the need to deal with additional issues in remote interpreting mentioned above taught students how to stay in control of the situation and develop required skills.

Another issue which dominated in the feedback from both students and teachers was the lack of social interaction with peers. It was rated by some students as the most negative aspect of ERTL (SQ17, 18, 23, SIN1, 2, TIN 5, 6). Students missed the opportunity to discuss their progress with their peers and either vent their frustration or share their excitement about what was happening in their classes, tutorials, SI practice or simply to exchange

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views on various issues of interpreting. In the words of one student, the training was more 'mechanical' when 'the teacher was saying this and that, and we had to move to another exercise. Also, the feeling we had that we perhaps wanted more explanations, that we are neglected sometimes' (SIN1). Another student missed lunches with their peers and time for 'chatting and building up relationships. Some other students reported that they had informal meetings with other students on Zoom, however they could not 'replace a real face-to-face interaction' (SQ17).

Teachers in some universities realised that this was a major issue, that they experienced themselves the impact of lockdown and limited opportunities for communication and the absence of face-to-face socialising. In order to create at least some space, some teachers decided to offer students an early connection time on Zoom for those who wanted to have a chat before the start of the class (SQ17). Overall, it was challenging for students and teachers 'to feel connected, positive and in full shape' when everything went online (TQ9).

A major issue of 'presence' was reported by both teachers and students (SQ10, 23, 24, TQ 7, 12, 17, TIN5, 6). Some respondents thought that it was difficult to 'link with the audience' or 'get visual feedback from the audience' as it was not always clear what the participants were looking at and whether they could 'understand the interpretation and whether the students followed teachers' instructions' (TQ7). As a result, the following two aspects of the same issue were identified:

(1) inability to connect fully with the students since the screens, cameras, lighting and other technical issues did not allow teachers to see exactly what students were doing and what they thought about certain issues (TQ12, 17);

(2) it was difficult to connect with the imaginary audience for whom the interpretation was provided (SQ24), 'it felt like you are speaking to a black hole. You do not know whether anyone actually understood what you said. Perhaps, this is similar to radio and TV presenters who are not able to see the audience...' (TIN6).

Both teachers and students felt somewhat disconnected, which had an impact on the overall quality of presentations during interpretation exercises (SQ10, 23, TIN5). This confirms previous studies into remote SI summarised by Moser-Mercer (2005) where such factors as 'a sense of presence' have an impact on the production in a remote setting. More recent research conducted by the United Nations in the use of RSI during lockdown supports this conclusion and specifies other technical challenges, such as the quality of sound and video streaming (Chaoui, 2020).

Students and teachers also identified the absence of a booth as another challenge for SI training. Normally, students are taught how to work together and collaborate in the booth, e.g. they could not practise switching microphones with a booth partner (SQ1, 8). In a remote setting, all students worked individually and there was very little cooperation between them in the same language combination. Some teams of teachers introduced Jamboard (Google Workspace, 2021), which offered opportunities for collaboration in real time and could 'replicate the notepad in the booth. But yet again, it requires an additional tool' (TQ9). Such abundance of tools, platforms, and new approaches to learn and absorb in the last part of the course was not always welcomed by students who sometimes felt overwhelmed by the number of devices they had to operate in SI online classes.

Students from almost all universities raised the issue of the quality and regularity of feedback from teachers as one of the major challenges during ERTL (SQ 21, 22, SIN1-4). One student wrote that

'the quality and continuity of the feedback to students to improve interpreting performance took a toll ... due to the lack of familiarity (by teachers) with the medium' (SQ21). Another student provided more explanations in his interview stressing that *'we could do more exercises in the face-to-face course and get immediate feedback so that we do not forget what was actually happening during the interpreting'* (SIN1).

Teachers also raised other concerns, e.g. time difference and the ability to accommodate students in different time zones, the use of other additional tools in ERTL in SI, organisation and the provision of training for teaching staff, the amount of work teachers had to put into the preparation and provision of remote SI training and the lack of adequate recognition of their considerable efforts and additional time by universities during this difficult, stressful, and emotional time for many (TQ9-12, 17; TIN1-6). The parameters of this article do not allow us to cover all issues raised in this research. Some findings will be considered and presented in future articles on the topic of remote simultaneous interpreting training.

5. CONCLUSION

Irrespective of challenges and limitations experienced by academic teams teaching SI, it is important to note that teachers were able to complete their modules in SI by making arrangements for a smooth transfer to ERTL in synchronous and asynchronous modes. The smooth transfer and the choice of the mode mostly depended on the prior experience of the teaching team in delivering online workshops and webinars and their close engagement with students. In this respect, the role of the course or module leader/director has been outlined as key in providing leadership, a sense of direction and necessary training at a time of change. The organisational side of ERTL was challenging from both technical and pedagogical points of view and requires further research and experimental training as well as more sharing of practices between universities nationally and internationally. Perhaps, international organisations and the CIUTI could give greater impetus to this work.

'The need for remote interpreting is obvious, as there could be many other situations and circumstances where face-to-face meetings may not be possible for various reasons, and universities will need to respond to this new challenge and consider introducing changes in the current provision of simultaneous interpreting and interpreting as a whole'

The proposed direction of developing remote SI training either within the entire postgraduate course or as part of an SI module is based on the feedback from students, teachers and professionals who have already been directly engaged in some modes of remote interpreting after finishing their courses. Irrespective of numerous limitations of the remote SI discussed in this article, this mode remains key in the current circumstances and students will benefit from some exposure to it.

The proposed development could also enhance the methodology of RSI teaching as well as introduce new approaches in our current interpreting teaching and learning. This research confirmed that blended learning is here to stay but requires the creation of new methods and techniques based on examples of good practice, their analysis, and further studies across a wide range of institutions.

Many universities will continue to teach SI and other subjects remotely due to the pandemic situation. In this respect, this study will help teaching staff identify and consider issues and challenges which could be avoided in the provision of either fully or partially remote courses in interpreting. More specific issues identified for SI in this research are also applicable to a variety of subjects, for example, the issue of quality and regularity of the feedback to students as well as the availability of peer feedback.

However, the main challenge in remote SI teaching and learning is the provision of appropriate and affordable platforms for training SI and ensuring good internet connection for all participants

which in its turn will contribute to the improvement of the quality of sound and video streaming of speeches. These changes should be accompanied by more focused training of teaching staff which would allow them to practise the use of platforms for specific tasks in RSI classes and mock conferences.

New studies and practical experiments should address other emerging challenges for RSI teaching and learning identified in this research, e.g. cognitive strain, tiredness and computer fatigue, the ability to cope with stress when working remotely and developing self-control and resilience when dealing with stressful situations, the issue of 'presence' and how students can develop 'links with the audience', the absence of booths and many other important issues. The need for remote interpreting is obvious, as there could be many other situations and circumstances where face-to-face meetings may not be possible for various reasons, and universities will need to respond to this new

challenge and consider introducing changes in the current provision of simultaneous interpreting and interpreting as a whole.

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ALEX KROUGLOV

University College London | Gower Street, WC1E 6BT London, UK

a.krouglov@ucl.ac.uk

Original Research

Teaching simultaneous interpreting: The early stage

by Alexandra G. Anisimova, Anastasiya E. Fedotova and Inna N. Fomina

Alexandra G. Anisimova Lomonosov Moscow State University, Russia anissimova@list.ru

Anastasiya E. Fedotova Lomonosov Moscow State University, Russia fedot-nastya@inbox.ru

Inna N. Fomina Lomonosov Moscow State University, Russia inna7@mail.ru

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The article deals with the initial stage of training simultaneous interpreters and developing their professional skills. The authors single out and analyse a number of abilities and skills that learners are expected to develop in order to successfully obtain the qualification of simultaneous interpreters and offer a system of exercises and tasks that is intended to assist their acquisition. The article tackles the following issues typically arising at the early stages of student training: inability of unprepared students to concentrate and keep a lasting focus on the meaning and the structure of the source speech utterance, inability to control their short-term memory, the unfamiliar situation where the student is required to listen and speak at one and the same time, a lack of control over intonation and structure of his or her own speech during the interpreting process. In terms of language, particular attention is paid to the crucial role of collocations and fixed expressions in teaching simultaneous interpreting, as well as processing information that requires precision. The study is based on a textbook on political, economic, and legal translation which has been successfully used during several years at the Department of Theory and Practice of Translation at Lomonosov Moscow State University as a key training input. The methods of the current research include contextual and comparative analysis, information synthesis as well as experimental student training. The latter showed that learners' performance substantially improved, both immediately after some of the preparatory exercises (particularly those aimed at short-term memory and anticipation skills development) and in the long run. The authors believe that exercises described here can form a sound basis for developing skills necessary for simultaneous interpreters.

KEYWORDS: *simultaneous interpreting, collocation, working memory, short-term memory, interpreting skills development, attention focus*



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1. INTRODUCTION

Since interpreting continues to play an increasingly important role in international communication, the need for highly-qualified interpreters is pressing. However, in the course of preparation for

simultaneous interpreting, the main attention should be paid not only to the development of skills required for oral and written translation in general, but also to the features specific to this particular type of activity. A lot has been theoretically

said about the skills a professional interpreter needs (Chernov, 2015; Duplensky, 2012; Gile, 2009; Jones 2002; Schweitzer, 1988), but few articles cover this issue from the practical perspective.

Therefore, this article proves its relevance by offering certain specific techniques and exercises that help to develop the skills necessary for simultaneous interpreters. At the same time, although the development of interpreting skills in general is impossible without fluency in both source and target languages, the article does not consider the issues of language learning. The authors assume that the course participants are proficient enough in their foreign language to cope with the assigned tasks. Grammatical and lexical difficulties are not the main focus of the exercises described herein.

The article suggests a strategy allowing the participants to overcome some of the most common difficulties arising at the first stage of a simultaneous interpreting course. Moreover, this strategy involves both developing new skills and activating certain cognitive mechanisms allowing students to perform the assigned tasks.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study is based on a textbook on political, economic and legal translation used for several years at the Department of Theory and Practice of Translation at Lomonosov Moscow State University as a key training input (Anisimova & Pavlyuk, 2019). The methods of the current research include contextual and comparative analysis, information synthesis as well as experimental student training, which allowed the authors to obtain the results described and single out several key exercises, which, if done on a regular basis, contribute to effective work with sample texts for simultaneous interpreting. The training lasted over 10 years and involved over 80 Russian-speaking learners specialising in translation studies. The exercises in question were used at the preparatory stage of the interpreting course and were followed by tasks simulating conference interpreting assessed by a number of parameters, such as fidelity of the translation, use of interpretation strategies, target language accuracy and fluency, coherence, delivery,

etc. The exercises underwent ongoing practical evaluation and evolved to serve their purpose as effectively as possible.

3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Since the issue of simultaneous interpreting remains highly topical in view of rapidly developing international relations, numerous scholars have dedicated their efforts to conducting research in this area. It is a generally recognised fact that the work of a simultaneous interpreter has certain specific features which may turn out to be a stumbling block for students and novice interpreters. The theoretical base analysed in the current article allowed the authors to single out such problems. These include cognitive and psychological barriers varying from excessive shyness to inability to listen and speak simultaneously (Matyushin, 2017; Chmiel, 2018), necessity to develop linguistic forecasting skills (Zimnyaya & Chernov, 1973; Chmiel, 2020), difficulties posed by clichés and collocations (Duplensky, 2012; Chmiel et al., 2020), etc. These problems have been described in detail as well as certain theoretical approaches and advice on how to solve them, including shadowing technique (Sabatini, 2000), listening comprehension (Herrero, 2017) and others. Still, for such a serious problem little has been said about purely practical means of overcoming the obstacles arising. This article makes an attempt to put theory into practice and offers certain exercises which would help students on their interpreting path.

The experience of working with students has helped to single out several key focus areas aimed at enhancing the efficiency of working with training texts for simultaneous interpreting. The next section considers them in detail.

4. STUDY AND RESULTS

4.1. Activating short-term memory

At first glance, in comparison with consecutive interpreting, a simultaneous interpreter has to retain a certain fragment of speech in his or her memory for a shorter period of time, and since the utterance itself is shorter as well, its volume can be controlled. However, to produce a coherent and

'At first glance, in comparison with consecutive interpreting, a simultaneous interpreter has to retain a certain fragment of speech in his or her memory for a shorter period of time, and since the utterance itself is shorter as well, its volume can be controlled. However, to produce a coherent and logical utterance in the target language, the simultaneous interpreter often has to let the speaker go, grasp the essence of the message, and only then begin interpreting it'

logical utterance in the target language, the simultaneous interpreter often has to let the speaker go, grasp the essence of the message, and only then begin interpreting it (Chernov, 2015). In addition, effective memorisation is impossible without focusing on the meaning of the utterance (Orlando & Hlavac, 2020), and the exercises aimed at developing short-term memory, which are described in this article, also help the students to focus their attention on the interpreting process to a greater extent. These exercises are not only useful at the initial stage, while students familiarise themselves with the required skills, but they can serve as a kind of warm-up for senior students or even professional interpreters before their work.

During the lesson we suggest doing these exercises at a fast pace, thus ensuring the constant involvement and readiness of students. In terms of order, it is better to start from simple tasks, gradually complicating them. At the same time, it is important to choose the right mode of presenting the information to be memorised. At the initial stage, students can be requested to recall printed words, phrases and sentences, but as tasks become more and more complicated, the reading time is reduced and students gradually move on to the oral form. Memorisation from hearing with a single repetition requires the greatest concentration. However, this activity is the closest equivalent to

actual interpreting (Jones, 2002). Sample tasks for activating short-term memory are given below in ascending order of difficulty.

Repetition of individual lexical units of varying complexity; the easiest ones to memorise are concrete nouns.

Look at the list of nouns for 10 seconds, then close the text and recall as many words as you can: 1) room, fog, tree, star, net, needle, square, flower, box, screen; 2) juice, salt, tomato, knife, meat, tea, spice, cup, fish, shrimp; 3) bat, cat, rat, mat, fat, hat.

At the same time, the researchers state that memorisation is much more effective if either the meanings of the enlisted words are connected, or these words have a similar pronunciation (see lists 2 and 3 above). If phonetic similarity is unlikely to help in the situation of real-life interpreting, the ability to see the unity and connection between the meanings should be developed as actively as possible. This issue will be discussed a little further.

Having completed this exercise, the students can move on to the categories which are a little more difficult to memorise, e.g. abstract nouns, such as *patience, calculation, destruction, analysis, determination, responsibility, movement, precision, vulnerability, reference*. In this case, as well as in the abovementioned examples, semantic grouping contributes to better memorisation. To simplify the task, semantically close nouns can be adduced, however, tasks implying that the students do such work on their own (divide the enlisted words into several semantic groups) activate better memorisation and bring training closer to real situations that require memorising.

The most difficult category for perception and memorising is precise information, both verbal (proper names, job titles, positions, names of organisations) and numerical (dates, amounts, indicators, etc.). At the same time, it is extremely important to render it in a correct and accurate way, since the interpreter's errors in many cases are not only obvious to the participants in the international communication but can lead to serious consequences.

Numerical data range from one- or two-digit numbers to complex combinations of figures and measurement units:

Memorise and recall these numbers:

3; 15; 17; 38; 430; 3 593;

19 678; 504 598;

22 May 2017; 12 September 1996;

Thursday, 14 Jan 2021;

35%; USD 230 000;

Flight A3 881; +7-495-939-3277.

Proper names are often accompanied by positions and titles, as is often the case in actual interpreting context:

Memorise and recall these names and posts:

The Chancellor of the Exchequer;

The UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres;

Prof. Petersen and Dr. Rossi

As the most complicated task directly contributing to the development of simultaneous interpreting skills, students can practise consecutive interpreting of individual phrases and short sentences at a fast pace.

Give English/Russian equivalents:

– *разбивать надежды, тесное сотрудничество;*

– *разрешение конфликта, to draw up the constitution;*

– *to wrangle over smth, действовать незамедлительно;*

– *отказаться от своих прав, economic convergence;*

– *a political concept, a single model of integration;*

– *to surrender sovereignty, a major step forward, долгосрочная цель;*

– *to map out a way forward, не прибегая к силе, to sign a treaty;*

– *проводить политику, вести переговоры о..., вступить в силу;*

– *Министры иностранных дел США и Великобритании запланировали очередную встречу в конце сентября;*

– *В середине октября в Москву с официальным визитом прибывает министр обороны Швеции;*

– *Yesterday a French trade-union delegation returned to Athens from a tour of Greece.*

The tasks in the above exercise range from comparatively brief phrases to full-fledged sentences. Although a prompt switch from one language to the other is not frequent in real-life interpreting, it proves to be an efficient warm-up exercise.

4.2. Developing simultaneous listening and speaking skills

Although interpreting is a complex cognitive process, even isolated and relatively simple lexical units can pose a certain difficulty. At the initial stage novice interpreters are often confused when they have to focus on what is being said and speak simultaneously, even if they do not need to analyse the meaning and context and produce logically connected utterances in the target language. Since this skill is rarely used in other types of activity, the situation when students need to listen and speak at the same time is unusual and stressful for them, even if they do not have to analyse and interpret what they have heard.

In order to overcome this psychological barrier, one can use the so-called *shadowing* method which implies listening to the audio recordings and simultaneously repeating them aloud, as close to the original as possible (Matyushin, 2017). Initially, this method was used in foreign language teaching and implied imitating the speech of the native speaker. The effectiveness of shadowing in language teaching is outside the scope of this article, but this method can help novice interpreters to get used to the very process of simultaneous listening and speaking. However, shadowing is not about understanding the meaning, but rather allowing students to adjust to the mechanics of interpreting, learn to control their voice, and distribute attention between what is being said and what is being heard.

When the students have basically mastered this skill and started to feel more confident, the trainer can complicate the task by offering them modified versions of this method, e.g. to pronounce the text with a slight lag (thus, activating short-term memory), read the finished translation at the pace of the original, read the finished translation, noting errors

‘One of the primary requirements for a simultaneous interpreter is confident, clear and sufficiently loud speech, where logical stress is intonationally emphasised, and pauses correspond to the norms of speech segmentation’

and discrepancies with the recorded text and reacting to them in a timely manner, and retell the text in the source language without repeating it verbatim, etc.

4.3. Developing speech technique, diction and intonation

Training novice interpreters (and sometimes, unfortunately, observing their senior colleagues at work) has shown that one of their greatest psychological problems is control over their speech. While being in a stressful situation and not having direct visual contact with the audience, students can neither foresee the phrase development nor its ending, and since they do not hear their own voices, they are often unable to produce smooth and natural interpreting. At best, students try to copy the speaker’s intonation (which complicates the perception of a message due to inevitable phonetic inconsistencies between the source and target languages), and, at worst, they make sudden and unjustifiable pauses in the middle of the phrase, abuse filler words, do not indicate the end of the sentence intonationally, or speak unintelligibly, monotonously, too quickly or quietly (Gile, 2009). However, the audience unfamiliar with the specific nature of this work, judges the quality of interpreting primarily by speech fluency and the interpreter’s confidence. One of the primary requirements for a simultaneous interpreter is confident, clear and sufficiently loud speech, where logical stress is intonationally emphasised, and pauses correspond to the norms of speech segmentation (Nolan, 2005).

The whole variety of exercises designed to develop delivery skills can be divided into several groups aimed at improving a particular aspect or a

number of them. At the same time, students’ self-control is of primary importance. It is recommended the teacher use audio equipment in order to record the performance of all the exercises (above all, when students do tasks on their own), so that students can later evaluate the results of their efforts.

Exercises improving diction are in many ways similar to those that students face in their foreign language phonetics course. However, no less attention should be paid to practising native speaker styles. The strategy of alternating exercises allows students to quickly switch from one language to another without losing interpreting quality. It is necessary to start with individual sounds and sound combinations, which are traditionally difficult to pronounce: as a rule, these are either combinations of consonants, or sounds requiring rapid rearrangement of speech organs (*months, sixths, waves, rural*, etc.). Then one can move on to traditional tongue twisters, varying the pace and volume of their pronunciation (certain scholars recommend that novice translators speak loudly in order to overcome excessive shyness). Tongue twisters not only allow students to work out individual sound combinations but focus on intonation, pausing and even the meaning of speech. Practice shows that concentration on word meaning and the breakdown of complex sentences into phrases united in meaning allow students to perform the exercises much better.

Special attention should be paid to intonation. When Russian students are asked to speak spontaneously or read a text in English (either a familiar one, or one prepared beforehand by the same student), they tend to make several typical mistakes, e.g. rising-pitch intonation at the end of sentences leaving a feeling of incompleteness, understatement, doubt or even a question, and incorrect pausing, which is either due to inability to understand the syntactic structure of the sentence in the correct way (when reading) or find the right word in time.

In the first case, it is recommended they use standard phonetic exercises: listening to authentic recordings and repeating after the speaker (as has

been mentioned above, the effectiveness of such exercises increases when the student's voice can be recorded so that the result produced can be compared with the original); reading short excerpts on the spot, without preliminary listening; composing short messages, paying special attention to the delivery, including loudness, clarity and intonation.

If incorrect pausing is the consequence of misunderstanding the sentence's syntactic structure, it is necessary to check whether the student comprehends the meaning of the entire utterance. In complicated cases analysing the sentence structure with the whole group is recommended, identifying grammatical and logical connections in it, and reminding students of the conversion phenomenon common in English (due to which a certain word can be mistakenly taken by the interpreter for another part of speech), and of the specific features of constructing phrases, use of various forms, etc.

Still, it should be noted that during real-time interpreting such challenges do not arise so often, because if the interpreter follows the speaker's intonation, he or she will probably be able to render the meaning of the message, even if certain grammatical structures seem unfamiliar.

The only exception here is probably the situation when the interpreter, having received the text of the speech in advance and not having worked it through, focuses on it more than on what the speaker is saying.

A much more frequent reason for unwanted pauses is the students' confusion in any unforeseen situation (e.g. inability to find the necessary equivalent, difficulties with the perception of the speaker's speech, the habit of using filler words, etc.). As a result, the interpreting rhythm is ragged. After a pause, they either omit part of the message or try to catch up with the speaker, speeding up until their speech becomes almost unintelligible. In this case, it is necessary to develop the interpreting smoothness, sometimes to slow down intentionally, allowing the speaker to go a little ahead, and thus being able to understand the meaning of the whole utterance and translate it with logically justified intonation pauses.

4.4. Attention focus

It is a well-known fact that the ability to control one's attention is one of the most important factors directly affecting the understanding of the message's meaning. Unfortunately, according to neuroscience research, even in the absence of external distractions, a person can focus on one subject or activity only for a short time (Bradbury, 2016). But even this requires a conscious effort and the abandonment of other, parallel types of activity. The question of whether the phenomenon of multitasking exists remains highly controversial, and according to some studies (Rosen, 2008; Salvucci et al., 2009), it does not. Instead, when performing two or more tasks, our brain constantly switches between them, thus giving much less time to both.

In order to motivate the students to be constantly focused on their work in the classroom, the teacher not only should propose different tasks but do them at a fast and intense pace, frequently changing the respondents, and, preferably, asking them in a random order, so that each student is constantly ready to start work.

4.5. Developing the ability to understand the message

Working with students has demonstrated that they tend to interpret utterances word by word, without delving into their meaning. At the same time, only understanding of the message, not limited to rendering individual words or speech fragments, allows them to formulate a logically consistent and intonationally correct message in the target language. Moreover, when focusing on individual words, any incomprehensible or poorly heard lexical unit leads to the fact that the student is lost and cannot continue interpreting.

To overcome this problem, in addition to the interpreting practice itself, a number of tasks dealing with individual sentences and the whole text are proposed, e.g. semantic analysis of a sentence (students may be asked to define theme, rheme and relations between them), various types of retelling (students may be asked to retell the text in source/target language, find certain information in the text, prepare a presentation on a topic related

to the text, or produce short or detailed retelling). As well as with many other exercises, written texts significantly facilitate the students' task, but as their skills develop, and they learn new topics and vocabulary, students can be offered audio recordings. These recordings can vary from rhetorically verified speeches, where the speaker's idea is obvious and repeated several times, to spontaneous speech, involving a significant proportion of semantic repetitions and paraphrasing, and, finally, to the most complicated task – listening to texts originally intended to be presented in written form.

Making up sentences contributes not only to better memorisation and improvement of lexical material, but provides immersion in the topic of translation (Li, 2019), thus forcing students to think about the possible contexts where certain expressions can be used.

Make up sentences using the following words and word-combinations:

а) оказать поддержку, проводить жесткую экономическую политику, свободный обмен капиталами и услуг, всеевропейская экономическая конвергенция, четко определиться как политическое понятие, установить тесное сотрудничество в области...;

б) столкнуться с проблемой, никогда за время своего существования, избежать риска, подписать договор, мирное разрешение конфликта.

4.6. Developing skills helping to prepare for interpreting

When working with the textbook, students not only acquire new lexical material but get basic knowledge about the functioning and history of international organisations, fundamental documents, economic problems, etc. See sample text below.

Almost half a century of European integration has had a profound effect on the development of the continent and the attitudes of its inhabitants. It has also changed the balance of power. As the major player in Europe, the European Union has a great responsibility. From the very beginning there was a vision of a future pan-Europe: a Europe

'Making up sentences contributes not only to better memorisation and improvement of lexical material, but provides immersion in the topic of translation (Li, 2019), thus forcing students to think about the possible contexts where certain expressions can be used'

without borders that separate, a Europe where opinions, capital and services can be exchanged freely and a Europe where conflicts can be resolved peacefully, without resort to violence. Europe needs to provide what is in the shared interests of its States: economic prosperity, international competitiveness, peace, safety from the risk of new conflicts and the development of a pan-European Union in which Europeans can pursue their own fulfilment.

The Treaty on European Union, which entered into force on 1 November 1993, set the Member States an ambitious programme: monetary union by 1999, new common policies, European citizenship, a common foreign and security policy and internal security.

However, in addition to classroom exercises including reading, retelling and finding logical connections between the statements, it is necessary to develop the habit of active self-preparation for interpreting. The task of comprehending a text is greatly simplified if an interpreter understands numerous aspects related to the information contained. One of the crucial factors is understanding the context (taking into account the speaker's personality, aims, the audience, the circumstances and history of their interaction, etc.) (Strelets & Rahit, 2020). Moreover, as has been mentioned above, it is extremely important to be careful with precise data, such as proper names, job titles (and their correspondence to the names of the main participants in the negotiations), and numbers (even if the exact numbers are not given in advance, the translator can get a general idea of their range so as to avoid the gross error of confusing them).

During the course, students get a chance to expand their background knowledge and learn new information.

Translate the following geographical names into English (name their capitals and derived adjectives):

а) *Австрия, Бельгия, Швейцария, Португалия, Греция, Венгрия, Германия, Дания, Нидерланды, Швеция, Финляндия, Чехия, Словения, Албания, Исландия, Люксембург.*

Besides, when preparing and translating the given texts, students can be asked to find the exact and generally accepted equivalents for the names of international organisations and important documents, as well as to clarify the pronunciation and translation methods of certain European (non-English) names into Russian (*the European Council, the Council of the European Union, the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the European Court of Auditors, the Maastricht treaty, the Schuman plan, Jean Monnet, etc.*).

Students can be asked to search for certain data and make short reports on the issues related to the topic of the lesson. This task is aimed at developing their ability to find linguistic, general and cultural information, as well as encouraging them to monitor the Russian and English press in order to update their knowledge and expand their horizons.

4.7. Developing anticipation skills

Anticipation skills development is considered one of the most important for simultaneous interpreters since it allows them not only to hear the speaker better and get the meaning of the message in case any technical problem occurs, but to construct a phrase in such a way so as to avoid incompleteness or gross syntactic errors. A system of training anticipation skills is understood as a special algorithm for the semantic and verbal design of an utterance developing in time in the original language and the anticipatory construct of a reproduced message in the target language (Zimnyaya & Chernov, 1973). Traditionally, scholars single out semantic and linguistic forecasting.

As Kosenko (2013) states, any translator or interpreter relies on three types of context: the narrow one (a phrase or sentence), the wide one (a paragraph, a chapter, or the entire work), and the extralinguistic (non-linguistic) one (historical period, situation, circumstances, place and time to which the statement refers). In the case of semantic forecasting, the interpreter relies on all three kinds of context, and considers possible situational development.

To a large extent, the interpreter's preparation discussed in the previous paragraph facilitates semantic forecasting. If the interpreter knows the topic of the report and has a general idea of the aims of the parties and the relationship between them, he or she will be able to understand and render the message even despite individual semantic gaps.

Kosenko (2013) argues that linguistic forecasting relies on both narrow and broad context, as well as on the structure of the sentence and the whole text. Analysis of the linguistic context gives information about the possible combinability of a particular word (since the appearance of each new word significantly limits the possibility of using others), about the tone, style and register of the text (through the analysis of the word's pragmatic meaning), about the grammatical function and the form of the omitted lexical unit. The broader context allows one to identify the verb tense, and therefore, based on the rules of its formation, to determine the form of both auxiliary and semantic verbs. It also allows the interpreter to establish the author's attitude towards the issue under discussion, and, consequently, to deduce the possible pragmatic meaning of the omitted linguistic unit. The narrow context allows the interpreter to establish the function of an omitted lexical unit in the sentence. To do it, it is necessary to determine the type of the simple sentence analysed (which can also be included in the structure of a complex one): what is the expressed attitude towards reality (affirmative / negative); what is the purpose (declarative / interrogative / imperative / exclamatory); and whether all the sentence members are present or partially absent (Kosenko, 2013).

'Besides, when working with a recorded text, linguistic forecasting requires taking into account the grammatical compatibility of words, i.e. their ability to collocate with other lexical units. The compatibility of words is determined by their part of speech and ability to perform certain syntactic functions'

Thus, the interpreter should be able to determine the syntactic function and (at least approximately) the part of speech of the missing word, and only then deduce its lexical meaning on the basis of the broader context, background knowledge and the speaker's general intention.

In order to rise to these challenges, the interpreter must understand the syntactic structure of the sentence and the functions of parts of speech in it. To practise these skills, the textbook offers several gapped texts, which students are invited to fill in with the words in their appropriate forms. The complexity of tasks varies depending on the number and frequency of omissions, the characteristics of the omitted words (whether these are major or auxiliary parts of speech), and the presence of options offering a word for substitution.

Replace the Russian words with their English equivalents in the necessary form.

Belarusian Delegation to Visit China

Official visit of the delegation, (1) Belarusian 'national assembly', (2) by the Chairman of the 'Republic's council' to China will take place on January 17-24. The (3) of their visit envisages (4) with the chairman of the (5) Committee of the Chinese Assembly of people's representatives Lee Pen, (6) chair Hu Tsintao, deputy premier of the (7) Council Tsyhan Tichen. The delegation members intend to visit the Khubay province, which (8) with the Brest region, and well as the towns Shantzen and Guanzhou.

1) представлять; 2) возглавлять; 3) график, план; 4) переговоры; 5) постоянный; 6) заместитель; 7) государственный; 8) сотрудничать.

Besides, when working with a recorded text, linguistic forecasting requires taking into account the grammatical compatibility of words, i.e. their ability to collocate with other lexical units. The compatibility of words is determined by their part of speech and ability to perform certain syntactic functions. However, this does not mean that all words belonging to the same part of speech have the same grammatical compatibility (Kosenko, 2013).

The exercises below give an idea of how these skills can be trained.

There is one word missing in each sentence. Insert the appropriate word from the following list: have, perspective, annual, coins, slowdown, under, recent, meticulous, faced, further.

The introduction of Euro notes and marked a decisive step in the history of European integration. Thanks to preparation and to the enthusiastic welcome given by a large majority of the public, the changeover to Euro notes and coins was an unprecedented success that marked the birth of a currency area comprising over 300 million people. Economic and monetary union rests on the undertaking to conduct sound macroeconomic policies, and these contributed to the emergence of a new culture of economic stability in Europe. It is this stability that has enabled the Union to cope with in the world economy. With this slowdown, the monetary authorities have cut interest rates, and budgetary policy has operated through the automatic stabilisers, which help to smooth out fluctuations in the growth of production. However, in the light of developments and in the absence of the recovery forecast in the spring, budget deficits have increased. These circumstances, the Commission has proposed improved coordination of economic policy and, in particular, of the Stability and Growth Pact. In order to strengthen and facilitate the coordination process even, it launched a new quarterly report on economic developments in the euro area. In the interests of consistency and efficiency, it also launched a process for streamlining the economic and employment policy coordination cycles. The Commission has thus reinforced the medium- and long-term for coordination in line

with the strategy embarked on at the Lisbon European Council and followed up at the Gothenburg European Council and has placed the emphasis on implementing the policy guidelines and achieving tangible results.

The learner's task is, on the one hand, simplified by the availability of the words to choose from. However, practice shows that without clear understanding of the syntactic role and functions of the parts of speech, as well as some acquaintance with set phrases, the list is of little help. The text below, on the contrary, indicates the gaps, but leaves it up to the learner to select a suitable word and put it in the relevant grammatical form.

Read the text below and think of the word which best fits each space.

A powerful symbol of new era of European integration, the Euro became part of everyday life for people on 1 January 2002, with the introduction of new notes and coins. The public's to the new currency in the 12 Member States of the euro zone, with their total population of over 300 million, lived up the expectations of all those at Community and national level who had worked so hard to prepare for the introduction of the single currency: by the beginning of February, payments in euro already accounted for 95% of cash payments, and the withdrawal of the national from circulation in the Member States concerned was completed at the end of that month. The process received extra impetus on 1 July when the regulation on the simplification of cross-border payments came into This regulation, which aims to create a single payment area in the euro zone, enable European citizens to take advantage of the benefits of single currency, by harmonising charges for national and cross-border transactions (cash withdrawals and payments by bank card or credit card). Given the success of the physical introduction of the euro, economic and monetary union undoubtedly qualifies as one of the significant in European integration, an example the 'real solidarity' beloved of Jean Monnet, ranking alongside such earlier achievements as the customs union of 1968 and the single market of 1992.

This article pays special attention to grammatical and lexical collocations since they significantly contribute to the efficiency and quality of interpreting. In this case, sometimes several options can be considered 'correct', but the learners should be able to justify their choices.

The task of forecasting in interpreting is to a certain extent facilitated by the redundancy of oral speech in comparison with the written one. This phenomenon has been described by many scholars. The speaker, realising that the main idea may not be heard due to various reasons (e.g. technical issues, interference, scattered attention of audience, etc.), says a little more than would be necessary if the message was presented in writing, changing the wording or even repeating important arguments. However, it should be noted that this is more relevant in the case of spontaneous speech or a rhetorically elaborate presentation. When it comes to an official report, these characteristics are less apparent, since the speaker tends to rely on an already prepared text that is not always suitable for oral presentation, and often speaks at a fast pace, without wasting time thinking. Therefore, a simultaneous interpreter must master the written register of speech as well.

4.8. Developing interpreting consistency

4.8.1. General requirements

After the students have mastered anticipation skills, it is necessary to teach them how to ensure the consistency and completeness of their interpreting. One of the requirements for simultaneous interpreting states, that no matter what and how the speaker says, every interpreted phrase must be logically connected with the next and the previous one. It is imperative to finish the utterance you have begun to interpret (Duplensky, 2012).

To meet these requirements, the interpreter must be ready, if necessary, to generalise the utterance as much as possible in order to fill in the missing information. Understanding the general meaning of the utterance, it becomes possible to use rather neutral phrases instead of the precise ones, as in *according to experts, certain features, considerable growth, several hundreds of*, etc.

'Besides, when working with a recorded text, linguistic forecasting requires taking into account the grammatical compatibility of words, i.e. their ability to collocate with other lexical units. The compatibility of words is determined by their part of speech and ability to perform certain syntactic functions'

Even if the speaker has not finished the sentence or has unjustifiably changed its syntactic structure (and also in case the interpreter was unable to hear a piece of it), the simultaneous interpreter should have a number of neutral phrases at hand to complete the utterance. The textbook suggests certain exercises, where students are asked to complete the sentence in the most neutral or contextually appropriate manner.

4.8.2. Developing and mastering the skill of translating clichés and collocations

It is highly important for the interpreter to react quickly and not hesitate to find correct equivalents for oratorical clichés, phrases of politeness, introductory and closing phrases, etc. Moreover, even if the speaker decides to use a vivid figure of speech of his own invention, it is possible and even recommended to remove and/or replace metaphors and figurative expressions with equivalent fixed phrases (Duplensky, 2012). This skill can be mastered by practising the use of fixed and widely used expressions in the target language.

Moreover, students need to actively expand their knowledge of the lexical and grammatical compatibility of the most common words and terms in the area of social and political interpreting. This process is most effective when students work on their own. On the one hand, searching, learning and reproducing phrases involves certain cognitive efforts, owing to which information is repeated several times and thus memorised. On the other hand, the pre-composed lists of phrases do not always give an exhaustive idea of the compati-

bility of a particular word at the moment of use, since language is constantly evolving. Therefore, the most relevant information can only be obtained by using numerous sources: explanatory and collocation dictionaries, text corpora, periodicals and recorded speeches of public figures available on the Internet. To ensure this, the textbook suggests tasks requiring serious individual work and further discussion of the obtained results.

Give as many collocations as possible with the following words and translate them into Russian.

A. Give attributes for the following nouns: step forward, impetus, goal, programme, risk, market, cooperation, policy, support, conflict, integration, threat, dispute, treaty.

B. Give nouns to go with the following adjectives: comprehensive, economic, mutual, major, long-term, political, troublesome, common, single, ambitious, free, profound, pure, creative, European, original, peaceful, robust.

C. Give direct objects for the following verbs: to allow, to extend, to sign, to establish, to fulfil, to receive, to pursue, to join, to share, to represent, to transfer, to plan, to attract, to launch, to exchange, to provide, to perceive, to remove, to stabilise, to promote, to expand.

Teaching simultaneous interpreting is impossible without tackling synonyms and antonyms, allowing the activation of the students' passive vocabulary, thus giving them an opportunity to go beyond the use of standard formulae and more accurately and flexibly render the meaning of the utterance. At the same time, it is desirable to work not only with synonymous series of individual words, but with synonymous phrases and word combinations as well.

Give as many equivalents as possible of the following collocations: to establish a Committee; to lend one's support to smb (somebody); to wrangle over smth (something); to draw up a constitution; to suspend the convertibility of the dollar; to pursue a policy; to resolve a conflict; to come into force; to decide to do smth; an ambitious programme; economic prosperity; to stabilise the exchange rates; economic convergence; the outcome of the negotiations; under the leadership of;

'It is highly important for the interpreter to react quickly and not hesitate to find correct equivalents for oratorical clichés, phrases of politeness, introductory and closing phrases, etc. Moreover, even if the speaker decides to use a vivid figure of speech of his own invention, it is possible and even recommended to remove and/or replace metaphors and figurative expressions with equivalent fixed phrases. This skill can be mastered by practising the use of fixed and widely used expressions in the target language'

to resist totalitarianism; matters regarding defence; to conclude a treaty; a troublesome and protracted process; to have a profound effect on smth.

On the one hand, such exercises allow students to revise collocations and thus to memorise them. On the other hand, they also provide an opportunity to see and understand the possibility of syntactic transformations, when the grammatical structure of a particular phrase has changed but the meaning has not. For example, the meaning of the expression *to have a profound effect* can be rendered by means of *verb + adverb* pattern: *to influence smth deeply*, a word combination *to lend one's support*, or a verb *to assist*.

To learn the material and master the skill of using collocations and word combinations, the textbook suggests different types of exercises for practising active vocabulary, including interpreting individual expressions and sentences with them.

Give Russian/English equivalents for the following words and word combinations: an urgent meeting, высшее военное командование, спровоцировать переворот, to downplay the coup rumours, смягчить обвинение, под эгидой, to prompt a decision, подкупить кого-либо.

Such exercises are done at a fast pace, thus enabling students to quickly switch from one language to another.

Translate the following sentences into English:

1) *Высшее военное командование вылетело в Бейрут для проведения внеочередной встречи по вопросу урегулирования конфликта.*

2) *Слухи о готовящемся государственном перевороте взбудоражили население страны.*

3) *Президент страны в своем заявлении попытался отвлечь внимание от слухов о готовящемся перевороте.*

4.8.3. Compression and expansion

According to Schweitzer (1988), compression is achieved by omitting redundant elements of the utterance, elements that can either be deduced from an extra-linguistic situation and communicative context or can be substituted with more compact expression forms. The mastery of compression and expansion strategies develops and improves mainly at the later stages of simultaneous interpreting teaching, but the earlier the students get to know them, the more effectively they can cope with other tasks.

When interpreting or translating, special attention should be paid to searching for options that contribute to the most appropriate rendering of individual phrases and sentences. Compression occurs at different levels: syllabic, syntactic, lexical-semantic, situational. The tasks students are faced with here often overlap with those described above in this article. For example, in order to ensure the coherence of the text and its compliance with the norms of the target language, sometimes the student has to change the syntactic structure of a sentence significantly without changing its meaning. This has already been discussed in the paragraph dealing with the rendering of clichés and collocations. Here we will restrict ourselves to the cases when the interpreter's goal is to find the most appropriate equivalent.

At the same time, interpreters should not forget that sometimes they need to amplify the target language (more often Russian) sentence in order to render the whole meaning of the utterance without violating linguistic norms. In the early stages, expansion during interpreting mainly implies combining individual words and ensuring the consis-

tency of the target language utterances. Still, a separate problem is the need to clarify certain concepts or provide the necessary background information when the interpreter considers it relevant and necessary for the target audience. This task, being more creative and depending on the subjective view of the interpreter, can be given to students who have already mastered basic interpreting skills.

5. DISCUSSION

The results of this study have allowed us to identify the key problems students and novice interpreters are typically faced with and to suggest general advice on how to overcome them. Continuous use of a variety of exercises in experimental student training served to single out the most efficient activities yielding the best results in building conference interpreting skills.

The importance of the research lies in the fact that its nature is purely practical – sample exercises and tasks presented in the article can be used in the classroom to develop basic skills at the initial stage of the interpreting course. Moreover, these exercises are aimed at developing a variety of skills. Thus, the teacher can choose options that he or she regards as most useful and relevant. In addition, such tasks can serve as a kind of warm-up for experienced and professional interpreters, helping to activate memory and prepare for the working process.

Despite the contribution of the current research, several questions require future consideration. Thus, the article deals with developing interpreting skills at the early stage. However, the process of transition from being a novice interpreter into becoming a professional one is open for discussion.

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Thus, it would be interesting to review and analyse skills which distinguish the professional interpreter from the novice and to see how these skills can be mastered and what is to be done to maintain them.

6. CONCLUSION

The article reviewed the following challenges arising in the early stages of training: the inability of students to concentrate and keep a lasting focus on the meaning and the structure of the source utterance, inability to control their short-term memory, the unfamiliar situation where the interpreter is required to listen and speak simultaneously, lack of control over intonation and structure of speech during interpreting, and others. Several methods have been suggested to solve these difficulties, including activating short-term memory by memorisation and repetition of single words and word combinations; listening comprehension and the shadowing technique with varying loudness, pace and intonation; semantic analysis of a sentence, which helps to develop a deeper understanding of its meaning; various types of retelling; work with gapped texts, learning new vocabulary, primarily collocations, and active acquisition of background knowledge connected with the topic of the translated texts. Introducing these activities in actual teaching carried out by the authors for over ten years has shown that they improve interpreting performance both immediately after the preparatory exercises (particularly those aimed at short-term memory and anticipation skills development) and in the long run.

The authors believe that if done on a regular basis these strategies will allow students to cope with interpreting tasks in a much better way and develop their cognitive skills.

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ALEXANDRA G. ANISIMOVA

Lomonosov Moscow State University | 1 Leninskiye Gory, 119234 Moscow, Russia
anissimova@list.ru

ANASTASIYA E. FEDOTOVA

Lomonosov Moscow State University | 1 Leninskiye Gory, 119234 Moscow, Russia
fedot-nastya@inbox.ru

INNA N. FOMINA

Lomonosov Moscow State University | 1 Leninskiye Gory, 119234 Moscow, Russia
inna7@mail.ru

Original Research

Mixed method in language teaching: Concepts and model's evaluation

by Alla G. Sokolova and Tatiana A. Bystrova

Alla G. Sokolova National Research Moscow State University of Civil Engineering, Russia as.falconi@yandex.ru

Tatiana A. Bystrova Russian State University for the Humanities, Russia tassina@yandex.ru

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In the present research, the authors have studied direct and indirect cross-cultural contact as well as motivated behaviour and language attitude in a study-abroad context in Russia. For research purposes, the mixed method combining quantitative and qualitative research methodologies was applied in order to demonstrate contact, behavioural and motivational variables throughout one academic year of the foundation programme. The participants were given a questionnaire containing 50 items aimed at evaluating direct spoken and written contact, media contact, and the importance of contact perceived. Also, the participants were involved in interviews covering seven principal themes that enabled the authors to gain insights into the changes occurring during the educational process and their possible reasons. The authors identified the main factors affecting the language learning motivation of international students studying in Russian international programmes, to define the type and frequency of the contact with the maximum impact on students' perception of language acquisition. The results of encounter experiences were registered at three discrete points throughout the academic year. The detailed analysis showed that written and media use contacts had become more frequent throughout the year while direct spoken contacts had exhibited the opposite tendency. The authors give some recommendations that would encourage contact opportunities and reduce inter-group anxiety among foreign students. The implemented analysis of the research results has demonstrated that the self-confidence of international students had suffered immensely as the result of negative encounter experiences. These types of experiences could be fully eliminated or reduced to a minimum if the hosts were aware of the expectations, attitudes, feelings, and possible forms of the international students' behaviour. The study proved the need for potential students to prepare for the study-abroad programmes before their arrival in the host country. They are supposed to develop communication skills and strategies as well as their linguistic ability. A necessary precondition for students upon their arrival is the provision of institutional support, which allows them to get used to a new cultural and social environment and to bond with native speakers.

KEYWORDS: cross-cultural communication, mixed method, second language, target language, qualitative method, quantitative method, encounter experience, study-abroad programme



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1. INTRODUCTION

Learning Russian as a second language involves studying not only the language itself but also its cultural aspects. Learning another language could serve as a portal to the historical perspectives, literatures, cultures and experiences of humanity accumulated over centuries. This is especially true in study-abroad contexts when learners are engaged in immediate interaction with the representatives of other cultures, and such intercultural encounters have great impact on student's identification with a particular cultural and ethnic group. This leads to the formation of the value of the student's own cultural awareness in relation to those belonging to other cultural groups. Cross-cultural communication affects the disposition of learners of Russian as a second language towards acquiring language skills and motivating their behaviour.

The aim of this intercultural experience for international learners studying abroad is to communicate and interact with the host country members and in this manner acquire a more profound understanding of their culture. Academic mobility and other study-abroad student exchange programmes are often organised and sponsored in the belief that students will be involved in contact situations, and their cross-cultural sensitivity and understanding of the culture of a target language country will be enhanced. At the same time, second language competence will be immensely improved (Ristic et al., 2019). Studying in technical universities in the Russian language could be challenging for international students as no programmes are delivered in English at the moment in the given university, and even Russian-speaking students usually struggle with certain disciplines, such as theoretical mechanics, strength of materials, or perspective geometry.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

2.1. Participants

The research was implemented with international students taking part in a foundation programme on the university campus in Russia. The programme's aim is to prepare students for entering the engineering programmes in the Russian

university within one academic year. In the technical university, the students received thirty hours of Russian language instruction per week during nine months or one academic year. The language component provided tuition in academic skills and aimed to develop learners' ability to understand and produce written and spoken academic texts. By the year end, the students sat an exam in both Russian language and the appropriate discipline of further studies (mostly engineering) and were supposed to reach the CEFR B1 level of Russian language command according to the standards of the European classification. The foundation programme is a common example of preparatory courses for university entry offered in Russia, as far as the curriculum is concerned. Unfortunately, most of the teaching is done online nowadays due to the quarantine restrictions.

Altogether, more than 1000 foreign students from 87 countries are currently enrolled in the University. They represent different cultures, traditions, customs and languages. Also, Interclub was established, the main international community in the system of cross-cultural communication and formation of the united educational space. The mission of this vocational organisation is understanding the creativity and beauty of all nationalities as the club is open to representatives of all nations sharing the goals and mission of the organisation without any limitation.

In the survey, 60 international students from a great variety of ethnic backgrounds took part, with the majority being Vietnamese (65%). Seven percent of the students were French speakers of Tunisian and Moroccan origin, and the others were representing such countries as Nigeria, India, Pakistan, Congo, Uganda and China. The level of competence of the students at the beginning of the course was assessed as Elementary. 42% of the partaking students were male and 58% female, whereas their ages ranged between 23 and 29. The interview participants were chosen from a pool of volunteers so that they could represent different nationalities and ethnic backgrounds. The interviews were conducted a year after the quantitative data had been collected and systematised which

means that the interviewees did not fill in the questionnaires throughout the preceding stages of the research. We didn't predetermine the number of interview participants and kept collecting data until we believed we had reached saturation point. We also interviewed 10 students and two course lecturers, both native speakers of the Russian language. By the interview date, the teachers had been working in this foundation programme for more than 5 years, so they were considered quite experienced and professional specialists.

2.2. Instruments and procedures

The questionnaire containing 50 items was aimed at evaluating four aspects of contact such as direct spoken and written contact, media contact and the importance of contact perceived. Also, the questionnaire indirectly assessed motivated behaviour, language learning attitude and language learning goals. The items of the questionnaire were based on the study by Csizér and Kormos (2009) investigating the role of intercultural encounters in motivation and insignificantly adapted to suit the context of study-abroad programmes. Correspondingly, the questions on motivational parameters were adapted from the instrument by Kormos et al. (2011). The questionnaire was written in the Russian language. The principal variable categories were defined as follows:

- 1) five items for direct spoken contact (frequency of direct spoken encounters with native and non-native speakers of Russian);
- 2) five items for direct written contact (frequency of conventional mail, emails, the use of messengers, social networks, chatting on the Internet);
- 3) five items for media contact in the target language by watching TV programmes, reading newspapers, magazines, the use of Russian-language websites;
- 4) five items for the perceived importance of contact as an indispensable tool for enriching their language, getting to know the language culture, and reducing anxiety levels;
- 5) eight items for instrumental orientation, i.e. the benefits associated with mastery of language, for instance, high demand in the labour market;

6) seven items for international orientation that exhibit students' attitudes to the Russian language;

7) eight items were allocated to the attitude towards learning the target language;

8) seven questions were given to motivated learning behaviour comprising students' effort and persistence in their studies.

The purpose of the interview that covered seven principal themes was to gain insights into the changes that occurred and their possible reasons. The main themes included also direct spoken and written contact, media contact, motivation, attitude towards language learning and students' cross-cultural orientation. To complement the results, we asked the lecturers and facilitators to give a detailed description of the tuition programme and overall characteristics of the students' profile.

Data collection took place at three particular points in time during the academic year, at approximately equal intervals. That means the first data collection was done straight after the students commenced their studies and joined the programme, then in the middle of the year before the winter break, and at the end of the academic year before the exam period.

It took students about 15-20 minutes on average to complete the questionnaire depending on their level of command of the Russian language. Taking part in the research was implemented on a voluntary basis. Both tutors and students were interviewed individually in a quiet room. The duration of the interview for students was 30-45 minutes and the tutor interviews lasted 45-60 minutes.

3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Mixed method research (MMR) (Riazi & Candlin, 2014) comprising quantitative and qualitative methods is gaining in popularity and broadening its application across a wide range of academic disciplines. This method could as well be applied to language teaching and learning and applied linguistics (Cardenas-Lopez, 2015). As an inter-discourse methodology combining quantitative and qualitative methods, MMR gives the researchers an opportunity to intertwine the strengths of two methodological approaches in favour of producing

more rigorous inferences in relation to the set research problems. In fact, MMR allows researchers to implement a thorough study of more complex research issues that are not possible to investigate by applying only one of these methods. In previous studies, the researchers treat MMR as a holistic methodology rather than a combination of separate methods by incorporating various epistemic perspectives in their problem conceptualisation. The MMR method is gaining increasing popularity and utility across a range of academic disciplines, and applied linguistics and language teaching are no exception. MMR poses its own challenges to researchers when planning and implementing their projects.

As an innovative and evolving research methodology, mixed method research presents new challenges for potential researchers. In this article, the authors discuss MMR proposals that are of particular interest not only to researchers but also to postgraduate and doctoral students. The results could be of interest for potential students who are planning to pursue their education in Russia.

The present research is partially based on the social psychological study of intercultural contact with the principal subject of the investigation being the contact-attitude relation within social psychology. This subfield is called the Contact Hypothesis (McKeown & Dixon, 2017), which basically means that contacts could change behaviour and attitudes of individuals and groups towards one another and, vice versa, such changes would further affect contacts between groups and individuals. Contact hypothesis is seen as one of the leading theories for reducing intergroup conflict which might arise. This theory states that certain conditions such as cooperation towards achieving a common goal, institutional support, and equal status can create a positive intergroup encounter and facilitate development of intergroup relations. However, contact hypothesis could be affected by three principal issues: (1) practicality, i.e. a contact situation, which includes overcoming serious practical obstacles; (2) anxiety of the participants that may lead to an unsuccessful contact or a contact with untapped potential; (3) generalisation, i.e. the

successful results of a contact are limited to the participant and the context of the meeting.

What are the factors required for optimal intergroup contact? Previous research (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008a, 2008b; Paluk et al., 2018; Zhou et al., 2019; Ramage, 2006) has revealed that equal status of group members, cooperation, motivation, willingness to collaborate, common goals and institutional support are necessary in order to achieve the desirable progress in studying. By means of general psychological observation, Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) figured out that familiarity led to an increase in liking due to reduction in anxiety and uncertainty. It was stated that between attitudes and contact, inter-group anxiety is the main mediating variable and both direct and indirect contacts with other cultural group members influence attitudes to the out-group (Macintyre & Gardner, 1991).

The findings of the previous research closely related to study-abroad contexts (Macintyre et al., 1998) suggested that at the beginning of their stay the majority of students are quite optimistic and have mainly positive expectations towards the host country people. However, throughout the period observed their attitudes tend to become rather negative (Cajkler & Addelman, 2000). Overall study-abroad experience, available thanks to the development of academic mobility and double diploma educational programmes, might be anxiety provoking and stressful for many students due to the initial culture shock. Students might have to face and deal with differences in values, cultural and moral norms, attitudes and behaviour in the new learning environment compared to their home culture (Abi-Hashem, 2020). The study-abroad experience might be itself insufficient for enhancing intercultural sensitivity and mutual understanding. Nevertheless, frequent contact with host-country groups could be vital for nurturing positive attitude change and promotes socialisation and acculturation (Chapelle & Sauro, 2017). Moreover, it is of extreme importance to research students' perspectives of intercultural contacts by means of qualitative methods such as diaries and interviews being a part of MMR.

It is generally recognised that more frequent contact experiences lead to confident language use and have an impact on language learners' personal identification. Even in the situations when direct contact with second language speakers is minimal, the learners are exposed to cultural products in the target language, such as videos, books, magazines, podcasts, films, social networks, etc. These cultural products play a significant role in familiarising learners with the different community and influence their attitudes. Thus, indirect contact could be considered as one of the principal variables boosting motivation towards learning.

Speaking of the study-abroad context, we investigated the experience of the students of mostly Vietnamese and African origin participating in a study-abroad programme in Russia using audio and video interviews and a diary study. The results revealed that a large number of participants had to cope with threats to their self-esteem and second language acquisition itself that negatively affected interactions with the participants from the target language groups. Students who succeeded in establishing strong intercultural bonds were those able to maintain control over interaction in the target language and their social status. Linking motivation, attitudes and interaction in study-abroad programmes for Vietnamese and African origin students, it was suggested that positive attitudes and intrinsic motivation have had a great positive impact on interaction with native speakers. Implemented qualitative analysis has shown a complex interaction between the foreign students' perceptions mentioned above, their identities and their involvement with the hosts in Russia. The results prove that thanks to globalisation and an innovative means of electronic communication immersion becomes a matter of choice and language learning in study-abroad environment will require a more profound and strong commitment nowadays.

In our study, we attempted to assess and evaluate how students' contact experiences, goals, and attitudes towards language learning have varied at three discrete time points in the academic year, in particular at the beginning, middle and the end, in

'The study-abroad experience might be itself insufficient for enhancing intercultural sensitivity and mutual understanding. Nevertheless, frequent contact with host-country groups could be vital for nurturing positive attitude change and promotes socialisation and acculturation'

the context of an international study. For one academic year, foreign students majoring in various engineering programmes study Russian at the Department of Russian as a Foreign Language and are supposed to achieve a command of Russian sufficient to continue their professional education in the target language.

In our research, we split types of contacts into two categories: direct contact with target language speakers and indirect contact using various media products. Correspondingly, for direct contact we included both written and spoken interaction and questioned host-country members as well as international students about their language use. Finally, we attempted to evaluate learners' perceptions regarding the benefits gained from encounter experience and the importance of contact. In the course of the qualitative interviews conducted retrospectively at the end of the academic year, we asked students about positive and negative interaction experiences they had had and which factors they and their facilitators had highlighted as the most important ones in fostering efficient communication with native and non-native speakers of Russian.

4. STUDY AND RESULTS

4.1. Research questions

In our study, we have attempted to answer the following research questions. First, how do encounter experiences vary at three discrete points in time throughout a period of one academic year in a Russian international study context? And second, which factors influence the language learning mo-

tivation of international students partaking in a Russian international study programme? Do the types of contact experiences and their frequency have an impact on students' perception?

The first part of our research was into the general characteristics of motivation for language learning and the encounter experiences of the students

participating in the study-abroad programme. Implementing the survey allowed us to reveal that two variables such as international and instrumental orientation showed the highest mean values, while the mean values for learning attitude and motivated behaviour were around 4 on a 5-point scale (Table 1).

Table 1

Descriptive statistics of the general characteristics

NO	VARIABLE CATEGORIES	POINT 1 (BEGINNING OF THE 1ST TERM)	POINT 2 (MIDDLE OF THE YEAR)	POINT 3 (END OF ACADEMIC YEAR)
1	Direct spoken contact	2.55	2.78	2.53
2	Direct written contact	2.84	2.95	2.83
3	Media contact	3.12	3.45	3.32
4	Perceived importance of contact	3.44	3.23	2.98
5	Instrumental orientation	4.87	4.32	3.98
6	International orientation	4.92	4.54	4.32
7	Language-learning attitude	4.15	3.98	3.67
8	Motivated learning behaviour	4.22	4.11	3.77

The implemented analysis of the descriptive statistics shows that students of this international study programme have demonstrated language learning goals and attributed high importance to the international status of language. All the goals mentioned are instrumental in nature as students mainly anticipated that the opportunity of study-abroad would help them to find a better job in their home country. At the same time, the quantitative data shows that students not only have a strong motivation towards language learning but also have self-efficacy beliefs, i.e. they strongly believe in their ability to achieve the level of language proficiency required for their professional studies in the sphere of engineering. These results were supported by the interview data. According

to the results analysis, only five out of the ten participants demonstrated confidence they would achieve the desired level of command of the language. Regardless of mainly positive learning attitudes, the mean values for motivated behaviour were lower. The results show that most of the effort the students invest in language learning is related to exams and achieving good marks. To sum up, all the students who took part in the survey exhibited strong language learning goals which are instrumental. However, the prevalence of instrumental goals does not lead to increased effort in language learning. As one of the facilitators described it, *'the majority of the students still have the school attitude and many of them have never attempted an independent study'*.

What possible explanations could be given to such findings? Firstly, students from different ethnic backgrounds might have the potentially variable cultural notions of responsibility for learning. Secondly, living in the era of developing technology, most interview participants provided detailed accounts of how new ways of entertainment and communication enabled them to stay in touch with their home country, thus, reducing the effort put into the target language learning.

4.2. The characteristics of the contact experiences of students in an international study programme

The experimental data obtained by the questionnaire revealed that the majority of participants consider the contact with host-country members and other speakers of Russian important as through social interaction they get new knowledge about the language. At the same time, the mean values of direct, indirect and media contact variables were fixed only slightly above the middle point of the scale due to the lack of frequent contact experiences. Both the quantitative and qualitative data have shown that contact with native speakers of Russian was rather infrequent for the majority of students, partially, due to the numerous numbers of Vietnamese and French speaking members in the international students' community. The exceptions were Indian participants who managed to build up a social network consisting of native speakers. Among the reasons why students did not initiate contact with native speakers – host country members – the lack of the following conditions was mentioned: common goals, collaboration, institutional support, equal status, and sufficiently high communicative ability (Waterworth & Hoshi, 2016). Quite often foreign students felt left out in conversation with native speakers, neglected and disregarded. Institutional support was provided by means of extracurricular activities, however, the efforts were not sufficient, apparently, to encourage frequent encounters between foreign students and host country members and the necessary conditions for successful contact opportunities were not met. Five out of ten interviewees mentioned

that they did not possess a sufficient level of Russian language competence to communicate with host country members, in particular with their roommates in the university student residence or dormitory. These factors led to high levels of anxiety and apprehension accompanying the communication process. Students experienced fear of making mistakes, being misunderstood or not understood at all. For many students, especially the Chinese, negative communication encounters significantly increased their apprehension.

Four participants informed us they were laughed at due to their language mistakes and experienced serious communication breakdowns. The behaviour of interlocutors explicitly or implicitly conveys negative attitudes and creates such feeling among the learners that their efforts in establishing contact have failed. As a result, they feel disregarded and disappointed. Nevertheless, the majority of the students admitted that they felt less apprehensive while speaking with international fellow students and did not experience similar negative incidents like those with native speakers.

Thus, the importance of bonding with the students of one's own language group should not be undermined. At the same time, when students do not have their own mother tongue speakers around to rely on for emotional support, e.g. a Bulgarian student, they start seeking contacts with the representatives of other cultures similar to their own cultures.

The quantitative data analysis has also shown the differences in direct contact experiences among representatives from various linguistic backgrounds. The results have shown that according to Schumann's (1986) Acculturation Hypothesis when the target language speaking community is large and the group is cohesive, second language speakers will be less inclined to communicate in the target language with host country students and teachers. According to the Acculturation Hypothesis, some learners progress rapidly when acquiring a second language, while others make relatively little progress in the same period, in spite of being provided with the same language instruction and having initial ability. As Schumann (1986)

suggested, such discrepancies arise due to characteristics of the psychological and social distances between learners. According to Teemant and Pinnegar (2007), eight characteristics of social dis-

tance could be distinguished (Table 2). Speaking of the characteristics of psychological distance arising between second language learners, four characteristics should be noted (Table 3).

Table 2

Characteristics of social distance

CHARACTERISTIC	DESCRIPTION
Social dominance patterns	When the native speaker language learners view their group as superior in terms of culture, politics, technology, or economics, they are not willing to learn the second language.
Integration strategies	There are three types of learners: assimilative, preservative, and adaptive. Assimilative learners give up their native language values and lifestyles, whereas preservative ones keep them. Adaptive learners become bicultural and are able to switch depending on the group.
Enclosure	Enclosure is low when groups share social facilities. This facilitates language learning.
Intended length of residency	The length of planned stay in the country and the permanency of residency greatly affect motivation towards learning a new language (the average stay in Russia of the participants of this research is 5 years).
Cohesiveness	Strong intragroup contact within the community of the native language speakers with few outside contacts affects second language learning.
Size	Second language acquisition is affected by the size of the native speaker language community.
Cultural congruence	Second language learning is affected by the similarity and harmony between cultures.
Attitudes	The feelings of the reference groups towards each other may also influence second language learning.

Table 3

Characteristics of psychological distance

CHARACTERISTIC	DESCRIPTION
Language shock	If the learners feel silly about trying to learn the language, they are less likely to learn.
Culture shock	Being disoriented or anxious in a foreign culture results in being less likely to learn the second language.
Motivation	Level of motivation has an impact on acquisition of the second language.
Ego-permeability	If second language learners view their first language as fixed and rigid to a certain extent, this affects their learning of the second language.

Indirect contact through numerous available media (such as TV, the Internet, radio, magazines, books, podcasts) tends not to be frequent, similar to direct spoken contact. Some students watched popular TV shows in Russian, but rather for entertainment purposes than for educational ones (Çelik & Casimoğlu, 2018). Very few reading activities were reported; the only exception being some compulsory reading for academic purposes and some electronic texts on the Internet. In recent years, the Internet has become an important and easily accessible medium of communication. It creates an environment for users where they feel more protected and exercise more control over the process of communication. The unique qualities of the Internet enable users to create a positive contact between rival groups.

Social networking sites in Russian were also used rarely and the same situation applied to writing emails in Russian. To sum up, both qualitative and quantitative data related to direct spoken communication emphasise the impact of intergroup anxiety and on students' willingness to engage in intercultural communication (Awwad, 2019). The results of this investigation demonstrate that international students from study-abroad programmes mainly socialise within their own ethnic group due to high communication anxiety and perceived threats to their self-esteem. However, these findings do not exclude friendships between students from different ethnic background as they facilitate students' social and cultural blending into the host society.

5. DISCUSSION

This section discusses motivational and contact variables throughout one academic year. During one academic year we observed a remarkable reduction in the values of all the variables apart from direct written contact.

The results in Table 1 show that the mean values of contact and motivational variables demonstrated a rather sharp decline between Point 2 and Point 3 of the programme, with the exception of direct spoken contact between Point 1 and Point 3. The impact of time on contact and motivational

variables was substantial, apart from the aspect of direct spoken contact demonstrating the medium range results.

Overall, considering the changes in the questionnaire data, we can conclude that no significant changes took place in the first semester between Point 1 and Point 2 with the exception of direct media and written contact while attitude and motivation remained quite stable. However, even three months after arrival spoken contact experiences of students had not improved dramatically due to high levels of communication anxiety and negative experiences of interactions with native speakers. As a result, students tried to avoid face-to-face encounters with host-country members and bonded even more strongly with their first language group in order to protect their self-esteem. Some Chinese students, for example, even adopted the avoidance strategy for communication with native speakers. Thus, the experiences where foreign students felt valued members of the host community were rather rare.

The data collected by means of the interviews have shown the important role of events in similar arguments regarding the willingness to communicate. The data illustrated that the majority of our participants described remarkable events, such as students' conferences, workshops, Interclub meetings, intercultural concerts, which had changed their attitude and willingness to communicate with native speakers and to evolve further communication. It is also apparent that a negative effect on the international students could have been avoided throughout most of the events if their counterparts had shown more understanding of the cross-cultural difficulties arising due to the clash of cultures and had tried to support and encourage students instead of opting out of the conversation (Avtonomova et al., 2019).

Nevertheless, direct written and media contact turned out to be more frequent between Point 1 and Point 2. This could be explained by the instructional tasks given to the students by their tutors throughout the nine months course. During the second term of the programme, students were asked to keep a reflective diary of the media

'The data illustrated that the majority of our participants described remarkable events, such as students' conferences, workshops, Interclub meetings, intercultural concerts, which had changed their attitude and willingness to communicate with native speakers and to evolve further communication'

sources they followed as well as the magazine articles and journal papers they read. Thus, in a study-abroad context, instructional tasks and institutional support play a crucial role in the attempt to engage students in media and written contact in the target language.

The results obtained show a considerable fall in the contact frequency by the year end. According to the curriculum, at the end of a study-abroad programme, students take exams in both Russian and some content area disciplines. As mentioned by the interviewees, the last period of the second term is commonly dedicated to preparing for these exams. Therefore, students normally have less time to engage in face-to-face contact with each other and with target language speakers.

As far as the motivational variables are concerned, their mean values have also decreased at Point 3 of the period. This could be explained by the fact that the students considered their official language learning period to be over and the language would cease to be the object of study. Instead, the language from then on would become a tool for acquiring knowledge in their further professional studies. Another reason for the drop in motivation might be that in this particular period of time the interviewees were focused on the exams content and therefore paid less attention to the improvement of language skills.

6. CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to investigate direct and indirect cross-cultural contact as well as motivated behaviour and language attitude in a study-

abroad context in Russia. The study used the mixed method research approach combining quantitative and qualitative research methodologies in order to demonstrate contact, behavioural and motivational variables throughout the academic year of the foundation programme. The results obtained proved that written and media use contacts had become more frequent during the year whereas direct spoken contacts were much less frequent.

Basing our conclusions on the quantitative and qualitative data, we suggested three principal groups of factors determining the type and scope of students' cross-cultural experience. First of all, one should mention the socio-environmental factors that comprise the size of the source language speaking community in the host country and the conflict arising from the differences between students' attitudes, expectations and cultural beliefs and those of the host country. In this respect, institutional support plays a crucial role in establishing direct and indirect contact with the target language, also by means of organising remarkable and memorable events.

The second factor to be mentioned includes internal variables, e.g. personal attitude towards language learning, self-confidence, intrinsic motivation, self-esteem, communication apprehension and others. All these components predetermine the willingness to communicate and the contact frequency and quality.

Finally, the third group of factors relates to the importance of significant events for successful interaction with native speakers in a study-abroad context.

The experiential history of the participants complements and dynamically interacts with the social and institutional context and learners' personality traits (Williams-McBean, 2019; Zhang et al., 2013).

To sum up, several conclusions can be drawn on the basis of the results of the research. First of all, the study emphasises the importance of preparing students for their study-abroad programme before their arrival in the host country both in developing communication skills and strategies and

their linguistic ability (Aveni, 2005). Upon arrival, a necessary precondition for students is providing institutional support enabling them to adjust to the new cultural and social environment and to establish contact with native speakers. As the analysis of the results illustrates, the self-confidence of foreign students can suffer dramatically from negative encounter experiences that could have been avoided

or fully eliminated if the hosts had been better prepared for social interaction and communication. Thus, institutional support is needed to help host country members to understand the attitudes, expectations, feelings and possible forms of the international students' behaviour. All these measures would help encourage contact opportunities and reduce inter-group anxiety among foreign students.

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ALLA G. SOKOLOVA

National Research Moscow State University of Civil Engineering | 26 Yaroslavskoye Shosse, 129337 Moscow, Russia
as.falconi@yandex.ru

TATIANA A. BYSTROVA

Russian State University for the Humanities | 6 Miusskaya sq., GSP-3, 125993 Moscow, Russia
tassina@yandex.ru

Original Research

A look into young learners' language learning strategies: A Croatian example

by Sanja Vičević Ivanović, Nataša Košuta and Jakob Patekar

Sanja Vičević Ivanović Greenfield International School, United Arab Emirates sanjavicevic@gmail.com

Nataša Košuta University of Rijeka, Croatia nkosuta@ffri.hr

Jakob Patekar Rochester Institute of Technology, Croatia jakob.patekar@outlook.com

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Language learning strategies (LLS) have been in the focus of researchers for the past five decades. However, few studies have explored young learners' LLS. Starting with the assumption that the intensity of second language (L2) exposure is one of the factors in the use of LLS, the aim of this paper is to investigate whether there is a difference between the use of LLS in young children with different L2 exposure in Croatia. The analysed data was collected from a sample of 35 participants aged 5 to 7 using a structured interview at two points. In the interview, participants were explaining how they would help a plush toy to learn to say certain words and structures in L2. This method enables participants to become aware of the LLS they are using and to verbalise them. Based on an analysis of the results from the first and second data collection, we describe the similarities and differences in LLS use regarding the intensity of L2 exposure. A key finding, in relation to the criterion of similarity considering the intensity of L2 exposure, is that participants prefer to use the memory strategies such as listening to the interlocutor, model repetition, and autonomous repetition. Regarding the differences in the use of LLS considering the intensity of L2 exposure, a key finding is that children at an early age with a higher intensity of exposure to L2 show a tendency to use informal strategies, such as learning through rhyme in rhymes and chants and exposure to media, as well as social strategies such as establishing contact with a native speaker. The results show that certain LLS are used regardless of L2 exposure, whereas the use of others may be linked to the intensity of L2 exposure.

KEYWORDS: language learning strategies, early language learning, second language, foreign language, immersion programme, young learners



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1. INTRODUCTION

Thanks to Selinker (1972) and his understanding of language learning strategies (LLS) as one of the central processes underlying the concept of interlanguage, LLS enter SLA (second language ac-

quisition) in the last quarter of the 20th century and quickly become one of the key topics (Dörnyei & Skehan, 2005). At the beginning of the 21st century, the field of LLS is still quite relevant because of the potential of LLS in making language

'In addition, research has thus far shown that multilingual learners use language learning strategies more frequently than monolinguals or bilinguals, but it has not provided an answer to the question of whether and how different languages affect language learning strategies use'

learning more effective (Griffiths & Oxford, 2014). Although Thomas and Rose (2019) find that there is a steady decline in LLS studies, Pawlak (2019) believes that such studies have not lost their appeal with practitioners who recognise the role of LLS in enhancing language learning.

In studying variations in L2 strategy use, researchers have found that age, among other variables, generally affects the use of LLS (Takeuchi, 2019). With regard to this, it is important to determine which LLS young learners use (Gürsoy & Eken, 2018), and for this reason it is this target group of participants that should be studied in order to create a scientifically-based theoretical foundation for the practical application of LLS at the very beginning of children's education.

In addition, research has thus far shown that multilingual learners use LLS more frequently than monolinguals or bilinguals, but it has not provided an answer to the question of whether and how different languages affect LLS use (Pawlak & Oxford, 2018). Therefore, we believe it is highly important to provide qualitative insights into LLS use among children with different levels of L2 exposure.

Based on the trends described in the field of LLS, the aim of this paper is to describe the use of LLS at an early age considering the intensity of L2 exposure. In our research, we were guided by the following questions.

1. Which LLS do young learners use considering the intensity of L2 exposure?
2. Are there similarities in LLS that young learners use considering the intensity of L2 exposure?
3. Are there differences in LLS that young learners use considering the intensity of L2 exposure?

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

2.1. Instrument

The instrument consisted of a structured interview (based on Mihaljević Djigunović, 2001) with six questions that stimulated the participants to say how they would help certain plush toys (a cat, a dog, a kangaroo, a panda, an elephant, a parrot) to learn to say certain words and structures in L2. We find that this method enables participants to become aware of language learning strategies they are using and to verbalise them by explaining how they would help a plush toy.

2.2. Participants

The sample consisted of 19 girls and 16 boys ages 5 to 6 in the 1st and 6 and 7 in the 2nd data collection (N=35) who were at different levels of exposure to a different L2: German, French, or Italian. The participants who were exposed to German (N=12) were included in the early language learning (ELL) of German as part of a kindergarten programme delivered in Croatian and enriched with some content in German. This 10-hour kindergarten programme was aimed at Croatian-speaking children who wanted to learn German as a foreign language. In line with this, by embedding German songs, stories, and games, children were motivated to use German. The participants whose L2 was French (N=9) were in an ELL course that involved 4 hours of French per day. In this course children were predominantly exposed to French through various age-appropriate activities and prompted to use French actively. This programme was aimed at Croatian-speaking children who wanted to learn French as a foreign language in an intensive course. The last group of participants were exposed to Italian (N=14) in a 10-hour kindergarten immersion programme for members of the Italian minority. Compared to the other two programmes, this kindergarten programme was delivered in Italian only because it was aimed primarily at preparing Italian-speaking children for Italian primary school in Croatia. All kindergartens were in Croatia. In part 3, we look at previous theoretical considerations and key research findings relevant to our study.

'LLS theory is 'highly complex, dynamic, and eclectic, drawing inclusively on insights from many different theoretical traditions' and interrelated with 'cognitive base, complexity/chaos theory, behaviourism, sociocultural theory, activity theory and, perhaps, others'

2.3. Procedure

The research was carried out in accordance with the ethical requirements of doing research with children as participants and in line with the guidelines set out in the Code of Ethics for Research with Children (Ajduković & Kolesarić, 2003). The research involved two data collection (DC) periods. The first DC was carried out toward the beginning of the academic year, from mid-October to mid-November, and the second DC was carried out toward the end of the academic year, from mid-May to mid-June. The first DC was used to establish the initial state of LLS use, and the second to determine the similarities and differences in the use of LLS during one academic year considering the intensity of L2 exposure.

Each child was interviewed for 10 minutes and the interview was video-recorded. Participants were able to choose the language in which the interview would be conducted. Learners of German and French chose Croatian, while Italian learners generally chose Italian. Considering the participants' ages, each interview question was asked twice to provide respondents with sufficient time to answer the questions. Following the completion of the interviews, the recordings were transcribed and the data was used to identify the reported LLS.

Data for this study originated from a larger set of data collected within research conducted for a doctoral thesis (Vičević Ivanović, 2017).

3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

3.1. Definition of language learning strategies

LLS theory is *'highly complex, dynamic, and eclectic, drawing inclusively on insights from many different theoretical traditions'* (Griffiths, 2019, p.

3) and interrelated with *'cognitive base, complexity/chaos theory, behaviourism, sociocultural theory, activity theory and, perhaps, others'* (Griffiths & Oxford, 2014, p. 2). Upon taking a closer look into the theoretical background, cognitivist theory stands out as the oldest and most influential. The cognitivist view has started to shape the traditional stream of LLS theory starting with O'Malley and Chamot (1990) and continues to stand as a theoretical framework for understanding LLS (Wenden, 2002; Harris & Grenfell, 2004).

However, seeing that the traditional line of research attempts has not resulted in a clear, precise, and universally accepted theoretical model and definition of LLS, other concepts entered the field, such as *'self-regulation, agency, autonomy, self-efficacy, mindsets, resilience, hope, and internal attributions'* (Thomas & Rose, 2019, p. 251). There have lately been increased efforts to define the notion from the aspect of self-regulation of academic learning (Dörnyei, 2005; Oxford, 2013; Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015), which provides an opportunity for a potential terminological clarification of LLS (Lazarić & Vičević Ivanović, 2017). However, seeing that self-regulation was not constructed to operate specifically within SLA, it has not been taken up by the wider LLS research community (Rose et al., 2018).

On the other hand, Pawlak and Oxford (2018) are convinced that the theory of complex dynamic systems could reflect well the dynamism of LLS. This, indeed, is the latest attempt to understand the nature of LLS. According to Oxford (2017), *'all complexity perspectives are ways of comprehending the world that involve complexity, holism, dynamism, and nonlinearity, as opposed to simplicity, fragmentation, stasis, and linearity'* which *'might help us understand learning strategies and strategy instruction in deeper ways than ever before'* (Oxford, 2017, p. 129). Thomas et al. (2019) note that researchers who study language learning are beginning to show increasing interest in complex dynamic systems theory because they realise that learning cannot be segmented into separate constructs and that individuals cannot be seen as detached from their groups and contexts.

Rose et al. (2018) recognise the potential of conducting LLS research without being bound to a theoretical framework as researchers can thus explore LLS from a variety of perspectives. Seeing that there is no universally accepted theoretical model of LLS, in this paper as we analyse the use of LLS we consider the complex relationship of different phenomena (at individual cognitive and metacognitive level, at individual affective level, and at social level) elaborated within various theories. However, our language learning strategy analysis considers known strategy taxonomies, and emerges as an adaptation for young learners which links this research to the traditional stream of language learning research.

Finally, considering there is no universally accepted definition, and bearing in mind the aim of this research, in this paper LLS are understood in line with the updated definition by Griffiths and Cansiz (2015, p. 476) who define LLS as '*actions chosen (either deliberately or automatically) for the purpose of learning or regulating the learning of language*'.

3.2. Studies on young learners' language learning strategies

LLS research thus far has primarily focused on determining and classifying LLS, which is the case with studies in the context of ELL (English Language Learning) as well (Nikolov, 1999, 2002; Mihaljević Djigunović, 2001; Tragant & Victori, 2003, 2006; Kirsch, 2012; Psaltou-Joycey et al., 2014; Chilkwicz, 2015; Hrozková, 2015; Veraksa & Belolutskaya, 2021; Lütze-Miculinić & Vičević Ivanović, 2018).

Mihaljević Djigunović (2001) identifies formal strategies as the most frequently reported LLS, followed by TPR (Total Physical Response) strategies; the least reported strategies are affective strategies. Ćirković-Miladinović (2017) found that social strategies and memory strategies are the most common in ELL, whereas metacognitive strategies were used significantly less. According to Nikolov (1999, 2002), memory strategies play an important role in ELL, especially taking into account that memory strategies are probably the first strategies

that young learners start to develop (Vičević Ivanović, 2020). Furthermore, Nikolov (1999, 2002) explains that the importance of cognitive strategies grows with age – young learners like to repeat songs and games, and they do this unconsciously, whereas at the age of nine or ten this propensity for repetition diminishes. Nikolov (1999, 2002) concludes that the younger the learners are, the fewer LLS they use as they rely on the natural acquisition process; however, as they grow, they tend to use more and more LLS.

Mihaljević Djigunović (2001) finds that LLS are a reflection of what the learners were exposed to or the way they were taught. In line with this, Psaltou-Joycey and Gavriilidou (2018) and Psaltou-Joycey (2019) highlight the importance of instruction in LLS use. In contrast, Kirsch (2012) claims that languages learning strategies are not always a reflection of class activities.

Gürsoy and Eken (2018) found moderate use of LLS, and Tragant and Victori (2003, 2006) identified fewer reported LLS among ten-year-olds in comparison to older learners, which were mostly memory strategies of repetition and copying and, more frequently, social strategies. The authors presume that more proficient learners report, and hence probably use, a wider spectrum of LLS. This has also been confirmed by Gu et al. (2005) and Nikolov (1999, 2002). Platsidou and Sipitanou (2015) also confirmed the link between language proficiency and greater use of languages learning strategies, regardless of age.

Unlike the previous quantitative approach that was predominantly focused on collecting and classifying LLS (see Oxford, 1990), the focus of contemporary LLS studies is on the qualitative analysis of data (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Rose et al. (2018) highlight that '*quantitative approaches need to be built upon richer qualitative data in order to fully understand the complexities of strategy use in context, but it is uncertain as to whether an uptake of qualitative research has occurred*' (Rose et al., 2018, p. 153). At the basis of qualitative analysis is a description of LLS from various aspects of their use, for example, among learners of different age. Bearing in mind that LLS studies with young learn-

ers are sporadic (Gürsoy & Eken, 2018), we have decided to investigate 5-6-year-old children with different L2 exposure within the Croatian context to gain an insight into the use of LLS considering the intensity of L2 exposure.

4. STUDY AND RESULTS

4.1. Quantitative analysis

In order to answer the first research question regarding which LLS were used by the participants, we carried out a quantitative analysis of the collected data. Drawing on the theoretical background which points to scarce research on LLS among young learners, with some contradictory results as well, we did not opt for a set LLS categorisation but focused on data-driven categorisation of reported LLS groups and sub-groups. As highlighted in the theoretical section, we analyse the use of LLS considering the complex relationship of different phenomena at individual cognitive and metacognitive level, at individual affective level, and at social level elaborated within various theories. Considering known strategy taxonomies, our categorisation is an adaptation for young

learners. The reported LLS were categorised into six groups: (1) memory strategies, N=223 (1st DC), N=242 (2nd DC); (2) informal strategies N=69 (1st DC), N=113 (2nd DC); (3) formal strategies N=53 (1st DC), N=71 (2nd DC); (4) analysing strategies N=53 (1st DC), N=58 (2nd DC); (5) social strategies N=39 (1st DC), N=34 (2nd DC); (6) metacognitive strategies N=2 (1st DC), N=6 (2nd DC). Surprisingly, affective strategies were not reported.

Memory strategies comprise actions focused on memorising linguistic material. Informal strategies are centred around acquiring a second language in a natural way, while formal strategies include learning actions typical for the classroom context. Analysing strategies are related to translation. Social strategies include learning with someone. Metacognitive strategies help with regulating the process of learning. Affective strategies enable the emotional management of learning.

A number of subgroups were identified in each group. Memory strategies include: (1) listening to the interlocutor; (2) model repetition; (3) autonomous repetition; (4) singling out and repeating certain sounds (Table 1).

Table 1

Number of LLS sub-groups within memory strategies, according to L2

	LISTENING TO THE INTERLOCUTOR		MODEL REPETITION		AUTONOMOUS REPETITION		SINGLING OUT AND REPEATING CERTAIN SOUNDS	
	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd
Data collection								
GE	19	32	71	62	13	5	0	0
FR	9	19	32	30	11	8	1	0
IT	22	35	42	47	3	4	0	0
TOTAL	50	86	145	139	27	17	1	0

If we compare different sub-groups of memory strategies, listening to the interlocutor, model repetition, and autonomous repetition were used by all participants. However, model repetition stands out as the most frequently reported in the 1st as well as in the 2nd DC.

Informal strategies include: (1) showing the object; (2) showing and naming the object; (3) use in language context; (4) physically manipulating what the word means; (5) learning through rhyme in rhymes and chants; (6) learning through participation in games; (7) exposure to media.

Only two subgroups within informal strategies, showing and naming the object and use in language context, were reported in the 1st and 2nd DC among all participants. On the other hand,

learning through rhyme in rhymes and chants, learning through participation in games, and exposure to media were reported only among participants with higher L2 exposure (Table 2).

Table 2

Number of LLS sub-groups within informal strategies, according to L2

	SHOWING THE OBJECT		SHOWING AND NAMING THE OBJECT		USE IN LANGUAGE CONTEXT		PHYSICALLY MANIPULATING WHAT THE WORD MEANS		LEARNING THROUGH RHYME IN RHYMES AND CHANTS		LEARNING THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN GAMES		EXPOSURE TO MEDIA	
	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd
Data collection	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd
GE	0	4	2	16	7	5	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
FR	0	2	9	11	10	26	10	2	1	1	4	0	0	4
IT	2	2	5	9	2	8	6	12	0	0	0	0	11	6
TOTAL	2	8	16	36	19	39	16	19	1	1	4	0	11	10

Formal strategies include: (1) learning through drawing words; (2) learning through writing words; (3) reading a picture book; (4) spelling. Learning

through drawing words and through writing words were two formal strategies reported by all participants, regardless of L2 exposure (Table 3).

Table 3

Number of LLS sub-groups within formal strategies, according to L2

	LEARNING THROUGH DRAWING WORDS		LEARNING THROUGH WRITING WORDS		READING A PICTURE BOOK		SPELLING	
	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd
Data collection	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd
GE	1	5	2	1	7	0	21	10
FR	1	3	4	4	3	4	5	9
IT	4	7	4	13	1	8	0	7
TOTAL	6	15	10	18	11	12	26	26

Regarding the analysing strategy, only one subgroup was identified: translation. Translation is a LLS reported by all participants, N=53 (1st DC), N=58 (2nd DC), regardless of L2 exposure: German N=18 (1st DC), N=13 (2nd DC); French N=34 (1st DC), N=24 (2nd DC); Italian N=1 (1st DC), N=21 (2nd DC). The result that stands out is only one reported strategy in 1st DC among partic-

ipants learning Italian. Regarding social strategies, they include: (1) learning with someone; (2) learning with a caretaker; (3) learning with a friend; (4) learning with family; (5) establishing contact with a native speaker; (6) L2 immersion in a kindergarten programme. Based on the data related to social strategies in Table 4, it is clear that these LLS were sporadically reported.

Table 4

Number of LLS sub-groups within social strategies, according to L2

	LEARNING WITH SOMEONE		LEARNING WITH A CARETAKER		LEARNING WITH A FRIEND		LEARNING WITH FAMILY		ESTABLISHING CONTACT WITH A NATIVE SPEAKER		L2 IMMERSION IN A KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMME	
	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd
Data collection	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd
GE	2	0	4	4	1	7	2	1	0	0	0	0
FR	0	4	0	2	2	7	0	0	0	3	0	1
IT	1	0	2	0	5	2	5	3	0	0	15	2
TOTAL	3	4	6	4	8	16	7	4	0	3	15	3

Finally, metacognitive strategies include: (1) mental and physical preparation for learning, N=6 (German, 2nd DC); (2) error correction, N=1 (German, 1st DC); (3) assessment, N=1 (French, 1st DC). These LLS are the least reported and we would like to highlight that metacognitive strategies were not recorded among participants exposed to Italian.

In the following part of the paper, we focus on certain research aspects considering the intensity of L2 exposure. In order to answer the second and the third question, we analysed the data qualitatively. Hence, we first describe similarities among the three groups and then we show differences in reported LLS considering the intensity of L2 exposure.

4.2. Similarities in the use of LLS in the 1st and 2nd data collection

In view of similarities in reported LLS, it should be noted that within four groups of LLS (memory strategies, informal strategies, analysing strategies, and formal strategies) in several subgroups LLS were reported in both first and second DC regardless of the intensity of L2 exposure. The subgroups are: listening to the interlocutor, model repetition, and autonomous repetition (memory strategies), showing and naming the object, and use in language context (informal strategies), translation (analysing strategy), learning through drawing words and through writing words (formal strategies). The fact that these strategies were reported in

both DCs might indicate that young learners are aware of them at that age and that they could be seen as characteristic to the strategic behaviour of children at an early age, regardless of the intensity L2 exposure.

In relation to memory strategies, which are the most frequently reported LLS in both DCs, our research shows that children at an early age, regardless the intensity of L2 exposure, consciously invest effort in memorising information and, in doing that, use different repetition strategies, such as listening (Example 1) and model repetition (Example 2). In contrast, previous research has shown that memory strategies are not used at a conscious level, although they play an important role in ELL (Nikolov, 1999, 2002). We find that a young child gives precedence to memorising information through repetition, primarily because that is one of key developmental features of six- and seven-year olds (Patekar, 2014). Furthermore, a child's working memory is limited, with its retention period extending as the child grows, which opens up an opportunity to process more information, which leads to the growth of complexity of retained information (Vasta et al., 1998).

Henceforth, (I) stands for the interviewer and (I) with a number stands for a given interviewee. The word in bold marks that the word was emphasised in speech. The symbol || indicates overlapping utterances. The utterances were translated from Croatian and Italian into English, retaining only the key word or phrase in the original language.

1. LISTENING

(I): *How would you help the kitty to learn to say 'blau'?*

(I10): *I would tell her blau.*

2. MODEL REPETITION

(I): *And how would you help the kangaroo to learn to say 'la mano'?*

(I63): *La mano.*

(I): *And he? (interviewer points to the toy)*

(I63): *Repeats la mano.*

In the aforementioned research (Nikolov, 1999, 2002) it was found that young learners rely more on the natural acquisition process and use fewer LLS. However, if we look at the strategy of showing and naming the object (Example 3) and the strategy of use in language context (Example 4) from our study, it can be seen that participants apply L1 acquisition mechanisms as LLS, regardless of the intensity of L2 exposure. This is expected as children at that age are still acquiring their L1 and are possibly applying the mechanisms of L1 acquisition when acquiring or learning L2.

3. SHOWING AND NAMING THE OBJECT

(I): *How would you help the kitty to learn to say 'blau'?*

(I13): *Blau means blue.*

(I): *(interviewee is silent for a second) And how else would you help the kitty to learn to say 'blau'?*

(I13): *To make it easier for her, then I would show her blue sky.*

(I): *And she would learn that that is blau?*

(I13): *(nods affirmatively)*

4. USE IN LANGUAGE CONTEXT

(I): *And how would you help the panda to learn to say 'la giacca'?*

(I62): *Put on your jacket!*

(I): *Ah, you would say: put on your jacket and she would learn the word?!*

We consider evidence of a translation strategy use a valuable find (Example 5). Translation as a strategy is characteristic of all participants in the sample, regardless of the intensity of L2 exposure, which might indicate metalinguistic awareness that develops in the early childhood due to children's cognitive and language development (Berk, 2006).

5. TRANSLATION FROM CROATIAN TO L2

(I): *Mmm, so you would tell it that la pomme is an apple. And how else would you help the baby elephant learn to say 'la pomme'?*

(I33): *Mmmm, that I say... mmm apple, and he says la pomme.*

The use of formal strategies such as learning through drawing words (Example 6) and writing words (Example 7) is typical for school-age children. However, participants in our research were not pupils. Nonetheless, children in Croatia begin preparing for school as part of the pre-school programme, which evidently plays an important role in shaping their (language) learning, regardless of the intensity of L2 exposure. As previously stated, Mihaljević Djigunović (2001) believes that the evidence of formal LLS in young learners is a reflection of how the children were taught or to what they were exposed. The data from our research points in the same direction. Note, however, that this is in contrast with Kirsch's (2012, p. 393) finding that *'the strategies are similar, though not identical to the actual experiences'*.

6. LEARNING THROUGH DRAWING WORDS

(I): *And how would you help the kangaroo to learn to say 'die Hand'?*

(I15): *Mm... (silent for 16 seconds) That he fiii-irst... (silent for 2 seconds) Aaaaa, draws, colours, and says, aaaaa...*

(I): *Die Hand.*

(I15): *(nods affirmatively)*

7. LEARNING THROUGH WRITING WORDS

(I): *And how else would you help the kangaroo to learn to say 'la main'?*

(I35): *Well, I'd write it on the board.*

4.3. Similarities in the use of some formal and informal LLS in the 2nd data collection

Based on the results of the second DC, it was found that spelling (as part of formal strategies) and showing the object and physically manipulating what the word means (as part of informal strategies) were reported in all three groups of participants. Although these LLS were not reported in the first DC within all three groups, we can assume that learners are quite aware of them and

that they are characteristic of learners at an early age, regardless of the intensity of L2 exposure. It is possible that participants simply did not report them in the first DC for some reason.

The strategy of showing the object (Example 8) and physically manipulating what the object means (Example 9) also supports the fact that, regardless of the intensity of L2 exposure, participants recognise L1 acquisition mechanisms and apply them consciously as L2 learning strategies.

8. SHOWING THE OBJECT

(I): *And how else would you help the baby elephant to say 'der Apfel'?*

(I10): *|| Ooouch! I would... I would show the apple.*

(I): *How?*

(I10): *I would show the apple.*

9. PHYSICALLY MANIPULATING WHAT THE WORD MEANS

(I): *And how would you help the elephant to learn to say 'la mela'?*

(I59): *La mela.*

(I): *You say la mela, and the elephant?*

(I59): *Answers.*

(I): *What does he answer?*

(I59): *That... that... he eats the apple.*

(I): *Aaaah, he eats the apple when you say la mela?*

(I59): *Yes.*

The use of spelling as a formal strategy (Example 10) suggests that LLS are a reflection of what the learners were exposed to or of the way they were taught (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2001). Therefore, exposure to typical school activities could be linked to the use of formal LLS, regardless of the intensity of L2 exposure.

10. SPELLING

(I): *And how would you help the elephant to learn to say 'der Apfel'?*

(I14): *Mmm... D-e-r Apfl. Hhh... d, hee... Der Apfel.*

(I): *Mhm.*

(I14): *Mm, aaaand... D-e-r A-p-f-l-e-l.*

(I): *So, you would spell d-e-r A-p-f-e-l, and the elephant?*

(I14): *Would repeat after me.*

4.4. Similarities in the use of metacognitive LLS in the 1st and 2nd data collection

Data on metacognitive strategies (mental and physical preparation for learning, error correction, and assessment) indicates that they are reported sporadically in the first and second DC, which is in line with the findings of Ćirković-Miladinović (2017). The results related to the occurrence of mental and physical preparation for learning (Example 11), error correction (Example 12), and assessment (Example 13) confirm that while children can think about their language acquisition, they do not prefer to do so. Children in the early childhood can indeed think about their own thinking, thanks to cognitive and language development (Berk, 2006).

11. MENTAL AND PHYSICAL PREPARATION FOR LEARNING

(I): *And tell meee, how else would you help the puppy tooo learn to say 'drei'?*

(I19): *(interviewee silent for 1 second) Ittt maybe haaas to run a lot and so, and I didn't sa- I couldn't (murmurs) ...say three so I ran as fast as I could and I did it.*

(I): *Then you learned to say drei?*

(I19): *(nods affirmatively)*

12. ERROR CORRECTION

(I): *And tell me how would you help the baby elephant to learn to say 'der Apfel'?*

(I14): *Apf... l... (children's voices in the background), there's a baby coming.*

(I): *Mmh. (indistinguishable voices in the background for 6 seconds)*

(I14): *Mmmmm, that we together... then him then me... letter by letter, and then... only... he tries, and then if it's not correct, then I help him.*

13. ASSESSMENT

(I): *And is there another way in which you could help him to learn to say 'la pomme'?*

(I34): *I would give him homework to write pomme, and then he gives it back to me.*

(I): *Aha, so he would write pomme and give it back to you?*

(I34): *Yes.*

(I): *Ooooh.*

(I34): *And I mark it.*

'The results related to the occurrence of mental and physical preparation for learning (Example 11), error correction (Example 12), and assessment (Example 13) confirm that while children can think about their language acquisition, they do not prefer to do so'

4.5. Differences in the use of LLS regardless of 1st and 2nd data collection

In the following part of the paper, we focus on the differences in reported LLS. The differences could not be related to the two different data collection points; rather, they are connected to the intensity of L2 exposure. With regard to this, within informal strategies we see differences between the strategies of learning through rhyme in rhymes and chants and exposure to media, and social strategies where the differences are noted in the strategies of establishing contact with a native speaker and L2 immersion in a kindergarten programme. The above-mentioned informal and social strategies surface among the participants with greater intensity of L2 exposure, and they appear to link institutional and non-institutional language acquisition. Let us recall that Tragant and Victori (2003) claim that more proficient learners report and probably use a wider spectrum of LLS. Seeing that in our sample only the participants with a higher intensity of L2 exposure (French and Italian) reported LLS typical for non-institutional language acquisition, we assume that these participants are more proficient and this shows a tendency toward a more diverse and effective use of LLS. Learning through rhyme in rhymes and chants (Example 14), exposure to media (Example 15), establishing a contact with a native speaker (Example 16), and L2 immersion in a kindergarten programme (Example 17) prove that participants with a higher intensity of L2 exposure are already at an early age able to use more diverse LLS than participants with less exposure because they extend institutional language acquisition to non-institutional contexts.

14. LEARNING THROUGH RHYME IN RHYMES AND CHANTS

(I): *Now you will help, aaaa, puppy... eeh and how would you help him learn to say trua?*

(136): *Number three. (interviewee silent for 2 seconds) Like this!... Let's say now the puppy wants to know a rhyme...*

15. EXPOSURE TO MEDIA

(I): *Now tell me how would you help the dog to learn the word 'tre'?*

(164): *Eeer, now (interviewee looks and touches the toy) the word... there is a cartoon where they say number tre and then he knows.*

(I): *Then he knows?! Only if they say it in the cartoon!*

(164): *(interviewee continues to look at and touch the toy)*

16. ESTABLISHING CONTACT WITH A NATIVE SPEAKER

(I): *Mhm! And how would you help the panda to learn to say 'le blouson'?*

(134): *Le blouson. (interviewee silent for a second) Aaaand...*

(I): *Aha, you would say that, and what would she do?*

(134): *Le blouson.*

(I): *She would repeat.*

(134): *(nods affirmatively)*

(I): *Mhm. (interviewer silent for a second)*

(134): *And she would re... she would also... aaand, also she would go to the zoo to the French paaaandas.*

17. L2 IMMERSION IN A KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMME

(I): *And how would you help the parrot to learn to say 'Mi chiamo Ara'?*

(160): *She would go to the kindergarten and after the teacher says it in Italian, she speaks Italian and then (murmurs)*

(I): *Then? Repeats?*

(160): *(nods affirmatively)*

Interesting data was collected for the following subgroups of social strategies: learning with a caretaker, learning with a friend, and learning with family. Although a number of authors (Nikolov, 1999, 2002; Tragant & Victori, 2003, 2006; Kirsch,

2012) underscore the importance of social LLS at an early age, our research shows that the strategies of learning with a caretaker (Example 18), learning with a friend (Example 19), and learning with family are only reported in the first and second DC by participants with a lower intensity of L2 exposure. Considering the results of previous research, we expected that the importance of a more proficient language model from the immediate social surrounding would be equally acknowledged by all participants, and we wonder why this has not been the case. It is possible that participants with lower exposure recognise the effectiveness of social strategies, become aware of their use, and hence seek help from a more proficient language model, unlike participants with higher exposure who might be using these strategies without being aware of them.

18. LEARNING WITH A CARETAKER

(I): *And now try really, really hard, how would you help the dog to learn to say 'drei'?*

(I19): *Eem... (silent for 2 seconds), kindergarten teachers taught us.*

(I): *Kindergarten teachers taught you?*

(I19): *Yes, when we count... counted and then we had to say 'drei' so the teacher taught us.*

(I): *Aha, when you were counting?*

(I19): *Yes.*

20. LEARNING WITH A FRIEND

(I): *Aahaaa to look at it and then to say it. And how else would you help him, aaaa, to learn to say 'le blouson'?*

(I31): *(interviewee silent for 2 seconds) Hm... weell... (interviewee silent for 3 seconds) ...to think and... and, eem... s, sss, aaaa s, s... a friend whispers it to him.*

(I): *Aaah, great!*

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the theoretical framework described in this paper, we can conclude that the results of previous research into LLS mainly refer to ten-year-old participants (see Psaltou-Joycey et al., 2012; Sadeghi & Khonbi, 2013; Savić, 2014; Platsidou & Sipitanou, 2015; Ćirković-Miladinović, 2017; Gürsoy & Eken, 2018), and that studies with younger

participants are sporadic. Bearing in mind the child's cognitive profile and other characteristics (Berk, 2006), differences among the age groups are significant and possibly determine the use of LLS. For this reason, we undertook to carry out this study to gain an insight into the strategic behaviour of children at an early age, considering the intensity of L2 exposure.

The results of this study enabled us to describe LLS based on the similarities and differences in LLS use with regard to the intensity of L2 exposure. A key finding, in relation to the criterion of similarity considering the intensity of L2 exposure, is that participants prefer to use the following memory strategies: listening to the interlocutor, model repetition, and autonomous repetition. The use of these strategies is determined by the limited working memory capacity, and not by the intensity of L2 exposure. Furthermore, another key finding is an insight into the use of certain informal strategies, such as showing and naming the object and use in language context. Based on the results related to these strategies, we believe that the strategic behaviour typical of L1 acquisition is transferred to L2 acquisition regardless of L2 exposure. Another important finding is related to the analysing strategy, that is, to the subgroup of translation. The use of this strategy might indicate that participants have developed metalinguistic awareness, regardless of the intensity of L2 exposure. The use of formal strategies such as learning through drawing words and learning through writing words found in this research shows that exposure to typical school activities as a part of pre-school preparation for the start of formal education could be linked to the use of LLS regardless of the intensity of L2 exposure. These findings are not surprising if we take into consideration that all the participants included in this research went through pre-school preparation, which is based on activities that are part of everyday school routine. Given that all of these results come from the first and second DC, we believe that the described use of LLS is typical for young learners, whereas the results related to the similarities of LLS from the second DC should be explored in further studies, that is, why spelling (as

part of formal strategies) and showing the object and physically manipulating what the word means (as part of informal strategies) were not reported in the first DC. The sample might be expanded to a greater number of participants to gain better insights into strategic language behaviour of young learners.

With regard to the differences in the use of LLS considering the intensity of L2 exposure, we find that children at an early age with a higher intensity of exposure to L2 show a tendency to use informal strategies, such as learning through rhyme in rhymes and chants and exposure to media, as well as social strategies such as establishing contact with a native speaker and L2 immersion in a kindergarten programme. This might indicate that already at this age children with a higher intensity of L2 exposure are prepared to extend institutional language acquisition to non-institutional. Seeing that previous research has highlighted social strategies as characteristic of young learners, our findings are somewhat surprising as they show that only participants with lower intensity of L2 exposure report such strategies. They might be reporting the use of these strategies because they are aware of their usefulness, unlike young learners with a higher intensity of L2 exposure who might not be reporting them because they are using them without being aware of them.

Although our study has yielded valuable results regarding the use of LLS in young learners and considering the intensity of L2 exposure, it has also opened up certain questions related to the strategic behaviour of children at an early age, which should be explored in further research. For

example, it would be interesting to explore whether not reporting LLS (such as affective strategies) means that young learners do not use them or that they are simply not aware of them. Likewise, the question of metacognitive strategy use in young learners is also quite interesting and requires further investigation into which metacognitive strategies are typical within the age group in view of different intensity of L2 exposure.

We find the results of this study to be a solid starting point for further research which should be verified through further studies of participants from other countries and contexts.

At this point we would like to highlight the insights from this study into conducting research with young learners. We found that there are certain preconditions that need to be met in order to carry out such research properly. The first is that the researcher establishes a warm, emotional, and respectful relationship with the participants so that they would be willing to cooperate. The second is to understand young participants' emotional and social world, which means the researcher will use familiar content and games to get closer to respondents and motivate them to participate. Finally, and equally important, the researcher needs to be aware of young learners' cognitive development as this affects the choice of instrument.

Regardless of the challenges that research with young learners poses, such studies are needed to establish theoretical models for the description of LLS of very young learners. Only on the basis of such models will it be possible to design effective guidelines for integrating the teaching of LLS in foreign language education from an early age.

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SANJA VIČEVIĆ IVANOVIĆ
Greenfield International School | 1 Dubai Investment Park, DIP 2 Dubai, United Arab Emirates
sanjavicevic@gmail.com

NATAŠA KOŠUTA
University of Rijeka | 10 Trg braće Mažuranića, 51 000 Rijeka, Croatia
nkosuta@ffri.hr

JAKOB PATEKAR
Rochester Institute of Technology | 6 Don Frana Bulića, 20 000 Dubrovnik, Croatia
jakob.patekar@outlook.com

Review

Rethinking language use in digital Africa: Technology and communication in Sub-Saharan Africa (a review)

Original work by Leketi Makalela and Goodith White (Eds.) published by Multilingual Matters 2021

Reviewed by Michael Carrier

Michael Carrier Highdale Consulting, UK michael@highdale.org

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In 2019/2020 just before the pandemic broke out in Europe I was part of a team exploring the teaching of English in technical institutes in Francophone countries to ease the access to employment of high school and technical college graduates. We went on to produce an English for special purposes course for learners wishing to integrate international companies. The company we created was a Nigerian online communication site (name made up) with branches in Kenya and South Africa. As *Rethinking Language Use in Digital Africa* shows, Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa are leading nations in establishing online sites not only for the establishment of online communication but also for the opportunity to establish native languages as a means of establishing communication online between different language groups and in the process helping local languages develop and spread across communities.

The purpose of the book is to show how online and social media resources have developed the use of African languages throughout the continent.

Using a widely spread group of contributors from Africa itself, the US, Canada, the UK and Ireland, its research has lessons for those interested in the survival and growth of minority languages in Europe and beyond, such as the Welsh language in the UK and Luxembourgish in Luxembourg and those interested in the development of plurilingualism, including international organisations.

The book is divided into four chapters with eight research papers in all. Chapter 1 deals with multilingual practice. Chapter 2 addresses linguistic and cultural maintenance. Chapter 3 analyses the effects of communication outside Africa. Chapter 4 examines the process of language change based on the study of how L1-mode intelligent software agents instruct Nigerian L2 speakers.

The book explores the role of digital media in Africa through the process of translanguaging, defined as the employment of multiple languages, often simultaneously, to communicate successfully. The term was coined in the 1980s by Cen Williams but has developed in the decades since. The

key to translanguaging in Africa has been the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on digital communication. The pandemic has accelerated the use of digital communication in education, government, commerce and personal interaction and government investment therein.

There are, of course, issues to be faced, as the editors, Leketi Makalela and Goodith White, point out. Power outages, inadequate hardware, lack of trained personnel, classrooms and lecture halls not designed for online teaching and expensive broadband costs have all inhibited online education. Added to this is the predominant use of European languages, English, French and Portuguese, rather than the use of indigenous languages. This has posed problems for home learning as many parents are not proficient in English, French or Portuguese.

The breakthrough has been in the use of social media. Using apps such as WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger and WeChat, people have been able to talk via mobile phone using a mixture of indigenous languages and lingua francas, raising the profile and widening the use of indigenous languages.

In *Networks of Outrage and Hope*, Manuel Castells argues that digital technology can disrupt traditional power structures, by facilitating the creation of autonomous spaces that are beyond the role of governments. It allows participants to grow and develop because they are given freer agency.

In Chapter 1, Makalela introduces the concept of multilingual literacies and technology in Africa and stresses the fact that African languages have been left behind in the development of languages in digital technology. He points out that although multilingualism is the norm in many African societies, the ways of knowing through educational packages and technological advances are often dominated by a monolingual bias that disadvantages speakers of African languages. In spite of research pointing to the need for African languages to be supported, foreign language monolingualism is still the norm. Once again this can be applied to Europe and other continents where local minority languages are subordinated to the demands of the national language or international lingua franca.

One answer may be the increasing use of translanguaging via social media. As the book explains, translanguaging is the process by which multilingual speakers use their languages as an integrated communication system. So, a single sentence may contain features of different languages used by the online communicators or a sentence or phrase in one language may be followed by a sentence or phrase in another, all languages being used understood by parties to the communication.

Makalela argues for Ubuntu translanguaging. Ubuntu is a South African Nguni Bantu word meaning 'humanity'. It is expressed in the Bantu language saying, '*I am because we are*' or '*Humanity towards others*' and emphasises the importance of community and togetherness. Ubuntu translanguaging is about the use of plurilingualism to encourage inclusivity and togetherness and supports the use of indigenous languages as well as foreign languages. Classroom teachers regularly use indigenous languages to ask their students questions and answer questions posed by students. However, African languages rarely figure in digital communication. As a side observation, Ubuntu is also the name of a computer open source operating system.

Chapter 2 reports on an enquiry into the use of language on WhatsApp in Rwanda, in Southern Africa. The researchers surveyed three WhatsApp groups of 600 to find out what language or combination of languages were used in WhatsApp messaging. The aim was to examine how the translanguaging practices used affected social dynamics and to what extent they promoted digital literacy and multiliteracies. The preferences of the Rwandan population for WhatsApp was based on the increase of telephony penetration in Rwanda, and throughout sub-Saharan Africa, and the popularity of telephonic social media applications over the computer-based Internet, which was seen to be too expensive and investment heavy. Internet World Stats reported in 2018 that 172 million of 191 million active social media users in Africa were using WhatsApp in 2017. In Rwanda the mobile phone penetration rate was estimated at 72% of the population while Internet use was 35%. As research

has shown, translanguaging practice has become increasingly common and the examples analysed in Rwanda included English, French, Kinyarwanda and Kiswahili in the same message. It is also interesting that in a materials project we recently developed for Francophone Africa, our team had to prepare lesson plans for teachers to deliver by WhatsApp as well as face-to-face or through the Internet.

Not only WhatsApp but other applications such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Skype, LinkedIn, IMO and Messenger are all commonly used in translanguaging communication. The book shows how translanguaging can raise the profile and status of indigenous languages such as Ewe in Ghana in West Africa and promote multilingualism and support heritage language learning. It also explores the value of online phone applications in raising international awareness of women's rights through the network of Eritrean women (RENEW), the role of the African Storybook project in encouraging identity, language and literacy among schoolchildren and the use of WhatsApp poetry groups in Malawi. A final paper analyses the facial responses of students of English as a second language in Nigeria and how they respond to English instructions issued first by a computer interface and then by a human instructor.

What does all this amount to? In conclusion, above all, the editors say this amounts to change. The pandemic has forced all governments to be heavily dependent on information and communi-

cation technologies. What is clear, and especially in the book, is the relationship between technology and language dominance. English and European languages dominate as Internet languages. These languages may not be appropriate for the creation and transmission of indigenous knowledge. Indigenous languages are already in danger in many parts of the world as a result of the dominance of mainstream national and international languages. The accelerated use of communication through technology puts indigenous and minority languages at risk of extinction and stresses the role of digital platforms as a basis for revival. In addition, the book shows how digital communication in indigenous languages can enhance rapport and build social integration, especially through the use of translanguaging practices.

As Kirsty Rowan points out in the book, digital technology enables the expression of diverse ideas, broader participation in national and international dialogue and preserving endangered languages and multilingualism as a resource. Digital translanguaging offers the opportunity for indigenous language forms to cross boundaries and create cross-pollination of indigenous languages with European-based lingua francas.

Theoretically and through its research examples *Rethinking Language Use in Digital Africa* is of value not just to students of language and society in Africa but to researchers interested in the theory and practice of digital communication and the study of minority languages around the world.

MICHAEL CARRIER
Highdale Consulting | 19 Legard Road, N5 1DE London, UK
michael@highdale.org

Review

Constructive intercultural management: Integrating cultural differences successfully (a review)

Original work by Ch. Barmeyer, M. Bausch and U. Mayrhofer (Eds.) published by Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd.

Reviewed by Peter McGee

Peter McGee University of London, UK pmcgee0212@gmail.com

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This is a very well organised, tightly focused and clearly presented book which will be of value to intercultural trainers, teachers of languages for special purposes and international managers dealing with cultural differences. It divides into three parts – Understanding Constructive Intercultural Management, Experiencing Constructive Intercultural Management and Designing Constructive Intercultural Management – and contains thirteen chapters. Each chapter is clearly laid out with a chapter summary of Learning Objectives at the beginning and a summary at the end, supported by Discussion Questions for use in groups or for individual study and reflection. The approach is broadly theoretical, but a highlight of the book is the examples of the challenges of intercultural management and best practice, presented in boxes throughout the text, and the frequent use of charts and diagrammes for further clarification.

With globalisation, digitalisation, and migration we live increasingly in a world characterised by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity –

a VUCA world, in the acronym coined by Nathan Bennett and James Lemoine. Constructive intercultural management can help resolve some of the issues that arise in international operations. So, what do the authors mean by interculturality? They define it as a reciprocal and dialogical, if possible symmetrical, process of negotiation, communication, and cooperation between actors in which adaptation, learning and development take place. They distinguish between interculturality (the negotiation of new rules of communication and behaviour), multiculturalism, the co-existence of different cultures with limited interaction, and transculturality, the networking of communities carrying different cultural identities. The authors stress the importance of critical incident methodology (incidents where conflicts arise due to differences in values, communication, and behaviour styles) as a basis for personal development and intercultural learning leading to new cultural framing where both parties find ways of adapting to each other.

So, what about national culture? Does it exist? Obviously yes, but in the authors' view in the complexity of multinational and multicultural working environments static national categories are being replaced by workers adjusting their own personal cultural identity to work with others from a different cultural background. Because I am of German or French nationality, it doesn't mean I have to conform to German or French national characteristics. The authors identify three levels of cultural interaction. First is the *micro level*, the culture of the actors, second is the *meso level*, the culture of the organisation in which they work or with which they deal, and third is the *macro level*, which is the culture of the society in which the individuals and the organisations work. That means that in any intercultural situation or negotiation three factors have to be taken into account: the character of the actors, the character of the institution/s they are dealing with and the culture/s. The conclusion is that in any situation culture is only one factor. The culture of the individuals concerned (the actors) and the institution they are involved with are also important. Cultural differences alone will not explain why an issue arises in cross-border or multicultural team management. The authors go on to propose a three-step model to help understand and integrate cultures. The three steps are: cultural specifics (characteristics of the culture), cultural comparison (understanding the similarities and differences between cultures), and interculturality (reciprocal intercultural learning, adaptation, and development).

In Chapter 11 the authors apply the principles of constructive intercultural management to organisational leadership, teams and the intercultural transfer of management practices, in other words how to transfer knowledge, management tools and practices successfully between organisations (e.g. in supply chain management) and between head offices, branches and subsidiaries. They also analyse the three stages by which knowledge and practices transfer takes place. The first stage is contextualisation where concepts and practices are introduced. The issue is that people are not aware of the cultural presuppositions that may underlie new

policies and procedures. The second stage is de-contextualisation. This describes the irritation that arises if the changes proposed seem senseless or don't fit the context. The third and most important stage is recontextualisation whereby negotiation and adaptation take place, and the issues can be resolved. Where this fails to happen the business relationship can break down, resulting in resignations and the loss of capital. A small example of successful recontextualisation in the reviewer's own experience took place when a French company took over a British company. The British workers' contract hours were from 845 to 1745 hours, but the French held their team meeting at 1800 hours. This was contextualisation based on French routine behaviour. The British workers were angry and threatened to go on strike. This was decontextualisation. The French manager apologised for the error and was able to recontextualise the team meeting by bringing it forward to 1600 hours. The constructive intercultural management strategy worked, and everyone was satisfied.

Chapter 9 on Intercultural Communication and Language will be of special interest to LSP teachers and researchers. It deals with the multiple forms of languages in use in organisations, the challenges of the use of English as a lingua franca and how organisations can deal constructively with multilingualism. The authors identify four areas of communication forms affecting cultures. One is verbal communication, especially the difference between direct and indirect styles, non-verbal communication, covering different paralinguistic styles of eye contact, gestures and body movement and, in written communication, pictures, diagrammes and colours, para-verbal communication, involving tone of voice, intonation, volume, rhythm and pauses and, in written communication, the use of punctuation, spelling and paragraphing, and finally, extra-verbal communication covering, space, time, smell and dress codes. Research suggests that the increased use of online media whether it be 'rich media' (video conferencing) or 'lean media' (emails), has facilitated communication within and between organisations across cultures.

Nevertheless, problems can arise. The authors describe how divergent meanings of the word 'concept' in French and German in a multicultural organisation caused problems. Asked to prepare a concept for a project, the Germans produced a full draft report while the French produced a two-page list of thoughts. The Germans thought the French were lazy and uncommitted while the French thought the Germans were trying to take over the project. In fact, the difference was linguistic misunderstanding. *Konzept* in German is a first plan for a solution, while *concepte* in French means an informal collection of ideas prior to discussion. The authors list multiple layers of language in organisations, national and regional language, corporate or organisational language, professional language (e.g. engineering) and team language. As an example of organisational language they give the interesting if offbeat example of Google employees who describe the Goggle campus as the *Googleplex* or *the Plex*, employees as *nooglers* (pronounced *newglers*) and employees who leave Google as *zooglers*. What is important is the language used in organisations, in teams and by individuals should strengthen effectiveness and efficiency of communication and ease the building of contacts and personal relations.

The danger is that language standardisation in a corporation can provoke anxiety in intercultural communication. Stressing the importance of recognising the links between communication, language, and culture in an organisation the authors consider language diversity as an asset that can enrich interaction between individuals and in teams. They describe five strategies for dealing with multilingualism: the introduction of a multi-lingua franca, intercomprehension, simultaneous

and consecutive interpreting, language training, and the support of intercultural and multilingual individuals in the group.

Having explored the meaning of intercultural competence and the development of intercultural training tools, the authors end with a systemic framework for constructive interculturality in organisations. A key figure in successful intercultural liaison is the boundary spanner. This is an employee who combines cultural and linguistic skills with a knowledge of the management process and can act as the 'go to' person in managing the recontextualisation process when an issue arises. Because of their knowledge and experience they are adept at code and frame switching in the situations the organisation encounters.

Boundary spanners may include employees or consultants and can provide greater social capital and intercultural skills as well as a degree of well-being and empathy. According to the business relationship of the institutions working together, the boundary spanners may provide translation skills, enhanced information exchange, social network building skills and problem-solving skills. Research suggests that multicultural teams embodying a wider range of experience and insight than monocultural teams achieve much greater success. So, it is important to recruit intercultural employees and promote them and to use their skills in helping to build and promote the values of an international organisation.

Constructive Intercultural Management deserves careful study both for its theoretical analysis and establishment of an intercultural management cultural framework but also for its case studies and examples of successful and unsuccessful intercultural negotiation and management.

PETER MCGEE

University of London | 32 Russell Square, Bloomsbury, WC1B 5DN London, UK
pmcgee0212@gmail.com

News & Events

ICC News

by Ozlem Yuges
ICC Coordinator

Webinars

Despite the lockdown, ICC-Languages has had a busy few months – online, of course. Our management has worked hard to cement our relations with international language organisations in Europe, particularly the ECML (European Committee for Modern Languages) and ECSPM (European Civil Society Platform for Multilingualism and the Lifelong Learning Platform), which offers lesson plans and activities for teachers.

We have also run a programme of monthly webinars featuring experts on a variety of language and cultural topics. The seminars which take place towards the end of each month are recorded. You can visit <https://icc-languages.eu/webinars> for details.

In April, Ian McMaster, Editor-in-Chief, Business Spotlight magazine, spoke on *Authenticity in Language and Leadership: What Is It and Why Do We Need It?* As he wrote in his summary, *'Authenticity is everywhere in business books and articles nowadays. Leaders and other professionals are urged to 'be more authentic' or 'be themselves'. But what exactly is authenticity? In this talk, we will discuss various dimensions of authenticity in relation to both language and leadership'*.

In May, Rebecca Oxford and Maria Matilde Olivero led a discussion on *Peacebuilding in Language Education*, which they summarised as follows. *'Language teachers become peacebuilders when they weave flexible peace activities into the current curriculum, thus increasing students' competencies in both language and peace'*. In the we-

binar, they describe crucial peace dimensions and lead several brief, experiential peace activities designed for language teachers and learners. The webinar demonstrates the simplicity and importance of integrating the activities into language instruction.

In her webinar in June, Gabrielle Hogan-Brun posed the question *Why Study Languages?* and answered it by showing how languages have the power to shape our life and the future. She told the real-life stories of how ordinary and famous people learned languages to help them find their place and become successful in the world.

In July, Geoff Tranter warned teachers to *Beware the Comfort Zone*, arguing that, *'if in the language classroom either the teacher and/or the students have a tendency to remain within their individual comfort zones, the chances of progress in language proficiency will diminish accordingly'*, and exploring counterstrategies to improve teaching and learning.

Finally, in her August webinar entitled *From Cheating to E-cheating in Language Assessment: (How) Should We Care?* Anna Soltyska examined how online cheating in exams can take place and how best to prevent it.

If any of these topics interest you, please feel free to follow them up on our website.

Annual Conference

Our annual conference held online in June was a great success. Entitled *'Language Teaching and Learning in a New Era'*, experts explored the effects of learning and teaching virtually using computer-assisted communication and exchanges and included a plenary speech by Frank Heyworth of ECML on how learning education might change as a result of the pandemic. Other papers explored blended learning, how to introduce variety into

online teaching, a holistic approach to online learning, how to build community into online classes and the role of neuroscience. A successful combination of theory and classroom practice. You can access the conference for more details at <https://icc-languages.eu/conferences>.

CATAPULT Project

Finally, ICC-Languages was delighted to award its certificate of quality assurance and best practice in language learning and teaching to the EU sponsored CATAPULT project, a six European nation partner project aimed at upskilling teachers of languages for special purposes (LSP).

The project, which ran from 2017 to 2020, had four main outputs; first, a situational survey of LSP teaching, secondly, a common competence framework, third, a 6-module MOOC for training teachers in the theory and practice of LSP teaching, including upskilling in language learning online technologies and fourthly, a Community of Practice (CoP) to provide a toolkit to build competences, along with a Job/Client toolkit to help teachers be more competitive in the educational market.

For more information about the CATAPULT project, its objectives, milestones, outcomes, and policy recommendations, please visit the project's website at <http://catapult-project.eu>.

EUROLTA News

by Myriam Fischer Callus
EUROLTA Project Manager

EUROLTA Online

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the education sector globally. Schools and universities went into lockdown, classes had to be suspended to enforce social distancing and educational institutions had to shift to teaching online. ICC (a network of leading institutions of adult education in Europe and around the world) has responded to this development and is launching a language teacher training programme in October 2021.

EUROLTA Online (European Certificate in Language Teaching to Adults) is an internationally recognised teacher training programme to teach languages using up-to-date methodologies. EUROLTA Online is a part-time course of 120 hours, consisting of 80 hours live synchronous sessions with a tutor and 40 hours self-study for extra reading, lesson planning and the writing of assignments. This six-month course will allow participants to pursue a career in language teaching and to gain the qualifications, the skills and knowledge one needs as a language teacher. It is open to teachers of all languages. The programme is scheduled to run from October 2021 to March 2022.

For more details about the programme please visit <https://icc-languages.eu/euroлта>.

How to Teach Languages Online

The sudden transition from face-to-face to online teaching and learning has presented many issues and challenges for educators and practitioners all around the world. Many teachers have been thrown into online teaching with hardly any preparation. For that reason, enhanced awareness of the specific techniques of online teaching is a must. Teachers with a qualification in online teaching will be in demand, so ICC-Languages is offering a 30-hour online course on *How to Teach Languages Online*.

This short training programme is designed for all teachers and trainers who would like to acquire new skills and gain experience in online teaching. The programme is spread over four weeks and comprises two face-to-face online sessions with a tutor and fourteen hours of home assignments and self-study.

By the end of the course teachers will develop the key skills needed to enable them to plan and deliver online lessons. They will be able to adapt the face-to-face teaching skills they already have to the online environment and will be able to use technology with confidence in their classrooms. For more information visit <https://icc-languages.eu/teacher-training>.

You can also visit <https://icc-languages.eu> to learn more about ICC and EUROLTA.

RUDN University News

by Elena N. Malyuga
Editor-in-Chief TLC

Cooperation Agreement between RUDN University's Faculty of Economics and the Christopher Ledentsov National Award

In July, the Faculty of Economics signed a Cooperation Agreement with the Christopher Ledentsov National Award. The agreement will deepen integration between the parties, mutual support and development of educational technologies, scientific and technical, personnel, innovation, production potential, ensuring problem-solving solutions in training and retaining highly qualified personnel. You can visit <https://ledentsovaward.org> for more details on the award.

RUDN University is Among the Leading Universities in the World in Graduate Employability

Peoples' Friendship University of Russia has strengthened its position in the international ranking of universities in QS Graduate Employability Rankings 2022, having moved up by 32 points (now 126th). The British rating agency Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) considered a total of 786 universities for the study. 550 universities were officially included in the rating, including 16 Russian universities. RUDN University has also strengthened its position in Employer Reputation, Graduates Achievements, Partnership with Employers, and Student-Employer Interaction.

RUDN University at the Technosreda Festival

September 25, *Technosreda* – an all-Russian festival of technical achievements – united the scientific community of leading scholarly and technological companies, universities, and research institutes. At the plenary session, Minister of Education and Science Valery Falkov, Presidential Advisor Andrei Fursenko, General Director of the Russian Society 'Knowledge' Maxim Dreval discussed


key trends in science and technology, memorable scientific discoveries, the role of fundamental science, career trajectories for young scientists, and business support opportunities. *'Thousands of people in our country are engaged in science to bring more comfort into our lives. I sincerely believe that Technosreda will contribute greatly to the development of science,'* said Valery Falkov. *Technosreda* hosted three sites (500 R&D projects, 20 Russian inventors, 30 technology companies) exhibiting medical exoskeletons, delivery robots, talking robots (some of them already working as museum guides, consultants and concierges), a prototype of a flying car, cyber prosthetic devices, and more.

3MUGIS Summer School at RUDN University

July 26 to August 2, 3MUGIS 5th International Summer School (Monitoring, Modeling and Managing Urban Soils and Green Infrastructure) was held on the basis of the Department of Landscape Design and Sustainable Ecosystems and the Smart Urban Nature Science Center of RUDN University. The school was organised with the support of the Russian Science Foundation and under the auspices of the International Union of Soil Scientists (IUSS), RUDN University, and the Institute of Urban Soils of New York in collaboration with universities, scientific organisations and research groups from around the world. Project partners included Brooklyn College (USA), Kola Science Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Southern Federal University, and many others. The school welcomed over 30 students and young scientists from Austria, Algeria, Germany, Mozambique, Russia, the USA, the Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. The participants learned about new approaches in modelling of urban ecosystems and eco-monitoring, studied the biochemistry of urban soils and plantations, analysed the issues of ecosystem services and urban climate, and got acquainted with technical innovations in the study of urban soundscape. RUDN University's Smart Technologies for Sustainable Development lab worked side by side with 15 well-known soil scientists, climatologists, biologists, and ecologists from Australia, Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy, India, and the USA.

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info@tlcjournal.org
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